

AGENDA

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday, 13 February 2018

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Sarah Aldridge, Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Andy Booth (Vice-Chairman), Lloyd Bowen (Chairman), Nicholas Hampshire, James Hunt, Peter Marchington, George Samuel, Ben Stokes and Tony Winckless.

Quorum = 3

Pages

1. Fire Evacuation Procedure

The Chairman will advise the meeting of the evacuation procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. This is particularly important for visitors and members of the public who will be unfamiliar with the building and procedures.

The Chairman will inform the meeting whether there is a planned evacuation drill due to take place, what the alarm sounds like (i.e. ringing bells), where the closest emergency exit route is, and where the second closest emergency exit route is, in the event that the closest exit or route is blocked.

The Chairman will inform the meeting that:

(a) in the event of the alarm sounding, everybody must leave the building via the nearest safe available exit and gather at the Assembly points at the far side of the Car Park; and

(b) the lifts must not be used in the event of an evacuation.

Any officers present at the meeting will aid with the evacuation.

It is important that the Chairman is informed of any person attending who is disabled or unable to use the stairs, so that suitable arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency.

2. Apologies for Absence and Confirmation of Substitutes

3. Minutes

To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2018 (Minute Nos. 438 - 445) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the room while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

Part B reports for the Committee to decide

5. Tenant Strategy Refresh

1 - 18

The Committee is asked to consider the Tenant Strategy Refresh.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing and the Strategic Housing and Health Manager have been invited to attend for this item.

6. Revised Open Spaces/Play Strategy

19 - 48

The Committee is asked to consider the Revised Open Spaces/Play Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs, the Head of

Commissioning and Customer Contact and the Leisure and Technical Services Manager have been invited to attend for this item.

7. Committee Work Programme

49 - 50

The Committee is asked to review and discuss the Committee's Work Programme (attached) for the remainder of the year.

Issued on Monday, 5 February 2018

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Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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Policy and Development Review Committee	
Meeting Date	13 February 2018
Report Title	Tenancy Strategy Refresh
Cabinet Member	Cllr Ken Pugh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	Amber Christou
Lead Officer	Rebecca Walker, Strategic Housing & Health Manager
Recommendations	1. That Policy and Development Review Committee consider the reviewed Draft Tenancy Strategy.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides PDRC with the background to the Refreshed Tenancy Strategy and as part the eight week consultation process considers the refreshed Strategy.
- 1.2 The Localism Act 2011 places a statutory requirement on all local authorities in England to adopt and publish a tenancy strategy by 15 January 2013, to keep it under review and modify it from time to time.
- 1.3 Tenancy Strategies provide local housing authorities and Registered Providers (RP's) flexibility in the types of tenancy they grant, including the use of flexible tenancies that are issued for a fixed period of time.
- 1.4 Flexible tenancies allow RP's the choice of providing a tenancy for a fixed number of years, normally five, rather than a secure tenancy for life. They also enable RP's to set rents at 80% of the open market rent level, increasing their income for investment in future affordable housing schemes.
- 1.5 Swale's Tenancy Strategy requires RP's operating in Swale to:
 - Have regard to Swale's Tenancy Strategy when formulating their own tenancy policies;
 - Ensure they meet affordable housing need and make the best use of available homes;
 - Provide flexible tenancies with a normal minimum duration of 5 years;
 - Grant lifetime tenancies to households whose circumstances are unlikely to change over time;

- Review each fixed term tenancy 6 months before it is due to end to decide whether it should be renewed, and if not work closely with the Local Authority to look at alternative housing options; and
 - Ensure flexibility is in place to charge rents of up to 80% of local market rents for new homes and a proportion of re-lets.
- 1.6 The Tenancy Strategy outlines the approach needed to ensure that Swale Borough Council continues to influence RP partners operating in the Borough, to meet local need and make the best use of social homes within the Borough.

2. Background

- 2.1 The purpose of the Tenancy Strategy is to provide clear guidance to RPs in developing their tenancy policies to ensure effective management of affordable housing to meet local need.
- 2.2 The Localism Act 2011 allows RPs to grant flexible tenancies for a fixed period of time to new tenants. The length of tenancy ranges from two years, but with five years or more being the recommended and normal term. Flexible tenancies are reviewed at the end of the fixed period, and can be terminated if the tenant no longer needs affordable housing. Assured tenancies, also known as lifetime tenancies, can still be issued in exceptional circumstances, for example to those over the age of 65 years.
- 2.3 RPs can charge rents of up to 80% of local market rents, but only on new build affordable homes delivered using Government grant, or on re-lets to new social housing tenants. Affordable rent tenure (ART) homes ensure that public subsidy is used in the best possible way and enables additional rent paid to be put back into the delivery of new build affordable homes in the future.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 To approve the Refreshed Tenancy Strategy.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 To not approve the Refreshed Tenancy Strategy. This is not recommended because it will delay publication resulting in Swale breaching the statutory duties.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Full public consultation is being carried out for an eight week period, and is available on the Council's website until the 23rd March. The link for the consultation has also been sent via email to all RPs that operate within Swale.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>A borough to be proud of The continuation of fixed term tenancies aims to encourage tenants into work, taking on more responsibility to ensure their homes are maintained to a good standard and their rent is paid. Lifetime tenancies will continue to be available to those with greater vulnerabilities to ensure protection and sustainment with their housing.</p> <p>A community to be proud of The tenancy strategy supports measures to tackle the gap between supply and demand of affordable homes, whilst ensuring Registered Providers continue to make best use of existing housing stock for those most in need.</p> <p>A council to be proud of The variety of tenancies available will encourage work and mobility, and enable affordable housing to be utilised more effectively across all sectors.</p>
Financial, Resource and Property	None.
Legal and Statutory	The tenancy strategy is a legal requirement of the Localism Act 2011 Part 7. Section 150 states that each local housing authority must publish a tenancy strategy setting out the matters to which Registered Housing Providers of the local area must have regard to when formulating policies.
Crime and Disorder	The proposals should encourage balanced and sustainable communities which will have a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Environmental Sustainability	Flexible tenancies and the affordable rent model, enables the opportunity to increase affordable housing supply in the Borough.
Health and Wellbeing	The requirement to review flexible tenancies and encourage tenants into work will have positive health and wellbeing impacts.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	There are no identified risks or health and safety implications.
Equality and Diversity	Affordable rent, flexible and fixed term social housing tenancies are available to vulnerable households most in housing need.
Privacy and Data Protection	Any personal information held as part of this programme will be protected from unauthorised access or disclosure.

7 Appendices

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

Appendix I: Refreshed Tenancy Strategy document

8 Background Papers

8.1 None

Swale Borough Council

Tenancy Strategy

DRAFT

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Swale Borough Council Tenancy Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to develop a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers (RPs) in developing tenancy policies for their own stock and it also requires RPs to have regard to the strategy. This is in regards to the Affordable Rent tenancy which enables affordable tenancies to be granted on fixed terms with rents charged at up to 80% of local market rents.
- 1.2 Flexible tenancies are for a minimum fixed term of two years and represent a move away from life-long social housing tenancies, to tenancies for the period of need. This supports the Government's aim that social housing should be used as a vehicle for progression and mobility.
- 1.3 Swale Borough Council recognises the valuable role RPs play in helping to meet housing need. Ideally Swale would like to see a harmonised set of rent levels, tenancy terms and renewal policies across Swale, which are easy to explain to customers and best respond to local needs. It is recognised however, that RPs are independent organisations working across borough boundaries, therefore this strategy sets out broad principles it expects RPs to have regard to, rather than a detailed set of policies.

2. Regulatory Requirements

- 2.1 It is a regulatory requirement that RPs let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way, taking account of the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. They need to demonstrate how their lettings:
 - make the best use of available housing;
 - are compatible with the purpose of the housing; and
 - contribute to local authorities' strategic housing function and sustainable communities, including the use of local lettings plans specifically in rural parishes to meet local need.
- 2.2 The regulator also requires that RPs publish clear and accessible policies which set out how long tenancies are for, when they will be renewed, the approach to management, including interventions to sustain tenancies and prevent unnecessary evictions, and tackling tenancy fraud.
- 2.3 In developing their policies RPs are expected to engage and consult with Swale Borough Council to ensure their policies are in line with the principles of Swale's Tenancy Strategy and to also engage with residents and stakeholders alike.

