

Why is the Council proposing further consultation?

A revised version of the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July and its new content needs to be taken into account in any plan making.

The impacts of the coronavirus pandemic are beginning to bed down. There is no doubt it has had a significant impact on town centres and the retail and leisure sectors, in particular. Certain employment sectors and the office market have also been impacted and further consultation will allow the opportunity to fully discuss how we can respond.

The Council is committed to preparing a local plan review in as fair and transparent a way as possible. It believes this has been done but it is faced with a choice. The Council could continue to submit the plan to the Secretary of State or undertake further consultation. On balance, a further Regulation 18 Issues and Preferred Options consultation to take account of the revised NPPF, consider the potential repercussions of the covid pandemic, respond to comments already made and provide an additional opportunity for participation is considered the preferred approach. This would then need to be followed by a further Regulation 19 stage prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

This approach allows the Council to respond proactively to the representations made earlier in the year on the February 2021 version of the LPR and to address other factors that are beyond the control of the Council, that could in themselves cause delay to the plan's progress.

Why is the Council proposing a new programme?

The local plan review must be prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme which sets out the programme. As a result of the proposed approach, a new programme, a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been prepared.

What will happen to the comments already made under the previous consultations?

The next version of the draft plan (Regulation 19) will take into account the comments raised at the consultation stage that took place earlier this year. The main issues raised have already been summarised and reported to the Local Plan Panel. The report can be viewed via [Agenda for Local Plan Panel on Wednesday, 8 September 2021, 7.00 pm \(swale.gov.uk\)](#). The Council will also have to demonstrate how it has taken into account the comments that will be made at the new Reg 18 Issues & Options consultation scheduled for this October.

What will the new consultation documents cover?

Detailed consultation has already been carried out on many specific policy areas and the consultation document to be published in the autumn will focus more on the development strategy options for delivering our future development needs.

How can I get involved?

As you are already on the consultation database for the local plan, we will automatically contact you with links to the documents. The documents will also be available to view (paper copy) at local libraries and at the council offices.

The Reg 18 Issues and Options consultations will ask a series of questions that will seek your views and ideas on how best to deliver our future development needs and address the issues we face.

You will be able to respond to the consultations in the usual ways, via the online consultation portal or by email or letter. Comments must be made in writing and received within the consultation timeframes.

As always, if you have any further queries, please contact a member of the planning policy team. We can be contacted via email LPcomments@swale.gov.uk or telephone: 01795 407014

Further information about the local plan can be found on our webpages www.swale.gov.uk/localplan