

Swale Local Plan Review 2022 - 2038

Statement of Consultation

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared to support the preparation of the Swale Local Plan Review (LPR).
- 1.2. The Statement sets out how Swale Borough Council (SBC) has involved the community and stakeholders in preparing the Swale LPR and how this meets the requirements set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and national Regulations (Regulation 19(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012).
- 1.3. The report provides information on the following:
- An overview of the engagement undertaken during the Regulation 18 stage of the plan making process;
 - Which engagement activities were used during the Regulation 18 stage;
 - How individuals, groups and stakeholders were invited to make representations to inform the Local Plan review process;
 - A summary of the main issues raised in the representations received; and
 - How the main issues have been addressed in the preparing the LPR.

2. Swale Local Plan Review

- 2.1. In early 2018, the Council began a review of the [adopted Local Plan \(Bearing Fruits\)](#), which had been adopted in July 2017. A commitment to undertaking an early review was one of the key modifications made to Bearing Fruits by the examining Inspector.
- 2.2. The Swale LPR will replace Bearing Fruits, although a number of the housing and employment allocations made through Bearing Fruits will be rolled forward as part of the LPR. The LPR will set out a vision, objectives, a development strategy and strategic and development management policies to guide future development in the Borough. The LPR will roll the plan period forward to 2038 and identify areas where new housing, employment or other development should take place.
- 2.3. The timetable for the LPR is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). Although the Council had proposed to undertake further consultation under Regulation 18, this approach was reviewed in early 2020. The Council considered that the 'Looking Ahead' feedback and the further evidence studies and assessments undertaken to inform the development of the Local Plan, provided a sound basis to move towards a Regulation 19 Local Plan. The changes to the LPR programme were published in an [updated LDS](#), which was published in March 2020.

3. Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.1. The Council's [SCI](#) (adopted 2018) sets out how the Council intends to involve the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Plan. The SCI requires a number of different engagement methods to be used and the Council has ensured that the engagement undertaken for the LPR was in line with the adopted SCI.
- 3.2. The SCI includes a list of specific and general consultees who must be consulted if it is considered they will be affected by the Local Plan. These requirements have been considered when including consultees on the Council's planning policy consultation database, which includes:
- Statutory consultees
 - Parish and town councils
 - Developers and agents
 - National and local organisations/bodies
 - Individuals who have requested to be notified of planning policy consultations
 - People who have registered themselves on the Council's consultation database via the consultation portal

4. Duty to Cooperate

- 4.1. In preparing the LPR, the Council will need to demonstrate that it has discharged the Duty to Cooperate with Neighbouring Authorities under Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011. The Council must work with neighbouring authorities and Kent County Council (KCC) as well as the following organisations, where relevant, on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those related to strategic issues:
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership
 - Environment Agency
 - Natural England
 - Historic England
 - Civil Aviation Authority
 - Port Authority
 - Homes England
 - Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
 - Office of the Rail Regulator
 - Highways England
 - Marine Management Organisation
- 4.2. The Council has had on-going dialogue with neighbouring authorities on cross boundary issues and worked closely with key stakeholders, service providers and statutory agencies to ensure that future development can be successfully delivered. The Council has worked with

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Kent County Council to identify future education provision required to deliver the Local Plan and the Swale Local Transport Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the County Council. The Council has also worked with the Kent and Medway CCG in respect of health provision and Highways England on transport infrastructure.

5. 'Looking Ahead' Consultation

- 5.1. The 'Looking Ahead' consultation took place between the 27 April and 11 June 2018. The consultation was wide ranging and sought views on various scenarios for future spatial development options, including the use of new garden communities¹ and where they could be located. To establish community priorities across a range of planning matters, the consultation also sought feedback on a number of issues ranging from the national and local challenges facing the Borough's economy, housing provision, infrastructure, climate change, transport and the environment.
- 5.2. The Looking Ahead consultation material was available on line through the Council's planning policy consultation portal², website and available to view in hard copy at local libraries and Council offices across the Borough.
- 5.3. The following methods of consultation were used:

Website	Information on the consultation was posted on the planning policy pages of the Council website
Press release	Press releases were distributed
Social media	The consultation was publicised on the Council's social media platforms and responses could also be made via Facebook and Twitter
Newsletter	An article on the Looking Ahead consultation was published in the summer 2018 edition of the Council's newsletter 'Inside Swale' (see Appendix 1a). The newsletter is distributed to all households in the Borough.
Availability of documents	'Looking Ahead' consultation documents were made available for inspection in Council offices and local libraries across the Borough and on the website. Paper copy questionnaire forms were available from Council offices and local libraries
Contact with statutory bodies/key stakeholders	Contacted via letter or email advising of the consultation, how documents could be viewed and how to respond (see Appendix 1b)
Contact with parish and town councils	Contacted by letter or email advising the of the consultation, how documents could be viewed and how to respond. Parish and Town Council representatives were invited to attend a briefing session on either the 9 or 11 April 2018 (see Appendix 1c). The briefing sessions were attended by 18 councils.
Contact with consultees	All contacts on the planning policy consultation database were contacted via letter or email informing them of the consultation, how they could