3. Local Context

- 3.1 Swale is a diverse Borough with a mix of rural and urban housing markets. Private sector rental costs remain relatively low compared to some other areas within Kent, but are still significantly above Local Housing Allowance Levels and unaffordable to many residents.
- 3.2 Swale has a growing population (145,000 people in total) and number of households, with increasing demand for new homes, jobs and services. Population growth is forecast to continue over the coming years.
- 3.3 Levels of deprivation vary substantially across Swale. Overall, based on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation, Swale is the third most deprived district in Kent.
- 3.4 The supply of affordable housing is limited and due to the economic climate delivery of new affordable housing remains low and is falling short of need.
- 3.5 The main issues that Swale faces are:
- Significant mismatch between affordable housing supply and demand
 - Difficulties in developing new affordable housing due to financial viability
 - Areas of deprivation in certain wards with high levels of unemployment
 - High level of benefit recipients in private sector and social housing
 - Increasing levels of homelessness
 - Reduced availability of affordable private rented sector homes

4. Affordable Housing in Swale

- 4.1 The government defines affordable housing in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) as social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households (whose needs cannot be met through the open market at a cost low enough for them to afford) with the provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or include a condition for any subsidy to be recycled for the provision of supplementary affordable housing if it ceases to remain affordable.
- 4.2 In 1990 Swale Borough Council transferred all Council homes to Swale Housing Association, who are now operating as Optivo and continue to be the largest affordable housing provider in Swale with around 7000 general needs, supported and older person's homes in the Borough. There are around 8800 affordable homes in the Borough, and over 1000 'live' households on the Council's housing register. 405 households were housed from Swale's housing register in 2016/17 and 144 new affordable homes were delivered across the Borough in 2016-17

4.3 The following table demonstrates Swale’s average market rent levels in the private sector, against those of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and new affordable rent levels set at the maximum level of 80% of open market rent.

Unit size	LHA Weekly Level	Average Weekly Market Rent	Affordable Weekly Rent Level (at 80% of Market Rent)
1 bed	£115.06	£137.84	£110.27
2 bed	£143.66	£186.33	£149.06
3 bed	£162.16	£239.97	£191.98

Based on: Zoopla.co.uk May 2016

Average rent based on available properties across Swale.

Average LHA records July 2016

5. Objectives of the Tenancy Strategy

5.1 Swale’s Tenancy Strategy aims to:

- **Protect and provide stability for vulnerable people** – social housing is an essential and valuable resource for vulnerable people, this may be for life or for a period when needed
- **Promote economic activity and not disincentivise work** – the Council believes tenancy policies should encourage work and mobility
- **Make the best use of the stock** – social housing supply in Swale can never keep pace with demand and there are limited opportunities to develop new homes. There is a clear need to make the best use of the housing stock for those that most need it
- **Be fair and not ‘over subsidise’ households that don’t need it** – social housing should not necessarily be a life tenure and those that can afford alternatives should pay more rent, or consider other options so others can benefit
- **Be relatively simple to understand, administer and communicate** – the benefits of having greater flexibility over the stock should not be outweighed by the cost of administration. Simple policies which are not overly bureaucratic are supported
- **Ensure those in most need are housed** - the Council believes that local people prioritised through Swale’s allocations policy should benefit from affordable housing. Affordable homes should not be let to households without this defined need.

6. Tenancy Terms

6.1 Tenancy policies

6.1.1 Affordable housing no longer has to be let as a life-long tenancy and instead RP’s can choose to let a property on a fixed term tenancy. There are now a range of options available when issuing such tenancies in addition to the periodic (lifetime) tenancies traditionally issued. The minimum tenancy term that can be offered is 2 years but government has indicated that this should

only be used in exceptional circumstances and that it would expect the normal minimum duration to be 5 years.

6.1.2 The Council expects that every landlord managing social housing within the Borough will publish a clear and transparent Tenancy Policy which should cover:

- The types of tenancies they will grant
- Where they grant tenancies for a fixed term, the length of those terms
- The circumstances under which they will grant tenancies of a particular type
- The circumstances under which a tenancy may or may not be reissued at the end of the fixed term, in the same property or in a different property
- The way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may appeal or complain about the length of fixed term tenancy offered and the type of tenancy offered, and against a decision not to grant another tenancy on expiry of the fixed term
- Their policy on taking into account the needs of those who are vulnerable, by reason of age, disability or illness, and households with children, including through tenancies which provide a reasonable degree of stability
- The advice and assistance they will give to tenants on finding alternative accommodation in the event they decide not to grant a further tenancy.

6.1.3 The Council expects that in instances whereby a property has been adapted to meet the specific needs of a household member and is no longer required, RP's will put in place the appropriate measures to facilitate a move to an alternative suitable property that meets the current needs of the household. The Council also requires RP's to re-let any properties that are adapted to households that best match the adaptations within the property.

7. Swale's Strategic Position

7.1 Introductory/Starter tenancies

7.1.1 Swale Borough Council supports the use of 1 year introductory or probationary tenancies followed by fixed term tenancies. Fixed term tenancies provide a way of making the best use of limited stock and linking tenancy renewal to behaviour and responsibilities.

7.1.2 It is desirable that all new social tenancies across the Borough are on similar fixed terms, rather than there being a hierarchy of tenancies which are difficult to explain to customers.

7.2 Fixed term tenancies

7.2.1 Two year tenancies should only be issued in exceptional circumstances for example where there is a strong likelihood that the tenant will only require the tenancy for a short duration or where the property is only available for a short, fixed term.

7.2.2 The Council believes that the normal minimum tenancy term that should be provided by RP's in Swale is 5 years. The use of short fixed term tenancies may result in increased costs for housing providers due to additional administration related to tenancy reviews and increased voids and it therefore recognises that providers may want to minimize this by offering longer tenancies. However, this needs to be balanced against the need to make best use of the housing stock and the Council would expect the rationale for adopting a particular approach to be clearly set out in tenancy policies.

7.2.3 RP's are expected to monitor the impact of fixed term tenancies on local communities and to identify to the Council any potential situations where their use appears to be having a detrimental impact on the sustainability and cohesiveness of a particular community. The Council will be prepared to consider the implementation of an agreed localised lettings plan to address any such issues

7.3 Lifetime tenancies

7.3.1 The provision of lifetime tenancies will be appropriate for some households. This includes households where the circumstances which led to them being granted a tenancy are unlikely to change over time. Examples include people with long term health conditions, a learning difficulty and older people living in specially designated housing such as sheltered housing and extra care housing.

7.4 Circumstances when a different type of tenancy can be granted

7.4.1 Tenancy Policies developed by RP's should clearly set out the circumstances under which different types of tenancy are to be granted and must clearly support the strategic objectives of this Strategy. Tenancy Policies should be reviewed on a regular basis and must meet the requirements of national tenancy standards produced by the relevant regulator.

7.5 Tenancy renewal and advice and assistance

7.5.1 Whether a tenant will be able to remain in social housing at the end of the fixed tenancy will depend on the landlord's tenancy policy. RP's are expected to review a fixed term tenancy six months before it is due to end to decide whether it should be renewed and must publish clear guidance on the process and assessment criteria to be used in deciding if the tenancy should be renewed.

7.5.2 The procedure for RP's who decide not to grant another tenancy at the end of the fixed term is set out in the Localism Act. A court can only refuse possession if the correct procedure has not been followed by the landlord or if the court is satisfied that the decision not to grant another tenancy was otherwise 'wrong in law'.

- 7.5.3 It is essential that RPs clearly communicate renewal terms to new tenants when they are offered fixed term tenancies so they understand that in most circumstances tenancies will be renewed. This will help people, particularly those that are vulnerable, feel connected and settled and also able to contribute to their local areas and to invest in their homes.
- 7.5.4 Social housing also comes with responsibilities and there should be a link between expected behaviour and tenancy renewal which needs to be strongly communicated at the start of the tenancy.
- 7.5.5 The following principles are supported for tenancy renewal:
- The tenancy renewal meeting should be timed to give enough time to consider all the issues and for appeals to be made
 - It should be used as an opportunity to link the household to any necessary support including employment support
 - Tenancies should not be renewed if households are under occupying and alternatives should be offered to meet needs
 - Tenancies should not be renewed where there has been a serious and persistent breach of the tenancy agreement such as anti-social behaviour and criminality.
 - Before making the decision not to renew, the impact on wider family members needs to be taken into account along with the impact on the community and neighbours
 - Consideration should be given to not renewing tenancies where the tenant is not engaging in the review process, however any vulnerability issues need to be fully taken into account
 - Income and capital should be taken into account and other appropriate housing options discussed; such as intermediate housing, exercising the Right to Buy or other private alternatives.

