

# **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Swale Borough Local Plan**

**SA Statement**

July 2017

REVISION SCHEDULE					
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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE PLAN-MAKING / SEA ‘STORY’ .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1	Introduction	
2.2	‘Pick your Own’ (2011)	
2.3	Bearing Fruits (2012)	
2.4	‘Bearing Fruits’ (2013)	
2.5	Publication and submission (2014/15)	
2.6	Post submission work (2015)	
2.7	Proposed Modifications (2016)	
2.8	Further post submission work (2017)	
2.9	Plan finalisation (2017)	
<b>3</b>	<b>MEASURES DECIDED CONCERNING MONITORING.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS ON THE SA PROCESS.....</b>	<b>17</b>
	<b>APPENDIX I: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### Background

1.1.1 The Swale Local Plan was submitted to Government, for Examination by an appointed Planning Inspector, in April 2015. Following a two year Examination process, the Inspector published a report into the Plan's legal compliance and soundness in June 2017. The Inspector concluded that the plan is legally compliant and sound, subject to a series of modifications being made. The Local Plan, incorporating modifications, is recommended for adoption at a Full Council meeting on 26 July 2017.

1.1.2 A parallel process of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was undertaken alongside plan-making. AECOM (incorporating former companies URS and Scott Wilson) took lead responsibility for SA. SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of an emerging plan, and reasonable alternatives, with a view to achieving sustainable development.

### SA explained

1.1.3 It is a requirement that SA involves a series of procedural steps. The final step in the process involves preparing a 'statement' at the time of plan adoption. The aim of the SA Statement is to present –

- 1) The 'story' of plan-making / SA up to the point of adoption
  - Specifically, the Regulations<sup>1</sup> set a requirement to: *"summaris[e] how environmental considerations have been integrated into the plan or programme and how the environmental report... the opinions expressed... and the results of consultations... have been taken into account... and the reasons for choosing the plan... as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with."*
- 2) Measures decided concerning the monitoring of plan implementation.

### This SA Statement

1.1.4 This is the Swale Local Plan SA Statement, and hence considers **(1) and (2)** in turn. This Statement concludes by presenting a **regulatory checklist** in order to clearly demonstrate when and where legal requirements have been met.

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<sup>1</sup> The information to be provided in the Statement is listed in Article 9 of the SEA Directive / Regulation 16 of the Regulations.

## **2 THE PLAN-MAKING / SEA 'STORY'**

### **2.1 Introduction**

2.1.1 Essentially, SA must feed-into and inform plan-making in two ways:

- 1) Appraisal of alternatives informs preparation of the draft plan.
- 2) The SA Report, and consultation responses received during the Draft Plan / SA Report consultation, informs plan finalisation.

2.1.2 However, it is typical for the plan-making / SA process to involve more than two steps and this was the case with the Swale Local Plan.

2.1.3 This section gives consideration to each of the main plan-making / SA steps in turn:

- 'Pick your own' (2011)
- 'Bearing fruits' (2012)
- 'Bearing fruits' (2013)
- Publication and submission (2014/15)
- Post submission work (2015)
- Publication of Proposed Modifications (2016)
- Further post submission work (2017)
- Plan finalisation (2017)

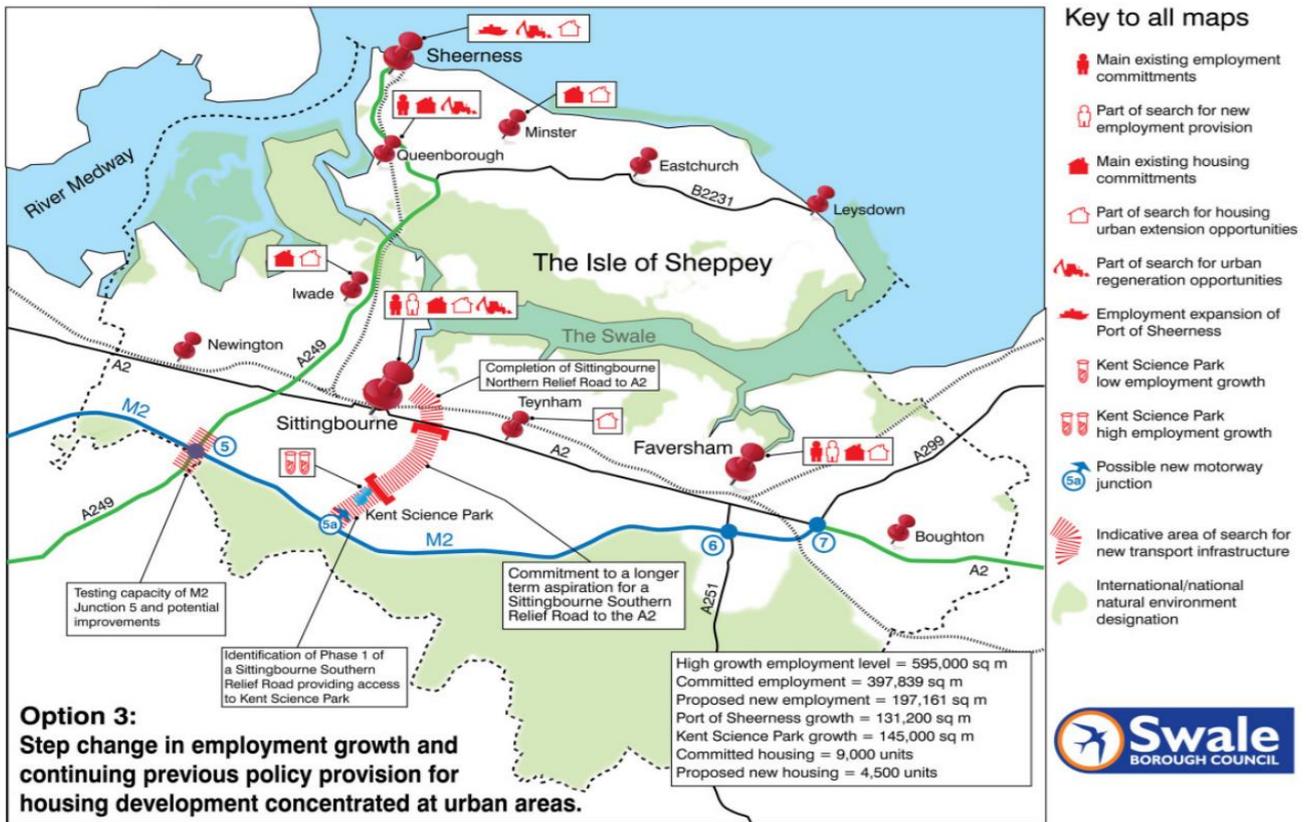
2.1.4 In line with regulatory requirements, there is a focus on explaining how sustainability considerations have been taken into account and influenced plan-making, including as a result of alternatives appraisal and other SA work, and consultation on plan / SA documents.