¹ These were later called strategic development options

² <https://swale-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/32636>

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	view the 'Looking Ahead' consultation document and respond to the consultation
Email	A dedicated email address (bearingfruits@swale.gov.uk) was provided for the submission of completed response forms. A separate email address was available for members of the public to contact the planning policy team to ask questions regarding the consultation
Post	Completed response forms or letters could be posted to the Planning Policy team
On line consultation portal	Online portal enabling responses to be made directly to the 'Looking Ahead' consultation document
Quick Questionnaire	A Quick Questionnaire was published online (see Appendix 1d). Principally aimed at residents, it contained 11 questions designed to seek views on priorities with opportunities for free text input. The Quick Questionnaire was anonymous.
Stakeholders Workshop	Five technical stakeholder workshops were held for invited attendees 1. Developers/landowners – 27 April 2018 (as part of New Communities Prospectus launch) 2. Infrastructure and utilities – 12 June 2018 3. Natural Environment – 22 June 2018 4. Heritage and culture – 28 June 2018 5. Rural communities – 4 July 2018 (See Appendix 1e)
Young People	Briefing session to meeting of the Youth Forum on 18 June 2018 (see Appendix 1f)
Public meetings	Presentation and debate on future issues affecting Swale and Faversham and highlighting forthcoming Looking Ahead consultation on 6 March and 19 May 2018

Key Issues

- 5.4. A total of 3,308 individual responses to the 'Looking Ahead' consultation document were received from 283 different consultees. In addition, 481 respondents returned the Quick Questionnaire, including 30 responses from schools. A further 1,781 free text comments were submitted via the Quick Questionnaire.
- 5.5. All the responses to the 'Looking Ahead' document can be viewed on the Council's planning policy consultation portal at <https://swale-consult.objective.co.uk/kse/event/32636/peoplesubmissions/section/>
- 5.6. The responses to the 'Looking Ahead' consultation, Quick Questionnaire and notes of the Technical Workshops were reported to the Council's Local Plan Panel on the 29 October 2018. All the consultation responses received were summarised (see Schedule of Responses in Appendices 2b, 2c and Notes of Workshops in Appendix 2d) with the Panel Report providing a full overview of the issues raised in the consultation responses (see Appendix 2a) and also an indication of how it was proposed the issues raised could be addressed in taking the LPR preparation forward. The responses to 'Looking Ahead' have helped shape the

direction of the LPR, influencing how and where the Borough's development needs should be met and the range of policies that should be included such as delivering affordable housing and responding to climate change.

5.7. The following is a concise summary of the key issues raised:

- Diversification of the economy with a choice of employment sites and a more flexible approach to town centre uses
- There were mixed views on the housing figure the Local Plan should be provide for with those arguing for the standard method or a higher housing figure generally being representatives of the development industry
- Responses on development locations, including a new settlement approach, were often governed by the desire to promote a particular location or avoid development in a particular town or village
- Housing sites should be more widespread across the Borough with a greater range of development site sizes/types to appeal to different markets. The development of brownfield sites should be given preference
- Support for the delivery of affordable housing to support rural communities and for higher percentage of provision on greenfield sites
- There was generally support for a mix of housing to be sought on developments and the application of accessibility standards
- Respondents were concerned over the capacity of infrastructure to support future development, with particular reference to the road network, schools and health provision, and the timing of infrastructure delivery
- There were mixed views on the use of density standards with some respondents supporting minimum standards whilst others supported the idea of density being design led
- There was support for the inclusion of policies on sustainable construction, biodiversity net gain

Addressing the Key Issues

5.8. As set out in the Local Plan Panel report on the 'Looking Ahead' consultation, it was proposed that further evidence base assessments would be undertaken. Since the consultation, the Council has completed these evidence base assessments (see Appendix 3) and they have informed the Council's approach to addressing the above key issues.

5.9. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (June 2020) has provided an updated assessment of the Borough's housing need figure using the Government's Standard Method (1,038 dwellings per annum). Some respondents considered the Council should not apply the Standard Method but having explored whether there are any exceptional circumstances that would justify departing from the use of the Standard Method, the Council have concluded

none could be sustained. The Housing Market Assessment (June 2020) has disaggregated the overall housing need figure into the different type, tenure and size of housing the future population will need, both for affordable housing and for specific groups of the population. This has informed the policy requirements for affordable housing and housing mix in the LPR, with policy requirements tested through the Local Plan Viability Report (December 2020).