7.6 Income and capital levels and renewal

- 7.6.1 Many households that have increased their incomes and levels of savings, will still need to remain in Swale for employment, family or having children at local schools, and may not be able to afford market or intermediate housing in the Borough to meet their needs. In circumstances where households with higher incomes and levels of capital are unable, or don't want to move, the Borough Council supports charging more rent (which would be reinvested back into social housing), rather than not renewing tenancies.
- 7.6.2 When calculating income and capital, the Borough Council supports taking all of the tenant's income into account plus that of household members, although it will need to be recognised that some young people will be saving to move on and live independently.

8. Succession

- 8.1 Fixed term tenancies provide the opportunity to make the best use of social housing for those that need it most. Only one right of succession to a spouse or partner is supported. It is acknowledged that some immediate family members of a deceased tenant would not be eligible for social housing in their own right, but may not have lived anywhere else.
- 8.2 In these circumstances, where the immediate family member has been part of the household for at least five years, Swale supports a discretionary succession into a property which meets their needs, for at least a 2 year non-renewable term. This will give them an opportunity to plan for alternative housing and some short term stability following bereavement, however, this decision ultimately rests with the RP's.

9. Appeals and Complaints

- 9.1 The regulator requires RPs to set out the way in which a tenant or prospective tenant may appeal against or complain about the length of the fixed term tenancy offered and the type of tenancy offered, and against a decision not to grant another tenancy on the expiry of the fixed term.
- 9.2 Swale Borough Council expects RP tenancy policies in this area to:
- Set out to whom appeals or reviews should be made (this is expected to be a more senior officer that wasn't involved in the original decision) and how they can be made
 - Give timescales for dealing with appeals or reviews
 - Set out how the tenant can take their appeal or review further if they are dissatisfied with the response i.e. to a tenant panel or Housing Ombudsman and where they may get independent advice
 - Be accessible and easily available i.e. published on websites/available in local offices.
 - The procedure by which a tenant may seek a review of a decision not to grant another tenancy is set out in secondary legislation (The Flexible Tenancies (Review Procedures) Regulations 2012).

10. Affordable Rented Housing

- 10.1 The Shared Ownership Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21 (SOAHP) funds the development of new shared ownership homes and some affordable rent tenure (ART) homes. ART enables RP's to charge rents of up to 80% of local market rents for new homes and a proportion of re-lets, but only where this is part of their agreement with government to build new homes. The ceiling of 80% is inclusive of service charges, and in Swale these rents should be set below the LHA rate.
- 10.2 Whenever an affordable rented home is let either by granting a new tenancy or renewing an existing one, providers are required to review the rent, to ensure that the rent remains no more than 80% of the relevant market rent.

10.3 The government's Affordable Rent policy objectives are:

- to maximise the delivery of new social housing, making the best possible use of constrained public subsidy and the existing social housing stock over the next Spending Review period, and matching delivery of new build to areas of housing need; and
- to provide an offer which is more diverse for the range of people accessing social housing, providing alternatives to traditional social rent and making the provision of social housing more flexible.

10.4 PPS 3 was revised on 9 June 2011 to include the following definition of Affordable Rent:

*“Affordable rented housing is:
Rented housing let by RP’s of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80 per cent of the local market rent.”*

10.5 The affordable rent model is intended to enable RP’s to secure additional financial capacity for the provision of new homes.

10.6 While initiatives aimed at increasing the supply of affordable homes are to be welcomed it is important that we ensure the flexibilities are used in a way that benefits our local communities.

10.7 It should also be noted that RP’s are free to undertake the delivery of other types of new social or market housing, funded entirely from their own resources, without entering into an agreement with the HCA (Homes and Communities Agency).

10.8 The Council expects RP’s to comply with the HCA Tenancy Standards and use a valuation of market rent in accordance with a RICS recognised method so as to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to the valuation of market rents.

11. Affordable Rent Implications

11.1 Affordable housing supply

11.1.1 The Council recognises that RP’s who build new social homes with grant assistance provided by the Homes & Communities Agency will be expected to let these homes at an affordable rent. However, they do have discretion over the number of existing homes that will be converted to affordable rent when they become available for re letting.

11.1.2 Affordable rented housing can have a role to play in meeting housing need within the borough but it is also important to ensure there is an adequate

supply of housing for those on the lowest incomes, who are unable to access market housing and may not have the funds to be able to access affordable rented housing.

11.1.3 The additional borrowing capacity RP's will benefit from via conversions to affordable rent and shared ownership should help to maintain the general supply of affordable homes but the Council is aware that this funding is not ring fenced for use in those areas where homes are converted. There has been a relatively low level of affordable housing delivery in the Borough in recent years a problem that has been exacerbated by housing market difficulties. Consequently, in order to give strategic housing support the Council would wish to see a commitment from RP's that a reasonable level of local reinvestment would occur.

11.2 Affordability

11.2.1 Evidence suggests that affordable rent levels in parts of Swale would fall at or below the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate and that the difference between an average Social rent and an average Affordable rent is likely to be lower than in many other local authority districts in Kent.

11.2.2 However, the Council recognises that market rent levels can vary significantly across the Borough and that in higher value areas, there is the possibility that the Affordable rent for some property types could exceed the LHA rate. Given these local market variations we would expect RP's to discuss development proposals with the Council at an early stage so that full consideration can be given to the potential impact of charging affordable rents on a scheme by scheme basis.

11.2.3 The Council's view is that wherever possible Affordable rent levels should be charged at the full 80% of market rent, for all general needs relets and new homes built, but in most circumstances should not exceed LHA rates.

11.2.4 The Welfare and Work Act 2016 requires registered providers of social housing in England to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year for 4 years frozen from a 2015 to 2016 baseline. For social rent properties, the reduction applies to the rent element and not to service charges, for most Affordable Rent properties; the reduction applies to the total amount, inclusive of service charges.

11.2.5 The need to provide access to affordable housing across the whole of the Borough is also an important consideration as far as the conversion of properties from social rent to affordable rent or shared ownership is concerned. each year for ten years.

11.2.6 RP's should notify the Council of their intentions of the level of rent they will charge when re-letting properties within the Borough. RP's should ensure that rent levels for properties are still accessible and can be let to those working on low wages in all areas, including rural.

11.3 House types

11.3.1 Evidence shows that the difference between social rent and affordable rent levels increase in accordance with the number of bedrooms and that in higher value areas, the conversion of affordable rent will cause affordability problems for households receiving housing benefit under the £20,000 per year family benefit cap. Consequently, the Council favours 4 bed houses remaining as social rent unless it can be clearly demonstrated that it will not have a detrimental impact on the availability and affordability of such homes for people in housing need.

11.4 Welfare reform

11.4.1 The Government is reforming welfare benefits through a universal credit system, housing benefit cap and reducing welfare benefits to some under occupying households. The Council therefore expects RP's to be mindful of the impact of these changes and the need to help under occupying tenants affected, move to smaller housing where they wish to do so.

11.5 Lettings

11.5.1 The Council expects that affordable rent properties will be allocated in the same way that social rent properties are now, through Kent Home Choice. The existing regulatory obligation on providers to co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing function on the allocation of social rent properties will also apply to Affordable Rent. Similarly existing lettings arrangements operated by local authorities and housing associations should continue to apply and we expect that Affordable Rent properties will be made available through choice-based lettings.

11.6 Mobility

11.6.1 The Council recognises that the tenancy rights protection given to tenants looking to transfer to another social rent property does not apply to affordable rent properties and that this has the potential to discourage tenant mobility. We therefore believe that landlords should offer transferring tenants the same type of tenancy they already have although at the higher affordable rent level.

12. Equalities

12.1 The public sector equalities duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies in exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** – i.e. harassment, victimisation
- **Advance equality of opportunity** – between people that share protected characteristics and those that do not

- **Foster good relations** – between people that share protected characteristics and those that do not.
- 12.2 People have protected characteristics due to; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 12.3 As determined by case law the duty applies to RPs when carrying out public functions. It is likely that most RPs are carrying out public functions in rent setting, managing and terminating social housing tenancies.
- 12.4 Equalities Impact Assessments on tenancy policies are considered the best way of demonstrating due regard.

13. Monitoring and Review

- 13.1 The Council will monitor and review the Tenancy Strategy as necessary to ensure that it continues to have regard to the Council's allocations policy and Housing and Homelessness Strategy

The Council will monitor:

- The number of under occupying households re housed via the Housing register
 - The number of homeless households re housed in the private sector via the governments annual return
 - Percentage of new homes let at affordable rent
- 13.2 It will also consider changes in market conditions and the impact this may have on affordable rent levels and housing affordability as well as the impact of welfare benefit changes, particularly housing benefit.
- 13.3 This monitoring and review will inform future changes to the strategy and we will expect registered housing providers to assist with this process by providing statistical information when requested.