N.B. steps are covered in an increasing amount of detail, for the simple reason that findings from early plan-making / SA steps are now dated, and somewhat superseded.

2.2 ‘Pick your Own’ (2011)

2.2.1 Four spatial strategy alternatives were presented for consultation within the 2011 ‘Pick your Own’ consultation document (Regulation 18),<sup>2</sup> with the alternatives varying in terms of both development quantum (housing and employment) and broad distribution. The alternatives were non-site specific, as can be seen in **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 2.1: An example spatial strategy option (2011)



2.2.2 Appraisal findings were presented within an **Interim SA Report** published alongside the consultation document.<sup>3</sup> A notable conclusion of SA work from this time was that certain spatial strategy options would lead to ‘significant negative effects’ in respect of -

- Biodiversity - Option 4, as a higher growth option, would lead to significant negative effects, recognising the extent of local sensitivities, including the North Kent Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA);
- Landscape - Options 3 and 4 would lead to significant negative effects as these options would involve a ‘Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road’ linking the A2 east of Sittingbourne to a new M2 Junction, via Kent Science Park; and
- Soil - all options would lead to significant negative effects due to the loss of high quality (‘best and most versatile’) agricultural land.

<sup>2</sup> Within the Local Planning Regulations 2012 there are two regulations that aim to guide Local Plan-making up to the point of submission (to the Secretary of State): 1) Regulation 18: Preparation of a local plan; and 2) Regulation 19: Publication of a local plan.

<sup>3</sup> The 2011 Interim SA Report is available at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Pick-Your-Own/Sustainability-Appraisal.pdf>

2.3 Bearing Fruits (2012)

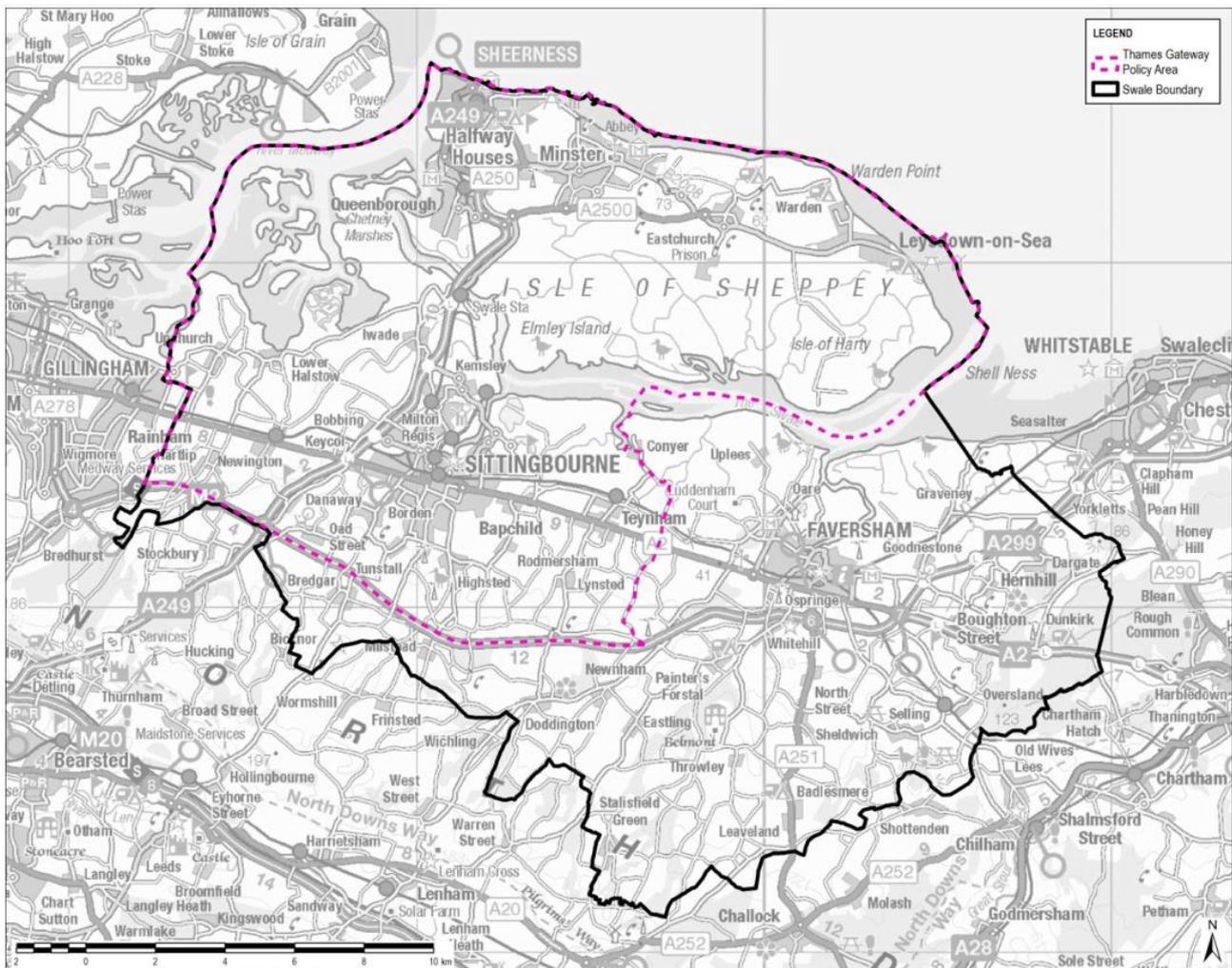
2.3.1 In 2012 a preferred development strategy was established in light of the earlier alternatives appraisal and published within the 'Bearing Fruits Draft Core Strategy' consultation document. The preferred strategy sought to:

- Provide for 540 dwellings per annum (as per Options 1, 2 and 3 from 2011);
- Deliver employment growth to meet the future needs of the Borough (as per Option 3); and
- Focus development at the main urban areas but with a distribution involving a degree of 'weighting' towards the Thames Gateway sub-area / away from the Faversham sub-area - see Figure 2.2.

2.3.2 An **Interim SA Report**<sup>4</sup> was published for consultation alongside, presenting an appraisal of the Draft Core Strategy (with a range of specific policy recommendations made) as well as an appraisal of alternative policy approaches for a range of plan issues. Notably, within Appendix I, there was a particular focus on presenting an appraisal of alternatives in relation to -

- Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision; and
- Employment land provision at Faversham.

Figure 2.2: The Thames Gateway sub-area within Swale Borough



<sup>4</sup> The 2012 Interim SA Report is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Swale-Borough-Draft-Core-Strategy-Interim-Sustainability-Appraisal.pdf>

## 2.4 'Bearing Fruits' (2013)

- 2.4.1 Subsequently, in 2013, the Council recognised that there was a need to develop the Core Strategy into a Local Plan, in order to address the new national planning policy context as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012).
- 2.4.2 A 'Bearing Fruits Draft Local Plan' (as opposed to a Core Strategy) consultation document was prepared and published for consultation in 2013, with the preferred strategy remaining broadly the same as that previously published in 2012 (540 dpa, weighted towards the Thames Gateway sub-area).
- 2.4.3 The **Interim SA Report**<sup>5</sup> published alongside the Bearing Fruits consultation document sought to present the information required of the SA Report.<sup>6</sup> As such, it essentially sought to answer three questions -
1. What has Plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
    - Including in relation to 'reasonable alternatives'.
  2. What are the SA findings at this stage?
    - i.e. in relation to the draft plan.
  3. What happens next?
- 2.4.4 In relation to ***"plan-making / SA up to this point"*** information was presented on 'reasonable alternatives' for several policy issues. Most importantly, the report presented an appraisal of the following borough-wide growth quantum alternatives (with the distribution held constant / assumed to reflect the preferred approach) -
1. 540 dwellings per annum
  2. 604 dwellings per annum
  3. 741 dwellings per annum
  4. 887 dwellings per annum
- 2.4.5 The appraisal of the four alternatives found the preferred approach (540 dpa) to perform relatively well in terms of environmental objectives, but relatively poorly in terms of economic and housing related objectives. In particular, the appraisal predicted an imbalance between workforce and jobs locally, which in the short term could lead to a reduction in the amount of out-commuting, but in the long term could lead to significant in-commuting.

<sup>5</sup> The non-technical summary of the 2013 Interim SA Report is available at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Local-Plan-2013/Local-Plan-SA-Aug-13/Swale-Local-Plan-SA-Reportrev2issued14-08-13-NTS.pdf>. The full report is available on the Local Plan Examination website. It is split into several 'Parts'.

<sup>6</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) prescribe the information that must be presented within the 'Environmental Report'. For Local Plans, the required information must be presented within the SA Report published alongside the Proposed Submission Plan (in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations).

**2.5 Publication and submission (2014/15)**

- 2.5.1 The Proposed Submission Plan was published for consultation, under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations, in 2014, and then subsequently submitted for Examination in 2015, alongside representations received. The spatial strategy was broadly as per that previously consulted on (540 dpa, weighted towards the Thames Gateway sub-area).
- 2.5.2 As required by the Local Planning Regulations, the **SA Report**<sup>7</sup> was published alongside the plan and then subsequently submitted. With a view to providing the required information, the SA Report answered the three questions introduced above (para 2.4.3).
- 2.5.3 In relation to **“plan-making / SA up to this point”** a focus (in addition to presenting contextual/background information, and an explanation of how the reasonable alternatives were arrived at) was on presenting information on two reasonable alternatives - see **Table 2.1**.

*Table 2.1: The reasonable spatial strategy alternatives 2014/2015*

Option	Quantum (dpa)	Distribution*
1	540	Weighted towards the Thames Gateway
2	740	Unweighted

- 2.5.4 The alternatives reflected a refinement of those previously subjected to appraisal and consultation.<sup>8</sup> ‘Outline reasons’ text was provided to explain the alternatives.<sup>9</sup>
- 2.5.5 The alternatives appraisal conclusion was as follows -

*“The appraisal shows that there is the greatest potential to differentiate between the alternatives in terms of environmental issues. In particular, it is possible to conclude that Option 2 (higher growth distributed as per the current population split) would likely lead to significant negative effects in terms ‘heritage’ considerations, whilst Option 1 would not; the key issue being the sensitive nature of Faversham, and also the service villages that could also see additional growth under Option 2. Loss of best and most versatile agricultural land is another issue in terms of which Option 2 performs notably worse than Option 1, given the higher growth quantum and also the additional steer towards Faversham. It is also suggested that the spatial approach to growth under Option 2 would encourage commuting (with implications for climate change and air quality objectives) relative to Option 1, although there is also a need to take into account the influence that the total growth quantum will have on commuting patterns. This is a complex issue...”*