- 5.10. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment (December 2018) identified the future retail floorspace needs of the Borough's town centres. The LPR reflects the recommendations of the Assessment but has also sought to reflect the flexibility to premises moving between town centre uses as a consequence of the recent changes to the town centre use classes and permitted development rights.
- 5.11. The Council has worked closely with infrastructure and service providers on the preparation of an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to make sure the infrastructure implications of the LPR growth strategy and individual site allocations are fully assessed and where necessary mitigation measures are identified.

6. Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

- 6.1. The draft Sustainability Scoping Report was published for consultation on the 31 May 2018 and ran until the 5 July 2018.
- 6.2. The three statutory environmental consultation bodies (Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency) were directly consulted (via email/letter) as were a number of other relevant bodies and individuals, including environmental organisations and adjoining local planning authorities. The SA Scoping Report was also published on the Council's website for wider public consultation, inviting anyone interested to comment on the draft report. Comments were received from the three environmental consultation bodies and there were a further 12 comments from other consultees. There were no comments as a result of the wider consultation.
- 6.3. Following consideration by the Local Plan Panel on the 20 September 2018, consultees were consulted again on amended transport objectives in October 2018.
- 6.4. The comments received to both the initial and subsequent consultation were considered and where relevant incorporated into the final SA Scoping Report (December 2018) (see section 14 of the Scoping Report).

7. Call for Sites

- 7.1. The Council carried out an initial 'Call for Sites' between 4 August and 15 September 2017. Landowners, developers, businesses and individuals were invited to submit site suggestions for housing, employment and other types of development for the Council to consider for

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inclusion in the Brownfield Register and Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA). A second 'Call for Sites' was held between the 27 April and 3 August 2018, although all sites submitted up to the 31 July 2019 were accepted for assessment.

7.2. The following methods of consultation were used:

Website		Information on the 'Call for Sites' was posted on the planning policy pages of the Council website
Availability of documents	of	An interactive form for the submission of sites was made available on the website. Paper copies of the response form were also made available
Contact consultees	with	Email or letter notification sent to wide range of people and organisations including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local landowners, developers and planning agents • Local house builders • All parish and town councils in Swale Borough
Email		An email address was available to return completed forms
Post		Completed response forms could be posted to the Planning Policy team

7.3. 237 sites were submitted through the 'Call for Sites' process. All the sites were assessed through the SLAA, the draft of which was published in May 2020. At this stage, the promoters of the sites were invited to comment on the factual accuracy of the assessments.

8. Evidence Base Studies

8.1. The Council has also worked jointly in preparing the LPR evidence base. As set out in Appendix 4 this has involved consultation with subject specific consultees and, where appropriate, the wider community.

9. Next Steps

9.1. Before submitting the LPR to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Council will update this Statement to detail the consultation undertaken under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the representations received and the main issues raised.

Appendix 1: 'Looking Ahead' Consultation Material

Appendix 1a – Article in 'Inside Swale' (summer 2018)

Appendix 1b – Consultee notification letter

Appendix 1c – Parish and Town Council briefing presentation

Appendix 1d – Quick Questionnaire

Appendix 1e – Workshop presentations

Appendix 1f – Youth Forum presentation

Appendix 2: 'Looking Ahead' Consultation Summary of Responses

Appendix 2a – Report to Local Plan Panel 29 October 2018

Appendix 2b – Schedule of summary responses to 'Looking Ahead' consultation

Appendix 2c – Schedule of summary responses to Quick Questionnaire

Appendix 2d – Notes of Technical Workshops

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Appendix 3: LPR Evidence Base Studies

Evidence Base Study	Purpose of evidence
Employment Land Review (August 2018)	To identify the amount of additional employment land needed during the local plan review period.
Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment (November 2018)	To identify the requirement for additional pitches for those who meet the definition of 'Traveller' in government policy and the requirement for additional Travelling Show Person plots.
Local Landscape Designation Review (October 2018)	To review the Borough's existing local landscape designations and recommend Areas of High Landscape Value
Landscape Sensitivity Assessment (October 2019)	Assessment of the landscape implications of possible extensions to the Borough's main settlements and their sensitivity to change from development.
Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) (May 2020)	To identify land that is suitable, achievable and deliverable to meet the development needs of the Borough for the local plan review period.
Local Housing Needs Assessment (June 2020)	To identify the borough's housing need using the government's 'standard method' calculation
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June 2020)	To identify the housing need for the Borough in terms of size, mix, tenure, including affordable housing provision, and needs of specific groups e.g. older persons within the overall need figure
Settlement Hierarchy Study (August 2020)	Reviews the existing settlement hierarchy by auditing the current provision of services and facilities in the Borough's settlements and recommending whether hierarchy should be retained or re-structured
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (February 2020)	To assess flood risk within the Borough from all sources now and into the future as well as assessing the impact that cumulative land use changes and development will have on flood risk
Retail & Leisure Needs Assessment (December 2018)	To identify the future retail and leisure needs of the Borough in terms of floorspace and facilities. Also assessed the retail hierarchy and reviewed the vitality and viability of both the town and local centres in the Borough.
Transport modelling	To assess the capacity of the road network and potential mitigation measures against different development scenarios
Assessment of New Settlements submission sites (Strategic Development Option sites) (March and October 2019)	To assess the risks, opportunities and uncertainties associates with the four submitted garden communities in Swale. The assessments looked at various issues including infrastructure needs, affordable housing provision, viability and landscape impacts.
Open Space Assessment (2017 and February 2019)	To assess the quantum of open space in the Borough and to identify the open space needs for the local plan review plan period.
Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (September 2020)	To identify the existing green and blue infrastructure resource across the Borough, opportunities for improvements and new provision