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Policy and Development Review Committee
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Meeting Date	13 February 2018
Report Title	Draft Open Spaces & Play Strategy 2017-2022
Cabinet Member	CLr David Simmons, Cabinet Member for Environment and Rural Affairs
SMT Lead	Mark Radford
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell
Lead Officer	Mike Marsh
Recommendations	1. That Policy and Development Review Committee consider the draft Open Spaces & Play Strategy 2017-2022 to be submitted to Cabinet on the 30 May 2018.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Open Spaces and Play Strategy 2017-2022 (hereafter ‘the Strategy’) has been prepared to:
- Provide a sound body of evidence for supporting open space policies within the Local Plan.
 - Identify key opportunities and strategic imperatives, plan for the delivery of improvements to existing open spaces for the next five years and introduce a policy of declining adoption of new open spaces triggered by development.
 - Provide a working document that sets standards for open space provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 1.2 This report sets out the processes undertaken to arrive at this final draft and what happens next.

2 Background

- 2.1 The draft Strategy (see Appendix I) focuses on what is important for Swale’s Open Space provision for the next 5 years, in consideration of previous studies and strategies, recent audits and the recently adopted Swale Borough Local Plan (2017). Cabinet noted the draft strategy and the covering report at its meeting in October 2017 and agreed the draft to go out for consultation.
- 2.2 To identify the Borough’s future needs and assess the quality and quantity of current open space and play areas, two technical assessment reports were commissioned from consultants, Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd who visited every site in the Borough and worked with Leisure and Planning officers to compile the final reports.

- 2.3 The first report addressed what open space provision exists in the Borough, its condition, distribution and overall quality by using standard assessment methodology developed for Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17), aligned with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 2.4 The second report aggregated the open space audit results and summarised the information by typology, identifying deficiencies by quality and value to enable a grading assessment for each open space as high, adequate or low. It also considered previous audits, studies and reviews such as the Open Space Study 2008 and the Play Review.
- 2.5 Leisure and Planning officers then pulled these findings and information together to form the draft Strategy and combining the 2 assessment report into 1 technical document.
- 2.6 The Strategy is structured in a way that contains an 'overarching vision', a set of 'recommendations' on what should be done and then an 'action plan' stating how we will achieve this. The vision is to;
1. Protect the Council's existing open space network
 2. Provide spaces to encourage a healthy community
 3. Focus on enhancing/improving the quality of the key open spaces
 4. Promote the benefits open space and wildlife has for people living and visiting Swale.
- 2.7 The draft strategy identifies the Council's financial constraints and is addressed in a number of the draft policies and recommendations that allow us to effectively cap expenditure for managing existing provision, where possible reduce open space provision that is of low quality and low value and decline proposals for the Council to adopt new open spaces.
- 2.8 The key conclusions are:
- There is sufficient provision of Council owned and managed open spaces across the seven open space typologies for the current population, with the exception of cemetery capacity.
 - The focus for the next five years is on enhancing the quality of existing open spaces that were assessed as low quality but provide high value to the community, with particular attention to play areas where 1 in 3 of all Council current play areas are of low quality.
 - A rolling programme to refurbish a number of play areas during the life of the strategy.
 - To invest at least £100,000 per year for 5 years on other existing open spaces through section 106 developer contributions held in reserves, supplemented where possible by securing grant funding.
 - A small number of sites that were assessed of being low quality and low value should be considered as redundant and disposed of or repurposed using the standard assessment, proximity to other sites and nationally recognised criteria

- The provision of new spaces associated with development/housing sites as set out in the Local Plan will address the expected demand for the next five years.
- Additional public space provision associated with new developments across the Borough will not be adopted by the Council for ongoing maintenance and management, unless there is an overwhelming case to provide a strategic new open space or the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity.
- Developers will be responsible for funding the required open space provision related to future new development and put in place arrangements for funding the ongoing maintenance of the open space

2.9 These proposals are embodied in seven recommendations (a-g) as set out in of the draft strategy section 2.4 'Open Space Assessment Recommendations' and the supporting strategy action plan in section 2.5

3 Proposal

1.1 Committee members discuss and note the Draft Open Spaces and Play Strategy 2017-2022 including its assessment recommendations:

- a) *Ensure low quality sites with a high community value are prioritised for future enhancement.*
- b) *Ensure all sites assessed as high for quality and value are protected.*
- c) *Destination (Strategic) sites should be recognised through protection and enhancement.*
- d) *Recognise types of open space that are surplus to requirements and/or those of low quality and value and determine their future use using the criteria set out in the technical assessment data and national standards.*
- e) *The need for additional cemetery provision should be led by demand rather than population calculations.*
- f) *The Council will no longer adopt future open spaces from developers and organisations unless there is an overwhelming case to provide a strategic new open space or the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity.*
- g) *Promote alternative future management arrangements for open spaces*

- 1.2 Cabinet in October 2017, noted the Draft Open Spaces and Play Strategy 2017-2022 and approved the draft to go out for final consultation as detailed in the report, ahead of coming back for final adoption at Cabinet.
- 1.3 That the financial implications of the Strategy as set out in Section 3 in the strategy, be considered as part of the Council's overall Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Budget proposals, against the total available resources.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Members could choose not to have a Strategy. This is not a feasible way forward as to do so would mean that challenges could be made against the decisions of the planning committee and the Local Plan could be called into question. In turn this would reduce the possibility of securing developer contributions.
- 4.2 We could continue with the current out of date strategy. This would also open the Council up to challenge, given the Local Plan is required to be based on robust and up to date evidence bases.
- 4.3 The Council could consider a radical approach to generate ongoing revenue savings and possible one off capital receipts by heavily reducing the current open space provision through closure and disposal and a reduction in the overall level of maintenance undertaken. The recent Government review of Parks highlighted the fundamental role they play in building communities so this option would appear to contradict that and our Corporate plan.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Following Cabinet's consideration of the draft strategy, the document will be published on the Council's website in late February for a period of six weeks and comments and written submissions invited from ward Councillors, town and parish councils, residents and relevant agencies via an online survey
- 5.2 The final strategy will be adopted by Cabinet at its meeting on the 30th May reflecting the range of comments received.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	<p>Priority Theme One: A Borough To Be Proud of A borough which is noticeably clean and well maintained, in which the natural and built environments are respected, conserved, and enhanced for future generations. Facilities for residents and visitors alike.</p> <p>Priority Theme Two: A Community to be Proud of A community in which everyone plays their part in maintaining their own physical</p>

	and mental wellbeing through healthy lifestyle choices, but where people have easy access to world-class healthcare when things go wrong												
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The Grounds Maintenance Contract value for 2017/18 is £1,231,991.64 and is the main expenditure relating to maintaining the open spaces. The open spaces budget also covers the staffing required to manage the service and on-going investment and totals £496,880 for 2017-18.</p> <p>The table below shows a five year financial plan to fund improvements in open spaces utilising section 106 developer contributions</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>year</th> <th>2018/19</th> <th>2019/20</th> <th>2020/21</th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Open Spaces Capital Cost (justification of this investment as detailed in strategy section 3)</td> <td>£100,000</td> <td>£100,000</td> <td>£100,000</td> <td>£100,000</td> <td>£100,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Capital improvements for play areas will be put forward as part of the annual budget setting process.</p> <p>The proposals in the strategy will be managed within the existing staff resource as the current Transformation work across the Leisure team is expected to generate service efficiencies which will absorb work relating to the proposed play area improvements programme.</p>	year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Open Spaces Capital Cost (justification of this investment as detailed in strategy section 3)	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
year	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23								
Open Spaces Capital Cost (justification of this investment as detailed in strategy section 3)	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000								
Legal and Statutory	<p>The provision of Parks and open spaces is not a statutory function but the service helps to contribute to many other statutory functions.</p> <p>The Local Plan is a statutory document covered by The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (and subsequent revisions). The Open Spaces and Play Strategy provides an important evidence base for the Local Plan on which planning decisions are made.</p>												
Crime and Disorder	Open spaces and the assets within them are increasingly susceptible to vandalism adding to the annual maintenance costs. Improving quality and encouraging community ownership of these spaces through volunteering will help to reduce this.												
Environmental Sustainability	<p>Allotments provide production of local produce reducing food air miles.</p> <p>The Strategy encourages important habitat and biodiversity. Open Spaces and woodland reduce CO2 emissions and are particularly important for protected species including migrating birds.</p>												
Health and Wellbeing	The provision of open spaces provides proven health benefits for both physical and mental well-being. There are a wide array of community groups accessing open spaces such as sports and recreation facilities, outdoor gyms, multi-use games areas												
Risk	The Council is required to meet its obligations on Health and Safety. Insurance												

Management and Health and Safety	claims relating to trips and falls in open spaces or accidents relating to faulty play equipment would be at risk of increasing if we reduced maintenance or left sites to decline in quality.
Equality and Diversity	The Strategy aims to provide facilities for all residents in the Borough. Improving the variety and quality of open spaces will allow more people to use them. This is a general high-level strategy rather than a detailed assessment of the ongoing value of any individual site. While there could be potential for different impacts on groups with different personal characteristics, the lack of specificity at this stage makes a general equality impact assessment inappropriate. However, any individual decisions to reduce or remove open spaces/play areas will have equality considerations, including individual equality impact assessments, built into the decision-making process.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications at this stage

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I: *Draft Open Spaces and Play Strategy 2017-2022*

8 Background Papers

n/a

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OPEN SPACES & PLAY STRATEGY 2017 – 2022

CONSULTATION DRAFT

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OPEN SPACES & PLAY STRATEGY 2017 -2022

DRAFT (The Strategy)

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Foreword:

I am pleased to present the revised Open Spaces and Play Strategy for the Borough of Swale.