*In terms of socio-economic issues/objectives, Option 2 clearly performs better in terms of ‘housing’ but otherwise the alternatives perform similarly. It is not necessarily the case that a lower housing growth strategy will significantly hamper delivery of economic growth objectives in the short term, although in the long term it is recognised that a housing shortfall could have a detrimental effect on the local economy if it is the case that an ageing population constrains labour supply. Either option would likely support the achievement of regeneration objectives in the Thames Gateway, although under Option 2 there could be some risks associated with bringing additional housing forward in advance of town centre improvements, employment and community infrastructure. More generally, there might be a risk that Option 2 would have the effect of ‘distracting’ from the regeneration agenda in Gateway, given more attractive greenfield development options at Faversham.”*

<sup>7</sup> The SA Report, as submitted (2015), is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Sustainability-Appraisal-April-2015.pdf>. A non-technical summary is available at: <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Sustainability-Appraisal-Non-Technical-Summary-April-2015.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> National Planning Practice Guidance is clear that options/alternatives should be ‘refined’ over time, through the SA process.

<sup>9</sup> There is a requirement to present ‘an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with’, within the SA Report. Within the Swale Local Plan SA Report, the key matter to explain was why the options of ‘lower growth un-weighted’ and ‘higher growth weighted’ were ‘unreasonable’. With regards to the former, the reason was that low growth in the Thames Gateway would stifle regeneration; with regards to the latter, the reason was that high growth in the Thames Gateway would be hindered by poor viability.

2.5.6 The discussion of 'plan-making / SA up to this point' then concluded with a chapter giving the Council's response to the alternatives appraisal / reasons for supporting the preferred option (Option 1). The Council concluded as follows:

*"On balance, having considered various alternative approaches over the years, the Council is able to come to the conclusion that the preferred approach reflects sustainable development, providing a review of the Local Plan is undertaken once key indicators are triggered."*

2.5.7 In relation to **"SA findings at this stage"**, the conclusion of the appraisal is presented below, as **Box 2.1**.

*Box 2.1: Conclusion of the Proposed Submission Plan appraisal, from the SA Report (2014/15)*

The scale of growth proposed has negative implications for the achievement of environmental objectives given the sensitivities that exist locally; however, other than with respect to 'high quality agricultural land' (c. 134 ha of which is set to be lost, despite the plan seeking to maximise redevelopment opportunities on brownfield land as part of Thames Gateway regeneration schemes) it is not thought that effects will be 'significant'. The spatial strategy goes some way to avoiding negative effects, given a focus on main towns and a weighting of growth towards the Thames Gateway, and a detailed policy framework is in place to guide planning applications (albeit some policy requirements, most notably around sustainable design and construction, have been softened due to 'viability' concerns). With regards to 'heritage', significant positive effects are predicted given that A) the decision has been taken to follow a relatively low growth approach at Faversham, which is particularly sensitive; and B) the policy framework in-place should ensure that historic assets are protected and enhanced as part of development schemes.

The potential for the plan to support reduced car dependency and longer journeys by car is obviously a key environmental issue, given the need to address poor air quality locally as well as reduce CO2 emissions. The spatial strategy directs development towards existing larger settlements, where there will be the greatest potential to walk / cycle / use public transport, as opposed to relying on the private car, which is a positive; however, another factor is the quantum of housing growth proposed relative to quantum (and nature) of employment growth, as this has a bearing on levels of commuting by car. As a result of a decision to avoid delivering housing in advance of jobs, the effect of the plan will be to avoid a worsening of the current out-commuting trend, and whilst in-commuting could potentially become a problem in the future these concerns are negated by the fact that a mechanism is in place to trigger an early plan review should it transpire that additional housing can and should be delivered to achieve a balance of labour supply and employment opportunities locally.

Finally, in terms of environmental considerations, it is important to consider flood risk. Areas of risk have been avoided wherever possible (e.g. with Sheerness allocated less land than its position in the settlement hierarchy would suggest should be the case, with growth instead directed elsewhere within The West Sheppey Triangle), although it has not been possible to avoid such areas entirely given the need to focus growth at certain areas in order to achieve wider socio-economic and environmental objectives. Policy measures are in place to ensure that flood risk is mitigated through masterplanning and design measures as far as possible.

In terms of socio-economic objectives, the first point to note is that the draft plan establishes a low housing growth strategy, i.e. one that will not meet objectively assessed needs. In addition, relatively low requirements for affordable housing delivery are set to be imposed on developers. It is recognised, however, that there may not be an alternative approach that could feasibly be pursued, given viability / deliverability issues. It is also noted that a clear mechanism is in place to trigger an early review of the plan, should monitoring demonstrate the potential to increase housing supply locally.

A fairly ambitious employment growth strategy is set to be followed, and it is difficult to conclude that the decision to follow a low housing growth strategy will constrain economic growth significantly, given the potential for an early plan review (which could allocate additional land for housing and hence increase the local labour supply). The decision to focus growth within the Thames Gateway is a positive, given the established opportunities that exist in key sectors. Employment led regeneration in the Thames Gateway is expected to support an up-skilling of the population in the long-term, and should also contribute to the achievement of wider health and regeneration objectives. Support for employment growth and town centre vitality in these locations should mean that new communities can develop that are 'sustainable' in the sense that there is good potential to access services, facilities and employment locally; however, it is noted that viability issues may mean that delivery of community infrastructure is a challenge.

**2.6 Post submission work (2015)**

2.6.1 Subsequent to submission of the Swale Local Plan, the Inspector wrote to the Council stating a concern regarding the housing quantum, and requesting further work. As part of this, two ‘Post submission Interim SA Reports’ were prepared, and submitted to the Examination.