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Evidence Base Study	Purpose of evidence
Biodiversity Baseline Report (October 2020)	Records the Borough's biodiversity baseline and sets out how requirements of the Environment Bill could be incorporated into the LPR
Important Local Countryside Gap Study (January 2021)	Review of land around Faversham and Teynham to assess and make recommendations on the identification of additional Important Local Countryside Gaps
Air Quality Modelling Report (December 2020)	To assess the air quality implications of growth scenarios
Local Plan Viability Study (December 2020)	To test the viability impacts of emerging LPR policy requirements
Sustainable Design and Construction Standards (January 2021)	Provides information to inform the development of sustainable design and construction policies
Local Green Space Designations (February 2021)	Review of existing Local Green Space designations and assessment of potential new designations

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Appendix 4: Evidence Base Studies Consultation

Evidence Base Document	Consultation Method	When Consulted	Who Consulted	Consultation Outcome
Employment Land Review	Stakeholder workshop	6 November 2017	Developers, agents and other stakeholders invited through Swale business newsletter and specific invites to Swale developers, agents and businesses	Informed qualitative understanding of the local property market, which fed into Employment Land Review report recommendations
Swale Local Landscape Designation Review	Letter Stakeholder workshop	Winter 2017/18 September 2018	Council Members, parish and town councils, statutory and non-statutory stakeholders and interested groups and residents invited to identify valued landscapes and comment on assessment criteria Stakeholder workshop to review results	Summary of stakeholder responses reported to Local Plan Panel on 29 November 2018. Stakeholder responses fed into evaluation forming one of the 5 assessment criteria. Reported in Section 3 of the Swale Local Landscape Designation Review Report
Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson Accommodation Assessment	Stakeholder survey on key issues via online questionnaire (this was carried out jointly with Ashford BC, Canterbury CC, Dover DC, Folkestone & Hythe DC and Thanet DC)	January – March 2018	National Gypsy, Traveller and Roma Council, known gypsy and traveller planning agents, neighbouring local authorities, departments within the Council and public service providers such as the NHS and police	Stakeholder responses to issues reported in Chapter 6 of the GTAA
New Communities Prospectus	Information published on Council website	April 2018	Landowners, developers and agents	Site submissions subject to detailed assessment and reports published on website

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Evidence Base Document	Consultation Method	When Consulted	Who Consulted	Consultation Outcome
	<p>Launch event/workshop for invited attendees</p> <p>Prospectus publicised through local and national 'trade' magazines</p>			
Swale Landscape Sensitivity Assessment	<p>Draft Report published on Council website</p> <p>Letter</p>	26 July and 6 September 2019	<p>Public consultation</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils, SBC Councillors invited to submit comments on the draft report</p>	<p>Summary of consultation responses reported to Local Plan Panel on 27 November 2019.</p> <p>Minor changes and clarifications to draft report</p>
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	Email	October 2019 December 2020	Environment Agency, KCC (as the Lead Local Flood Authority), SBC Engineering Team and Emergency Planning Team, Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board, Marine Management Organisation, Southern Water (as sewerage undertaker), Neighbouring Authorities (Ashford, Canterbury, Medway and Maidstone)	Comments fed into technical assessment outputs
Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy	Email and telephone interviews	June and July 2020	National and local environmental organisations, adjoining local authorities, SBC internal stakeholders	Proposals and actions in Strategy informed by stakeholder consultation

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Evidence Base Document	Consultation Method	When Consulted	Who Consulted	Consultation Outcome
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	Email	Consulted in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2020 • August 2020 (Growth Options) • October 2020 (Site Allocations) • January 2021 (draft IDP) 	KCC, Kent and Medway CCG, Southern Water, South East Water, Environment Agency, Network Rail, Highways England, UK Power Networks, Southern Gas Networks, National Grid, Emergency services	Responses informed understanding of infrastructure required to support development. Reflected in Infrastructure Schedule.