The Strategy shows how the Council, with the support of partners and residents, will protect, enhance and maintain our fantastic open space assets over the next five years.

The Strategy is the culmination of a range of inspections and assessments undertaken over the last year. It provides an important evidence base and sets out how we will make decisions on our open spaces sites. It supports the Swale Local Plan: Bearing Fruits 2031 and helps to ensure we have enough spaces and that the quality is maintained.

Formal parks and gardens, informal residential open spaces, playgrounds, allotments, coast line and other natural habitats play an important role in a community and can greatly benefit the health and well-being of the population. They provide opportunities for formal sport, play or simply a place to meet with friends and neighbours.

I would like to send special thanks to the many people who volunteer in our open spaces to provide activities or to help keep them looking good.

Councillor David Simmons.
Cabinet Portfolio Holder Environmental and Rural Affairs

Section 1: Introduction and Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

The strategy is for the borough of Swale. It was prepared in 2017 and sets out how the Council plans to protect, manage and enhance its open spaces over a five year period.

The strategy will be reviewed annually and updated every five years to harmonise with Local Plan revisions. The strategy has been prepared by Swale Borough Council with technical assistance from Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd in preparing the space audit and assessment.

1.2 Definition of Open Space

The principle of public access lies at the heart of this emerging open space strategy. Therefore, for the purpose of this strategy, open space is defined as:

Public open space which provides:

- generally unlimited free public access;
- genuinely useable open space for people; and
- Accessibility over the great majority of the open space.

This strategy does not include open space which is provided as private or paid for provision, e.g. playing fields within school grounds, golf courses and private estate gardens. It also does not include incidental areas, such as verges or streets (unless defined as part of a civic open space or other typologies below) or areas of land with the sole purpose of protection of wildlife without public access.

1.3 Typologies of Open Space

The use of the term ‘open space’ is generic; in reality it covers a range of types. For the purpose of this strategy and for the completed audit of the existing Council owned open space, the following typologies have been defined by the primary use:

Typology	Description	Example
Parks and Gardens	Large areas of open space, the majority of which will be publically accessible, close to public transport links and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. These open spaces may also include areas for water recreation	King Georges Playing Field Sittingbourne
Natural / Semi-natural Greenspace	Informal and natural green space provides the opportunity to promote meaningful and safe recreation. This open space typology covers a wide range of uses, including woodland areas, wetland areas, heath-land Meadow and water recreation spaces	Milton Creek Country Park
Green Corridors	Relatively continuous areas of ‘The Green Open Spaces’ leading through the Swale area which may include spaces of water recreation.	Mid Kent Downs
Outdoor Sports & Playing pitches	Outdoor sports space includes all formally laid out sport and playing pitches for a number of different sporting activities (including rugby, football, netball, hockey, tennis and basketball). This does not include indoor sports provision or facilities.	King Georges Playing Field Faversham
General Amenity greenspace	Most commonly (but not exclusively) in residential areas including informal recreation spaces, green space in and around housing, village greens. This may also include areas for water recreation.	Village Green Bapchild
Play areas	This covers provision for children and teenagers, and includes play areas, skateboard parks, MUGA’s, and other more informal areas (for example teenage	Thistle Hill Play Area

	shelters, kick walls). This typology typically sits within other open space typologies such as General Amenity or Strategic Parks.	
Cemeteries, closed church yards and other burial grounds	Publically accessible cemeteries, churchyards and closed churchyards /cemeteries.	Faversham Cemetery

These categories are not always mutually exclusive. For example, a Green Corridor can contain informal kick about and play space and most typologies can contain significant provision for wildlife.

1.4 Executive Summary

Open Spaces enrich the quality of our lives and contribute towards healthy living. They help define and add to the character of a place as well as provide vital green infrastructure for wildlife, biodiversity, water, tranquillity, recreation, play, food production and off road pedestrian and cycling routes.

Swale’s stunning and distinctive environment is one of the Borough’s greatest assets. It includes an outstanding range of internationally and nationally important landscapes, focusing on the extensive grazing marshes, mudflats and saltmarshes of the Swale estuary, but also including wetlands, chalk downland and ancient woodland.

Swale currently enjoys a wide range of Open Spaces across its urban, rural and coastal environment. It has the benefit of existing wildlife sites, protected landscapes and a network of accessible countryside. It also has the benefit of having many organisations and groups of people active in the community who take great interest in their current and future local environment.

This Strategy attempts to focus on what’s important for Swale’s Open Space provision for the next 5 years in consideration of previous studies and strategies, recent audits, consultation and the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan (2017).

The key conclusions and proposals are:

- There is sufficient provision of Council owned and managed open spaces across the seven open space typologies for the current population, with the exception of cemetery capacity.
- The focus for the next five years is on enhancing the quality of existing open spaces that were assessed as low quality, with particular attention to play areas where 1 in 3 of all Council current play areas are of low quality.
- A rolling programme to refurbish a number of play areas during the life of the strategy.

- To invest at least £100,000 per year for 5 years on existing open spaces through section 106 developer contributions held in reserves supplemented where possible by securing grant funding.
- A small number of sites that were assessed of being low quality and low value should be considered as redundant and disposed of or repurposed, using the standard assessment and nationally recognised criteria.
- The provision of new spaces associated with development/housing sites as set out in the Local Plan will address the expected demand for the next five years.
- Additional public space provision associated with new developments across the Borough will not be adopted by the Council for ongoing maintenance and management, unless there is an overwhelming case to provide a strategic new open space or the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity.
- Developers will be responsible for funding the required open space provision related to future new development and put in place arrangements for funding the ongoing maintenance of the open space

1.5 Purpose

The strategy has been prepared to:

- Provide a sound body of evidence for supporting open space policies within the Local Plan;
- Identify key opportunities and strategic imperatives, plan for the delivery of improvements to existing open spaces and new open spaces triggered by development; and
- Provide a working document that sets standards for open space provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility, and a process for regular and future review.

1.6 Vision

The strategy is seen as a continuation of the good work prepared and being implemented by many organisations and individuals across the Borough. It is aimed to give a strategic and policy direction in relation to Public Open Space provision against predicted population growth.

The overarching vision of the strategy and its recommendations follow 4 guiding principles:

1. Protect the Council's existing open space network
2. Provide spaces to encourage a healthy community
3. Focus on enhancing/improving the quality of key open spaces
4. Promote the benefits open space has for people living and visiting Swale and enriching the biodiversity for wildlife.

1.7 National Planning Policy for open spaces.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012

The NPPF set out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these are expected to be applied. In relation to the provision of public open space the NPPF states:

"...The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities..."¹ and that "Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities."²

Planning policies and decisions should promote:

"safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas."³

And the NPPF requires that:

"Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision are required."

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss."⁴

The NPPF also make specific reference to biodiversity and geodiversity:

¹ National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 69

² National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 73

³ National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 69

⁴ National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 73-74

“To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:

- plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;
- identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;
- promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
- aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests; and
- where Nature Improvement Areas are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.”⁵

The NPPF also details “three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental”⁶. These dimensions have provided a framework and shaped the approach to assessing public open space.

PPG17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

This document, which was current at the time of the preparation of the Swale Borough Council Local Plan 2000, has now been replaced by the NPPF. However, the specific requirement of PPG17 for an open space audit is considered good practice by the borough Council. A new open space audit has therefore been undertaken to accompany this strategy and to inform the planning of the Council’s priorities for management of its existing open spaces. The approach of the audit has considered guidelines and recommendations within PPG17.