**Post Submission Interim SA Report 1 (2015)<sup>10</sup>**

2.6.2 The task was to develop and appraise refined **spatial strategy alternatives**, in order to address the Inspector’s concern that: *“the justification for a housing target significantly below OAN [objectively assessed need] is very weak.”*

2.6.3 The task of developing refined spatial strategy alternatives (as reported under the heading **“plan-making / SA up to this point”**) was undertaken in light of the Inspector’s stated concerns, context / parameters provided by past alternatives appraisal, and new evidence. There was a need to give consideration to both growth quantum and distribution -

- Growth quantum - There was a need to take into account an updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which identified that planning for Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAHN) would necessitate allocating sites to deliver 776 dwellings per annum (dpa), i.e. a level of growth above that previously considered to be a reasonable option. This figure was arrived at on the basis of certain assumptions regarding demographics and migration, and the SHMA work also identified another, even higher figure arrived at on the basis of varied assumptions. This higher figure would involve 861 dpa. In light of the 2015 SHMA, the Council accepted that there was a need to test the implications of delivering housing growth quantum options previously considered to be unreasonably high. This acceptance also reflected other newly emerged evidence / understanding, including in relation to viability. Ultimately, the Council determined a need to test both the growth quantum options established through the SHMA (i.e. 776 and 861 dpa).
- Distribution - Whilst in 2014 (see above) the view was that higher growth could only be delivered if the Council were to move away from the preferred distribution strategy of ‘weighting’ growth towards the Thames Gateway, this understanding had shifted by 2015. This was on the basis of new viability evidence pointing to an improved situation (albeit viability, and hence ability to fund infrastructure and affordable housing, was shown to remain challenging on Sheppey). As such, the Council recognised in summer 2015 that the option of delivering more homes in the Thames Gateway (i.e. a number over-and-above that supported through the submitted plan) could not be dismissed as unreasonable.

2.6.4 Ultimately, the two reasonable spatial strategy alternatives were arrived at - see **Table 2.2**.

*Table 2.2: The reasonable spatial strategy alternatives 2015*

Option		Quantum (dpa)	Distribution*
1	The submitted plan approach	637 <sup>11</sup>	Weighted towards the TG
2	OAHN	776	As above
3	Above OAHN	861	As above

2.6.5 The conclusion of the alternatives appraisal (as reported under the heading **“plan-making / SA findings at this stage”**) was as follows -

<sup>10</sup> Post submission Interim SA Report 1 (2015) is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Further-evidence-2015/Swale-Local-Plan-Interim-SA-Report-151008-3.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> The submitted plan made provision for 540 dpa, but this lower growth figure could not simply be rolled forward for testing in 2015. Rather, there was a need to take account of A) the fact that the plan period had been reduced from 20 to 17 years; and B) the latest situation with regards to housing completions and planning permissions. The adjusted figure was 637 dpa.

*“The first point to note is that higher growth options tend to perform worse in terms of environmental considerations (and perform much worse in some respects, most notably landscape and cultural heritage), but better in terms of socio-economic considerations. However, the picture is not entirely clear cut in this respect. Most notably, Option 2 is preferable to Option 3 in terms of ‘Economic growth, employment and skills’ reflecting the view that this option has the best potential to balance jobs and homes (i.e. reflecting the view that under Option 3 constraints other than labour supply would mean jobs are not provided locally commensurate with homes).*

*Finally, it is important to mention two areas of uncertainty. Firstly, in terms of ‘Population’ and ‘Health’ considerations, the alternatives are ranked on a par and no significant effects are predicted; however, it is recognised that as viability conditions improve there is greater potential for higher growth to support regeneration in the Thames Gateway. Secondly, in terms of ‘Water’, the alternatives are ranked on a par and no significant effects are predicted; however, there are considerable flood risk issues in Swale and whilst there is good potential to mitigate flood risk through masterplanning, design and engineering, there is also a need to ensure that areas of flood risk are avoided in a sequential fashion.”*

- 2.6.6 These appraisal conclusions served to inform the Examination. Whilst Post Submission Interim SA Report 1 was not formally published for consultation, it was placed onto the examination website ahead of hearings in December 2015.

[Post Submission Interim SA Report 2 \(2015\)<sup>12</sup>](#)

- 2.6.7 In parallel with Post Submission Interim SA Report 1, the Council and AECOM also worked together to produce Post Submission Interim SA Report 2, which focused on presenting an appraisal of **site options** - i.e. the pool of sites from which any additional allocations would be selected. The intention was that the two Post Submission Interim SA Reports should be complementary.
- 2.6.8 The report began with an important discussion explaining the links between the report and other reports / work-streams, including the Strategic Housing Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and parallel work being undertaken to ‘rank’ site options.
- 2.6.9 Discussion under the heading of **“plan-making / SA up to this point”** then focused on identifying ‘reasonable’ site options. Ultimately, 170 site options were identified as ‘reasonable’.
- 2.6.10 The reasonable site options were then subjected to appraisal using a strict, criteria-based methodology, as reported under the heading of **“SA findings at this stage”**. The main output was a large table categorising the performance of each reasonable site option in terms of 31 criteria, using a red/amber/green (RAG) scale.
- 2.6.11 Also, sub-sets of site options were compared and contrasted. In particular, it was possible to compare and contrast the performance of (A) proposed allocations within the submission plan on average vs. (B) omission sites on average. The following conclusion was reached -

*“The analysis presented above primarily serves to highlight how allocated sites perform on average relative to non-allocated sites. This analysis is crude, but does perhaps serve to identify issues in terms of which there may be a need to accept sub-optimum outcomes if the approach to allocations within the submitted plan is to be modified, and conversely issues in terms of which modifications might result in an overall strategy that performs better.*

<sup>12</sup> <sup>12</sup> Post submission Interim SA Report 2 (2015) is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Further-evidence-2015/Swale-Local-Plan-Post-Submission-Interim-SA-Report-II-151026.pdf>

*In terms of environmental considerations, the analysis suggests that the allocations on average perform well in terms of the objectives relating to locally designated wildlife sites, woodland, locally designated countryside gaps and rural lanes. The analysis may also suggest a tendency for allocations to comprise sites less likely to impact a sensitive landscape or worsen air quality in an AQMA, but this is less clear. Similarly, the analysis is inconclusive with respect to avoiding the loss of Grade 1 agricultural land.*