Accessible Natural Green Space Guidance NE265, Natural England 2011

NE265 is the latest review of work begun by Natural England in the early 1990s to establish standards for accessible natural green space. The Guidance retains Natural England’s existing Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt). The standards are non-statutory but are very widely accepted as representing an ideal quantitative and qualitative standard which should be used to inform the provision of natural open space in new developments and the management of existing open space.

The Strategy will have due regard for the guidance and will achieve access to natural green space in new residential areas through the provision of an extended green corridor network which will provide small natural areas close to homes and off-road connections to larger natural green spaces

⁵ National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 117

⁶ National Planning Policy Framework – Promoting healthy communities, 7

1.8 Swale Strategic Context

This Strategy supports the aims of the Swale Corporate Plan 2015-2018 with links to each of the three priorities – A Borough to Be Proud of, A community to be Proud of and a Council to be Proud of.

The Strategy (and supporting technical assessment) will provide an evidence base for open space policy within the Swale Borough Local Plan 2031.

The Open Space and Play Strategy is informed by the Playing Pitch Strategy 2016 - 2026 and previous Play Strategy of 2007-2012. There are two action plans addressing the local natural environment and biodiversity: Swale Green Grid Framework 2016¹ and the Biodiversity Action Plan 2016.



1. Green Grid is a strategic, joined up approach to land management. It focuses on the relationship between green spaces and the communities they serve and aims to maximise the potential multi-functional benefits of a well-designed public realm.

1.9 Local Plan

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017

Bearing Fruits 2031, The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017, is the most important planning document for the borough, setting out the vision and overall development strategy for the area and how it will be achieved for the period from 2014-2031. It identifies where development will take place and how the natural environment and built heritage of the borough will be protected and enhanced.

It allocates major sites and locations for housing and employment to meet the needs of our growing population and in accordance with national planning policy and practice.

There are a number of policies which relate to the protection and future provision of sport and open space. These include Policy CP5: Health and Wellbeing, Policy CP7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure, Policy DM17: Open Space, Sports and Recreation provision and Policy DM18: Local Green Spaces as set out below:

Policy CP 7

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure

The Council will work with partners and developers to ensure the protection, enhancement and delivery, as appropriate, of the Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and its associated strategy

Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Recognise and value ecosystems for the wider services they provide, such as for food, water, flood mitigation, disease control, recreation, health and well-being;
2. Protect the integrity of the existing green infrastructure network as illustrated by the Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy Map, having regard to the status of those designated for their importance as set out by Policy DM25 and Policy DM29;
3. Where assessment indicates that it is necessary to enhance and extend the network (including when management, mitigation and/or compensatory actions are required to address adverse harm), be guided by the Green Infrastructure Network and Strategy Map, prioritising actions toward identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas;
4. Ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plan and projects, as it would not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of this Local Plan;
5. Require the completion of project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment, in accordance with Policy DM28, to ensure there are no likely significant effects upon any European designated site.

For residential sites within 6km of an access point to any of the North Kent Marshes, development must contribute to its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring

Strategy;

6. Contribute to the objectives of the Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas in Kent;

7. Make the enhancement of biodiversity and landscape as their primary purpose;

8. Promote the expansion of Swale's natural assets and green infrastructure, including within new and existing developments, by:

a. delivering a high standard of design quality to maximise the social, economic, health and environmental benefits of green infrastructure;

b. providing a focus for social inclusion, community development and lifelong learning;

c. taking into account the guidelines and recommendations of relevant management plans and guidance, Biodiversity Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents;

d. contributing to the protection, conservation and management of historic landscapes, archaeological and built heritage assets;

e. achieving, where possible, a net gain of biodiversity;

f. providing new recreational facilities in accordance with Policy DM17, exploiting opportunities to link urban and countryside areas and to create new footpath and cycle links;

g. taking account of and integrating with natural processes, such as flood risk and utilising sustainable urban drainage; and

h. including proposals to 'green' existing and proposed developed areas by increasing opportunities for nature in domestic gardens, streets and buildings, including street trees and in and around formal open spaces and sports provision.

Policy DM 18

Local green spaces

Sites are designated as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the Proposals Map. Within designated Local Green Spaces planning permission will not be granted other than for:

1. The construction of a new building for one of the following purposes: essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, cemeteries, allotment use, or other uses of land where preserving the openness of the Local Green Space and not conflicting with its purpose;

2. The re-use or replacement of an existing building, provided the re-use does not include any associated uses of land around the building which might conflict with the openness of the Local Green Space or the purposes of including land within it; and

3. The carrying out of an engineering or other operation or the making of any material change of use of land, provided that it maintains the openness and character of the Local Green Space.

Local Plan Review

An early review for the Local Plan was acknowledged as necessary by the Inspector. This is partly as a result of Kent County Council Highways concerns over the local highway network capacity to accommodate growth to 2031. The timescale the Inspector has recommended for adoption of a review is April 2022. This would require a quick update to this Open Spaces Strategy to ensure any needs arising out of new housing allocations will be highlighted through the Local Plan review process.

BIRDS (Known as Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy)

Local Authorities across North Kent have joined Natural England and other agencies and organisations within the North Kent Environment Planning Group to identify the impacts of recreational disturbance on SPA birds. Designated European Wildlife Sites in North Kent include three Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites: the Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site, the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar Site, and the Swale SPA and Ramsar Site.

There has been a decline in the number of birds using these sites in recent years. Studies show that this could be due to people using the estuary and marshes for recreation purposes. The [North Kent Bird Disturbance Report](#) concludes that all new housing development within 6km of the North Kent Ramsar Sites or Special Protection Areas (including the Thames Estuary and Marshes) and larger housing development beyond 6km from the sites could have an adverse impact on them. This is because new housing development is likely to lead to further increases in recreational use of the sites which means that further declines in the bird population cannot be ruled out. Possible mitigation measures are set out in the [Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy](#). Having considered a number of options, North Kent Planning Authorities have imposed a tariff on new housing development. The money raised will be used to pay for schemes to avoid the adverse impacts of new housing development on the birds.

1.10 Local Green Spaces

The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should be able to identify Local Green Spaces for special protection. By designating these spaces the Council will be able to protect them from development and ensure their retention for enjoyment by the local community. It explains that spaces to be designated will be of particular importance and demonstrably special to local communities because of, for instance, their recreational value and tranquillity, heritage or biodiversity value.

Local Green Space designations differ from Village Green registration which is handled by Kent County Council under separate legislation that is outside the remit of national planning policy and the Local Plan.

The Council has undertaken an assessment of potential Local Green Spaces against defined criteria and this is published separately in Local Plan Technical Paper No. 2. The 111 designated sites in question have, for the most part, been put forward by

local communities themselves and have been the subject of specific consultation with landowners and occupiers. The areas represent a wide diversity of types, ranging from coastal cliff tops, allotments and recreation grounds through to private country parks, urban woodland and informally used urban fringe land.

The sites designated as Local Green Spaces are shown on the Proposal Maps. Policy DM18 can have no direct influence on the management of these sites, although clearly the Borough, Parish and Town Councils wish to see their current usage continue. However, Policy DM18 will be used to preserve these Local Green Spaces and proposals for development which would conflict with the purposes of designating the land will not be permitted, other than in very special circumstances.

The designated sites can all be viewed in chapter 9 of the Local Plan <http://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s7987/FULL%20COUNCIL%2026%20JULY%20Local%20Plan%20Item%20Appdx%201%20Bearing%20Fruits%202031%20The%20Swale%20Borough%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

Section 2: The way forward

2.1 Technical Assessment Report summary

The technical assessment report of the Council's Open spaces was completed by the Council assisted by the detailed audit work of the appointed consultants, Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd.

The technical report has addressed what open space provision exists in the Borough, its condition, distribution and overall quality by using standard assessment methodology developed for Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17), aligned with the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The audit and assessment of the existing open space in report is broadly focused on three primary considerations:

- Quantity
- Quality
- Value

There is also an audit of accessibility by applying national distance standards based on proximity of open space types to nearby conurbations.

The aggregated audit results summarised the information by typology, identifying deficiencies by quality and value to enable a grading assessment for each open space as high, adequate or low. It also considers previous audits, studies and reviews such as the Open Space Study 2008 and the Play Strategy 2007-2012.

The accumulated information led to the seven recommendations as set out below in section 2.4 'Open Space Assessment recommendations' and will also help the Council prioritise investment and provision over the next five years and the required revisions of the Local Plan.

2.2 Open space challenges

Improving the quality of the open space infrastructure has been, and remains, one of the Council's top priorities. However, stretched financial resources have led to increasing pressure to reduce Council spending generally.

This has brought about a need to re-assess the costs of maintaining these spaces and the way they may be managed in the future. This generates choices in whether the Council continues managing poor quality spaces that currently offer limited value to a local community.

There may well be some tough decisions to be made in order to achieve the high quality, safe, clean and sustainable open spaces that we aspire to. We will keep residents regularly informed so there is a shared understanding of the Council's intentions and objectives.

The evidence prepared for the Strategy helps steer where to apply these themes and how they may be implemented.

Recommendations in 24 provide more detail. The recommendations will be refined and rationalised following further consultation and testing against the evidence. There is a great potential to help strengthen Swale's Open Space provision by giving a series of interrelated actions that are all working towards the same goal.

2.3 Play Areas: Future Provision

One of the key open space typologies is play areas.

This section sets out future direction for play development and maintenance of play areas within SBC, taking into consideration national guidance and local provision based on the assessment work undertaken by the Council's consultants in assessing quantity, quality, access and type.

It also acknowledges the largest population increase for Swale when compared with all the Kent Council areas both in real and percentage terms, between 2015 and 2016 with further predicted growth, increasing by an additional 2,600 people (+1.8%), of which 24.6% are expected to be aged 0-15 years,

The previous strategy considered Children and Young People's play provision which focussed on informal and formal opportunities for 0-18 year olds. Since then there has been a wider focus on outdoor exercise provision for adults with the introduction

of outdoor gyms in the borough's open spaces to help promote improved health and increasing fitness.

The strategy aimed amongst other things;

- To acknowledge the importance of play for children and young people both for themselves and for communities in general.
- To identify the work of all agencies involved in providing play opportunities children and young people to assist in developing a co-ordinated approach, identifying gaps in provision and reducing duplication.
- To make effective use of funding, including but not limited to that available through the Children's Play Initiative.
- To ensure that sustainability is built into children's play provision in the longer term.
- To improve children's access to safe place to play and socialise.
- To provide more and better local and inclusive opportunities where they are most needed, evidenced by the results of audits and community engagement.
- To improve public open spaces as an environment to play.

This report suggests that the future strategy continues the ethos of the previous strategy whilst understanding the constraints of the current financial climate. National funding streams have dwindled and internal maintenance budgets are being stretched alongside contributions from developments.

The assessment audit identified 101 play sites across the Borough, of which the Council manages 79 sites, with the remaining 22 play sites in the borough managed by a range of organisations such as parish councils, housing associations and developer led management organisations. These sites all add to the offer but do not impact financially or on the resources of SBC.

In addition the Council also manages a number of skate parks, multi-use games areas, 9 outdoor gyms and also coordinates the design and commissioning of new play areas, predominantly funded through developer contributions. The Council is currently coordinating and funding a new £300,000 skate park as part of the Mill project in Sittingbourne.

Zurich Municipal inspects the Council managed play areas annually and give an independent assessment of quality and identify any risks that the Council need to consider. Throughout the remainder of the year the operational staff and the Council's Open Space contractor also carry out regular inspections.

Our intention is to provide quality facilities for play despite increasing financial difficulties. In order to ensure this, it is proposed there are two standards of playground:

Flagship Play Sites (NEAPs¹) – that SBC provides a flagship play site in each of the main conurbations, Sittingbourne, Sheppey and Faversham. These will be top quality ‘destination’ facilities that people would travel further for and are aimed at providing variety for all age groups 0-18 years. The focus will not be solely on children’s play but look to new and innovative approaches to engaging teenagers/older youths.

Local Standard Play Areas (LEAPs¹) – the rest of the existing play areas have been assessed on quality and value, what elements are safe and fit for purpose and the quantity of sites within the standard walking catchments. They will be maintained to a safe standard suitable for the basic use of play e.g. swing, climb, and slide.

Appendix A sets out the criteria for these play area types

¹ LEAP play areas are a medium size facility of approx 500-1000m². The main difference between a LEAP and NEAP playzones is that even though both are designed for children to play on, the NEAP park area also has an area for kickabout soccer which is usually designed to be a MUGA multi use games area.

Youth sport and play sites – where existing facilities remain in good condition; the intention would be to keep multi-use games areas, basketball hoops, football goal ends, and outdoor gyms skate parks in the current locations.

The total budget for playground repairs and the replacement of equipment for the council’s 79 play sites, including vandalism costs, is £40k annually. Major external funding programmes such as the Big Lottery Children’s Play Initiative have disappeared and it is increasingly harder to get the amount of capital needed for full playground replacement.

While developer contributions provide for new play areas to be created and then adopted by the Council including a commuted sum for ten years of maintenance, the Council inherits the ongoing maintenance liabilities from year 11.

To address the need to improve the overall quality of play areas managed, the Council will explore:

- capital budget proposals for a programme of upgrading a number of play areas for consideration alongside the Council’s overall Medium Term financial Plan and the total available resources.
- Disposal of redundant or low quality and low value sites.

There are a small number of play areas identified in the assessment as low quality and low value which need to be considered for disposal using the criteria set out in the technical assessment data, the catchment area and proximity to other play areas and national standards. Approving the disposal of a specific site will be authorised through a delegated decision to the Cabinet Portfolio Member Environment and Rural Affairs.

The annual strategy refresh will include analysis of the other identified low quality low value sites to consider a priority order for refurbishment or in a small amount of cases possible closure.

Poor maintenance of equipment or lack of money to replace ageing stock can lead to legal implications and/or insurance claims from members of the public. SBC has a responsibility for play areas in the same way as all public open spaces.

2.4 Open Spaces and Play Strategy Recommendations

The following section provides a summary on the key findings in the application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards. It incorporates and recommends what the Council should be seeking to achieve in order to address the issues highlighted.

Recommendation a)

- ◀ ***Ensure low quality sites with a high community value are prioritised for future enhancement***

The policy approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality to the applied standards (i.e. high quality). This is especially the case if the site is deemed to be of high value to the local community. Therefore, they should initially be protected, if they are not already so, in order for their quality to be improved.

The open spaces assessment document identifies those sites that should be given consideration for enhancement if possible.

Recommendation b)

- ◀ ***Ensure all sites assessed as high for quality and value are protected***

Sites within this category should be viewed as being key forms of open space provision. The quality and value matrix in the Open Spaces assessment document identifies those sites rating high for quality and value.

Recommendation c)

- ◀ ***Destination (Strategic) Sites should be recognised through protection and enhancement***

There are a number of sites across Swale with strategic multi-functional roles which serve a large part or whole of the Borough. These 'destination' sites provide a wide range of diverse opportunities associated with several different forms of open space which users are willing to travel greater distances in order to access. Sites considered as 'destinations' in Swale include:

- ◀ Bartons Point Coastal Park
- ◀ Leysdown Coastal Park
- ◀ Perry Wood
- ◀ Milton Creek Country Park
- ◀ Oare Gunpowder Works Country Park

Such sites currently help to meet the identified 'catchment gaps' in the provision for other open space typologies. The Council should seek to ensure the role and quality of these sites through continued enhancement so providing a diverse range of features. This is in order to provide a stronger secondary role and will also help to minimise the need for new provision when considering gaps in catchment areas.

Recommendation d)

- ◀ ***Recognise types of open space that are surplus to requirements and/or those of low quality and value and determine their future use using the criteria set out in the technical assessment data and national standards.***

For sites identified as having an oversupply for the current/future population or those being of low value and/or low quality (as shown in the open space assessment document), a decision on their future use needs to be made. If no improvements can be made, no shortfall in other open space typologies is noted, or it is not feasible to change the primary typology of the site, then the site may be redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'. Options for disposal or repurposing should be considered.

Recommendation e)

- ◀ ***The need for additional cemetery provision should be led by demand rather than population calculations***

No standards have been set for the provision of cemeteries. Instead provision should be determined by future projected demand for burial space.

The Assessment Report highlights there are currently only 10 years of burial capacity across Swale and given the complexities of securing and preparing suitable land this policy seeks to set a policy of having 20 years burial capacity. The need for additional burial space is therefore a key objective for the Council to identify an appropriate new site.

Recommendation f)

The Council will no longer adopt future open spaces from developers and organisations unless there is an overwhelming case to provide a strategic new open space or the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity.

The Local Plan identifies additional new open space provision requirements to support new housing developments, traditionally funded by developer contributions. The Council will encourage developers to fund and create quality open spaces and also provide management arrangements for the ongoing upkeep and provision of the publicly accessible spaces. This can be through either direct developer management or legal transfer to a local community association or Trust supported by a commuted sum, funded by the Developer.