*As for heritage assets (Conservation Areas / Listed Buildings), the analysis seems to highlight that these tended not to be seen as a major constraint, and indeed may have been seen as an opportunity (in-line with principles of positive planning for the historic environment and/or heritage led regeneration) when developing the preferred strategy for submission. Similarly, it seems that flood risk was not taken to be a major constraint (given the potential for mitigation) and indeed there was a tendency to allocate sites in flood risk zones (having followed national guidance).*

*In terms of socio-economic considerations, the analysis suggests that allocations on average perform well in terms of the objective to support development in areas of relative deprivation. The analysis also suggests a tendency for the preferred approach to comprise sites in close proximity to a train station, primary school, local shop, larger shop and GP. A decision to allocate additional sites would, therefore, potentially result in an overall strategy that performs less well in terms of accessibility to these community assets. Conversely, allocations do not perform any better than non-allocations in terms of proximity to a secondary school.<sup>13</sup>*

- 2.6.12 These appraisal conclusions served to inform the Examination. Whilst Post Submission Interim SA Report 2 was not formally published for consultation, it was placed onto the examination website ahead of hearings in December 2015.

## 2.7 Proposed Modifications (2016)

- 2.7.1 Subsequent to Examination Hearings, the Inspector published two Interim Reports in February and March 2016. In light of these, the Council then undertook targeted work, and prepared Proposed Modifications for publication.
- 2.7.2 An **SA Report Addendum**<sup>14</sup> was published alongside Proposed Modifications, presenting targeted information in order to inform the consultation. Once again, the report was structured in order to answer the three key SA Reporting questions (see para 2.3.2).
- 2.7.3 Under the heading of **“plan-making / SA up to this point”** the task was to present information on -
- 1) developing reasonable spatial strategy alternatives;
  - 2) appraising reasonable spatial strategy alternatives; and then
  - 3) establishing the preferred approach.
- 2.7.4 Steps 1 to 3 are considered in turn below, before the discussion then moves on to the “SA findings at this stage” element of the SA Report Addendum.
- 2.7.5 In relation to **(1)**, when developing reasonable spatial strategy alternatives in early 2016, there was a need to take into account the Inspector’s findings that -

<sup>13</sup> It is likely that, were the analysis to have taken into account travel time (rather than ‘as the crow flies’ distance), then proposed allocations would be shown to perform better than non-allocations in terms of access to a secondary school. Also, had the data taken into account the secondary school that will be delivered as part of the proposed NW Sittingbourne allocation, then it might be the case that proposed allocations would have been shown to perform better on average.

<sup>14</sup> The SA Report Addendum (2016) is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Main-Modifications-June-2016/Sustainability-Appraisal-Addendum.pdf>. N.B. An Erratum document was also prepared and published, which is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Main-Modifications-June-2016/Erratum-SBCPS105c-SA-Report-Addendum.pdf>.

- A) Proposed Modifications must allocate additional sites, such that the plan provides for Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) for housing, which in practice means allocating sites to deliver an additional 2,224 homes plus an appropriate buffer, which the Council determined should mean allocating sites to deliver an additional **c.3,000 homes**.
- B) Additional sites allocated through Proposed Modifications must be in accordance with the **submission plan's spatial strategy**.

Specifically, the Inspector's interim finding was that: *"The settlement strategy is soundly based... subject to allocating additional sites to meet OAN whilst maintaining the broad proportional balance of growth between the two planning areas [i.e. the two planning areas of: A) the Thames Gateway; and B) Faversham and the rest of Swale]."*

- 2.7.6 Having considered background factors (A) and (B), there was an understanding that: firstly, the aim was to develop a single set of alternative approaches to distributing c.3,000 dwellings; and, secondly, only certain distribution options needed to be reasonably considered.
- 2.7.7 However, even with this understanding, it was recognised that there remained a **plethora of alternative approaches** that might be taken, with 116 site options in contention.
- 2.7.8 As such, it was recognised that there was a need to undertake work to examine reasonable **site options**, with a view to narrowing down the number of distribution alternatives in contention, and ultimately establishing a set of reasonable borough-wide alternatives. There were a number of different work-streams examining site options, including work presented in Appendices I - III of the SA Report Addendum.
- 2.7.9 Ultimately, having considered site options in isolation, and also considered how site options might be delivered in combination at each settlement in order to achieve a coherent growth strategy, **three reasonable alternatives emerged** - see **Table 2.3**.
- 2.7.10 Points to note are -
- There are numerous **constants** across the alternatives, including -
    - allocation of 18 sites judged by the Council<sup>15</sup> to stand-out as performing well, on the basis of work to examine site options, including large urban extensions southwest of Sittingbourne, south of Faversham and west of Minster.
    - non-allocation of numerous sites judged by the Council<sup>15</sup> to stand-out as performing poorly, on the basis of work to examine site options, including: all sites at Teynham, at 'East Sheppey' and at villages; and two large urban extension options on Sheppey (see discussion at para 5.3.7 of the SA Report Addendum).
  - The **variables/questions** reflected across the alternatives are -
    - Sittingbourne - allocate **A)** 700 additional homes, primarily through an urban extension to the SW of Sittingbourne; or **B)** 1,300 additional homes, through the (A) sites plus an additional urban extension to the SE of Sittingbourne?
    - West Sheppey - allocate **A)** 800 additional homes, through four sites to include an urban extension to the west of Minster; or **B)** 1,400 additional homes, through the (A) sites plus additional smaller sites?
    - Iwade - allocate **A)** nil additional homes; or **B)** 600 additional homes, through a strategic urban extension to the east?

<sup>15</sup> The Council took lead responsibility for developing the reasonable alternatives (as was the case throughout the SA process), working closely with AECOM. In 2016, at the Proposed Modifications Stage, the Council prepared an 'LDF Panel Report' to summarise views on site options. This report was submitted to the Examination (PS/108) and is available at <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Main-Modifications-June-2016/LDF-Panel-report.pdf>.

Table 2.3: The reasonable spatial strategy alternatives 2016 (key differentiating figures in bold)

	Option 1 <i>'Constants' plus...</i> <b>Growth at Iwade (east)</b>	Option 2 <i>'Constants' plus...</i> <b>Higher growth at West Sheppey (smaller sites)</b>	Option 3 <i>'Constants' plus...</i> <b>Higher growth at Sittingbourne (southeast)</b>
Sittingbourne	700	700	<b>1300</b>
West Sheppey	800	<b>1400</b>	800
Iwade	<b>600</b>	0	0
Faversham	800	800	800
Newington	100	100	100
Teynham	0	0	0
East Sheppey	0	0	0
Boughton	0	0	0
Other villages	0	0	0
Total additional allocations through mods	3,000	3,000	3,000

- 2.7.11 In relation to **(2)** - see para 2.7.3 - the alternatives appraisal conclusion was that -
- *“Option 1 (Iwade) stands-out as performing best in terms of a number of objectives, although it performs worst in terms of ‘biodiversity’ (see the HRA for detailed discussion) and ‘soil’, as there would be some loss of ‘best and most versatile’ agricultural land.*
  - *Option 2 (West Sheppey) performs notably best in terms of ‘soil’, but notably poorly from a ‘housing’ perspective given poor development viability, and is potentially also most constrained from a heritage perspective.*
  - *Option 3 (Sittingbourne) is notably worst performing in terms of ‘landscape’, and also gives rise to some particular air quality concerns.”*
- 2.7.12 In relation to **(3)** - see para 2.7.3 - the Council made a range of comments in response to the alternatives appraisal, in order to explain the justification for the preferred option (Option 1), including -
- Air - *“The preferred approach performs equally as well as option 2, however, on balance, the Council believes that option 1 has a better relationship with the strategic road network and does not give rise to air quality concerns. Whilst option 2 would not give rise to air quality concerns on Sheppey, the longer journeys off-Island to employment and other services would be less favourable than for option 1.”*
  - Biodiversity - *“Significant effects within option 1 relate to HRA issues at Iwade, but examination of the HRA and the proposed policy AX5 put in place by the Council demonstrate that the issues are capable of being addressed and that these could, potentially, lead to certain biodiversity benefits.”*

- Cultural Heritage - *“Whilst the preferred approach leads to some issues, any potential impacts arising are capable of adequate mitigation with the issues appropriately addressed in proposed policy wordings.”*
- Landscape - *“The preferred approach is, on balance, the best performing and whilst the approach is not without potential adverse impacts, these are clearly addressed through proposed policy.”*
- Soil - *“Whilst option 2 performs better and significant effects are highlighted against option 1, the Council considers that this is not an overriding reason for not favouring option 1, once other factors, notably transport and traffic and housing (viability) are taken into account. The Council’s preferred approach seeks to avoid the use of high quality soils until such times as significant conflict with other objectives occurs. The Council believes that the balance that is required to be reached between these potentially conflicting objectives has been struck.”*
- Transport and traffic - *“The preferred approach performs best, even though it is acknowledged that this is not by a significant margin. This is largely due to outstanding or unknown impacts associated with further work required to assess impacts in the A249 corridor. However, the plan has in place the work required to address any issues arising.”*
- Health - *“Whilst the preferred approach does not stand out against other options, it does have the potential to deliver high quality infrastructure that supports health activities.”*
- Housing - *“Whilst the preferred approach does not perform any better than option 3, it is clearly preferable to option 2 in terms of that option’s more dispersed approach and poorer viability. This is particularly relevant in terms of the balance to be struck with the protection of soil and transport and traffic issues.”*

2.7.13

Finally, under the heading of **“SA findings at this stage”**, the SA Report Addendum presented an appraisal of Proposed Modifications, concluding -

*“The appraisal of proposed modifications finds the likelihood of significant positive effects in terms of ‘housing’ objectives, given that additional housing site allocations are proposed such that objectively assessed needs should be met, and also minor positive effects in terms of communities (‘health’ and ‘population’) and the local economy objectives. Significant negative effects are predicted in terms of air quality (albeit with much uncertainty), given an allocation at Newington in proximity to an AQMA, and in terms of the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land. In respect of ‘biodiversity’, significant negative effects are not predicted, given the robust policy framework that is set to mitigate effects; however, it is clearly the case that major expansion at Iwade is not ideal in this respect. A number of other tensions are also highlighted (e.g. in respect of cultural heritage and landscape); however, again it is the case that significant negative effects are not predicted given the policy framework (particularly site specific policy) that is proposed. No formal recommendations are made at the current time (see footnote discussion above of past recommendations, which have already been addressed), although it is generally recommended that the Council / Inspector should consider ways to address the negative effects / tension highlighted through the appraisal.”*

N.B. the SA Report Addendum also gave explicit consideration to the effects of ‘the Submission Plan plus Proposed Modifications’. This essentially amounted to a consideration of ‘cumulative effects’, i.e. a consideration of the implications of the proposal being consulted-on (i.e. Proposed Modifications) being implemented alongside other proposals (i.e. those elements of the Submission Plan not the subject of consultation). This approach was subsequently endorsed by the Planning Inspector, within her report of June 2017. Para 33 of the Inspector’s Report stated: *“The SA Addendum, whilst making it clear that it should be read alongside the 2015 SA, focusses on the proposed modifications, enabling stakeholders and the public to identify their impacts, as well as the cumulative impacts of the Plan as a whole. This is entirely reasonable and provides a thorough sustainability appraisal with clear definition of the impacts at each stage of the Plan’s evolution.”*

**2.8 Further post submission work (2017)**

- 2.8.1 In early 2017, subsequent to publication of Proposed Modifications alongside the SA Report Addendum, and prior to the resumed examination hearings that had been timetabled, the Council determined a need for some targeted work to explore alternatives in relation to a specific site: South West Sittingbourne. The site was not allocated for development within the submitted plan, but a Proposed Modification (2016) proposed a 565 home development.
- 2.8.2 In order to inform the Council’s thinking, and to inform the Examination, **Post submission Interim SA Report 3**<sup>16</sup> was prepared and submitted to the Examination.
- 2.8.3 Discussion under the heading **“plan-making / SA up to this point”** explained the ‘context and background’ to the site’s proposed allocation, and the targeted work undertaken in 2016 by the developer and the Council, before then introducing three reasonable alternative approaches to allocation - see **Table 2.4**.