The Council will also pursue the principle of sustainability in enhancing our existing open spaces by seeking developer contributions towards such existing facilities that are in close proximity to new developments as detailed in section 3.3 of the strategy

Recommendation g)

◀ *Promote alternative future management arrangements for open spaces*

The national review of Parks undertaken by the Government select committee in 2016/17 provided discussion around different types of management models for public open spaces. This recommendation encourages Swale Borough Council to look at sites and models that may work locally. This links strongly to our Community Asset Transfer policy which is outlined later in this document. Focus will be on more efficient ways of managing or attracting new income to reduce down the financial burden on public money.

2.5 Strategy Action Plan

The development of an action plan provides a baseline of proposed outputs and targets that will be reviewed annually.

- a. To invest at least £100,000 capital spending per year for 5 years on existing open spaces through developer contributions, grants, capital works and disposals.

- b. To achieve 3 Green Flag parks and open spaces in the next 5 years.
- c. To explore funding for a rolling programme of upgrading play areas, to be considered as part of the Council's overall Medium Term Financial Plan
- d. To review our open space portfolio and identify relevant sites for investment, disposal or alternative uses by April 2018, linked to our successful programme of Community Asset Transfer.
- e. To actively promote our open spaces in partnership with other agencies and voluntary groups as places to sustain and improve health and wellbeing.
- f. To increase the amount of open space under a wildlife management regime by 5 hectares by December 2020.
- g. To increase community involvement in open space management by providing support to new or existing community groups.
- h. To ensure actions in relation to Local Plan Policy DM 17 are put in place to protect existing open space and private playing fields , to help negotiate new open space in future housing developments and to continue the designation of Local Green Space across the Borough.
- i. Look at new methods of operation and potential commercial ventures to help meet the ongoing cost of maintaining open space facilities

3: Funding the improvements

3.1 Council funding

The Council does not have unlimited budgets for open space management and improvement. Careful consideration must be given to ensure that any works carried out to open spaces are affordable and sustainable in the long term.

The strategy acknowledges that even though funding is limited, there are still opportunities for the Council, working with partners and volunteers, to deliver safe, active, and well managed spaces. New methods of operation and potential commercial ventures will also be explored to help meet the ongoing cost of maintaining open space facilities.

As identified in section 2.3 'Play Areas: Future Provision', we will consider capital funding for a rolling programme to upgrade play areas to help address the under investment in play areas and raise the quality and value.

To invest at least £100,000 per year for 5 years on existing open spaces through 'section 106' developer contributions held in reserves and securing external grant funding. A proportion of the funds will be allocated for enhancements to the Destination sites as listed in Recommendation 3.

The allocated sums will greatly assist officers in leveraging additional match funding or contributions from external bodies such as charities, town and parish councils and community groups.

3.2 Community Asset Transfer

Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a shift in management and/or ownership of land or buildings from public bodies (most commonly local authorities) to communities (community and voluntary sector groups, community enterprises, social enterprises etc.).

The Council recognises the value of enabling local community partners to take more responsibility for local assets, a process which can help to bring in external funding for its sites. With suitable safeguards in place, this can bring real benefits to both residents and the Council. The Council's CAT policy aims are:

- i. Sustain viability and improve service provision;
- ii. Deliver sustainable solutions that are accepted, agreed, 'owned' and driven by the local community;
- iii. Increase the number of local people helping to run or own local services or assets;
- iv. Realise wider community benefits such as increased levels of volunteering, social capital and civic participation; and
- v. Improve the leverage of external funding into the local area through increased funding opportunities, encouraging economic development, and social enterprise activity.
- vi. Transfer options can range from freehold, a long lease, a shorter lease or a licence to occupy. However, for most transfers, where grants or loans are sought for capital development, the length of tenure will need to be long enough to secure external investment. Therefore, community asset transfer is usually taken to mean a long lease of up to 125 years but in certain circumstances the period can be shorter.

The full policy can be viewed on the Council's website:

<http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies-2014/Community-Asset-Transfer-policy-Nov-2014.pdf>

3.3 Open Spaces Contribution Costs

This strategy determines quantity and quality of provision not only of the existing facilities in each open space typology, but also the requirement for any provision provided as part of new development within the borough.

Commuted Sum for Maintenance

Recommendations 6 & 7 identify that the Council will only seek to adopt new open space where it is of strategic importance or for the protection of important natural habitat and biodiversity. Where this is applicable, the Council will seek a 10 year commuted sum to manage and maintain the land as accessible public open space.

The commuted sum is calculated based on typical grounds maintenance costs and includes a calculation that takes estimated account of both inflation and bank interest. If a play area is required and included on site an additional supplemental sum will be sought to cover the additional costs incurred.

The Commuted Sum - £235.00 per dwelling

Supplemental Play Area Commuted Sum - £57.00 per dwelling

Off-Site Contributions

There are sites where although open space is provided as part of the development, it is not appropriate for facilities such as play or formal sports facilities to be incorporated. This could be due to the scale of the development not generating appropriate areas of land or because there are adjacent facilities that with enhancement and increase in capacity can adequately cater for the increased population generated by new development.

While national information is not easily available to identify costs of all facilities, the contribution sums are calculated based on technical costs identified for example in Sport England's Facility Cost Guidance.

As such the Council will seek to collect appropriate contributions from developers where able, to increase capacity and quality to cater for the new communities.

Contribution for off-site formal sports - £593.00 per dwelling

Contribution for off-site play/fitness - £446.00 per dwelling.

Appendix A. SBC PLAY AREA CRITERIA

FLAGSHIP PLAY SITES:

A flagship play area should include the following items:

- **Innovative headline piece of equipment i.e. Viking ship, zip wire, L climbing wall etc.**
- **Play centre for all ages; 3-7, 8-14, 15+, 15-17, + adults.**
- **Multi-gym equipment or Multi-use games area**
- **Roundabout**
- Slide
- Swings
- Basket swing
- Rocker
- Perimeter fencing
- Ample seating area
- Picnic benches
- Bins
- Signage
- Wet pour safety surface throughout (not bark pit or safety matting)
- High population area (high footfall within 20 minutes walking distance)
- DDA specific play equipment - designed, installed and maintained with specialist equipment to ensure that disabled children and their parents can enjoy playing in a safe and stimulating environment.

LOCAL STANDARD PLAY AREA:

Adequate provision of equipment to provide play provision for lower usage which include:

- Swings (junior and baby)
- Slide
- Multi-frame climbing area
- Rocker
- Basic Seating
- Bins
- Signage
- Perimeter fencing where required (based on risk assessment)
- DDA compliant equipment where possible
- Equipment specific safety surfacing

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Policy Development and Review Committee - Policies, plans and strategies due for review in 2017/18 and beyond

Policies, plans and strategies	Service unit	Due date for publication of new/revised policy, plan or strategy	Policy Development and Review Committee dates	Commentary
Tenant Strategy Refresh	Resident Services	Spring 2018	13 February 2018	
Revised Open Spaces/Play Strategy	Commissioning and Customer Service	Spring 2018	13 February 2018	
Digital Strategy	Chief Executive	Summer 2018	10 April 2018	On Forward Plan for 30 May Cabinet
Regeneration Strategy	Economy and Community Services	Winter 2018	10 April 2018	
Swale Strategic Air Quality Action Plan 2018 - 2022	Environmental Health	Summer 2018	10 April 2018	A request has been made to the Chairman of PDRC by a ward councillor for this to be reviewed by the Committee. A report to Cabinet on 4 October confirms that PDRC will be consulted on the Plan. On Forward Plan for 30 May Cabinet
Policies likely to be considered in 2018/19 Municipal Year				
Corporate Plan review	Policy and Performance	TBA	6 June 2018	To consider initial iteration
Beach Hut Policy	Commissioning and Customer Service	Spring 2018	6 June 2018?	
Update Tree Policy	Commissioning and Customer Service	Spring 2018	6 June 2018?	

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Policies, plans and strategies	Service unit	Due date for publication of new/revised policy, plan or strategy	Policy Development and Review Committee dates	Commentary
Homelessness and Housing Strategy	Resident Services	Autumn 2018	18 July 2018?	
Corporate Plan review	Policy and Performance	TBA	12 September 2018	To consider further iteration following discussions Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and Heads of Service
Housing Allocations Policy	Resident Services	Autumn/winter 2018	12 September 2018	

Policy Development and Review Committee dates 2017/18:

- Page 5
- 13 February 2018; and
 - 10 April 2018.

Provisional Policy Development and Review Committee dates 2018/19 (subject to agreement at Annual Council)

- 6 June 2018;
- 18 July 2018;
- 12 September 2018;
- 24 October 2018;
- 27 November 2018;
- 16 January 2019; and
- 12 February 2019.