Table 2.4: Reasonable alternative approaches to development at South West Sittingbourne (2017)

	Option 1 Policy MUX1 as published	Option 2 Developer’s proposed amended Policy MUX1	Option 3 HBA’s proposed amended Policy MUX1
<b>Number of homes</b>	At least 565	At least 650	
<b>Other uses</b>	Small scale commercial floorspace; landscaping / open space; primary school	Small scale commercial floorspace; landscaping / open space; primary school; neighbourhood centre Rugby pitches and associated facilities	Small scale commercial floorspace; landscaping / open space; primary school; neighbourhood centre
<b>Transport infrastructure</b>	Explore access options, including any linked road between Wises Lane (A2) and Borden Lane	Explore access options, including any linked road between Chestnut Street, Wises Lane (A2) and Borden Lane, with new slip road onto the A249.	
<b>Size</b>	33.7 ha	49.5 ha	

- 2.8.4 Under the heading of **“SA findings at this stage”**, the Interim SA Report presented an appraisal of the reasonable alternatives, concluding -  
  
*“The appraisal serves to highlight that each option is associated with ‘pros and cons’. There is an argument to suggest that option 2 is worst performing, given that a ‘significant’ negative landscape effect is predicted; however, option 2 performs better than the other two options in respect of ‘health’ and ‘population’, given delivery of a new rugby club. Option 1 performs well in terms of a number of objectives, but notably performs worst in respect of ‘transport and traffic’, as it would not deliver a new link road and hence not support ‘strategic reassignment’ of traffic from currently congested routes/junctions. Option 3 does not stand-out as performing notably poorly in terms of any objective, but is nonetheless associated with a number of issues, with this option performing poorly relative to option 1 in respect of heritage, landscape and loss of best and most versatile agricultural land.”*
- 2.8.5 These appraisal conclusions served to inform the Examination. Whilst Post Submission Interim SA Report 3 was not formally published for consultation, it was placed onto the examination website ahead of hearings in late January 2017.

<sup>16</sup> Post submission Interim SA Report 3 (2017) is available at: <http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Main-Modifications-Nov-2016/Swale-Interim-SA-Report-in-respect-of-SW-Sittingbourne.pdf>

## 2.9 Plan finalisation (2017)

2.9.1 The Inspector's report into the soundness of the Local Plan was received on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The report concludes that the plan is sound, provided that modifications are made.

2.9.2 The Inspector's Report concludes that the modifications that should be made to the plan are broadly those that were published for consultation in 2016. However, there is one exception, i.e. one instance of the Inspector making a final main modification, subsequent to the 2016 consultation on Proposed Modifications. As stated by the Inspector -

*"In the light of the consultation responses and discussions and taking account of evidence regarding highway infrastructure that emerged during the resumed hearings, it has become clear that in order to be capable of adoption the Plan should be subject to an early review. I have therefore amended the Council's **proposed modification to Policy ST2 (MM42) to include a commitment to an early review.**"*

2.9.3 The Inspector's Report went on to discuss 16 **issues** that were a key consideration when reaching a conclusion on soundness / the need for main modifications, including -

Issue 1 - Does the Plan set out a clear overall strategy for the area which is supported by the evidence and sustainability appraisal?

Issue 2 - Is the OAN justified and up to date?

Issue 3 - Is the failure to meet the full OAN in the submitted Plan justified?

Issue 4 - Are the proposed housing allocations soundly based and has the Council's work to plan for the full OAN through updating allocations in the submitted Plan and allocating additional sites been undertaken in a robust and methodical way, subject to appropriate SA and consultation?

Issue 10 - Does the Plan include a robust strategy for protecting designated environmental sites?

Issue 11 - Does the Plan provide a clear strategy for future development at the Port of Sheerness and Kent Science Park?

2.9.4 These issues were all a focus of the SA process, with the Inspector's Report highlighting the role of SA in relation to Issues 1 and 4 in particular.

2.9.5 Under Issue 1, the Inspector concluded (para 36) -

*"In conclusion I am satisfied that the Plan sets out a clearly justified strategy and has been subject at all stages to robust **sustainability appraisal** which includes examination of alternatives and balances all the relevant issues to demonstrate that the Plan is appropriate and sustainable." [emphasis added]*

2.9.6 Under Issue 4, the Inspector concluded (paras 62 to 63) -

*"... the LDF [Panel] report presents a clear step by step analysis of options for allocating land around Sittingbourne, based largely on **sustainability appraisal**... I am satisfied that the presentation of reasonable alternatives and recommendation of site allocations set out in the LDF report is clear, consistent and logical.*

*Thus... the evidence is detailed and robust and provides an appropriate basis for the selection of new allocations. It is based on appropriate **sustainability appraisal**, takes account of all relevant issues including environmental risks, landscape and heritage and balances consideration of matters such as Air Quality and the use of BMV land with the need to meet development needs as set out in the NPPF. " [emphasis added]*

### 3 MEASURES DECIDED CONCERNING MONITORING

- 3.1.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, this SA Report Adoption Statement must present ‘measures **decided** concerning monitoring’, building on the ‘measures **envisaged** concerning monitoring’ presented within the SA Report (2015) and SA Report Addendum (2016).
- 3.1.2 Chapter 8 of the plan document deals with implementation and monitoring. Chapter 8 is presented within **Appendix I** of this report, but in summary Chapter 8 -
- Lists key delivery milestones, before stating that: “A change in the delivery of one or more of the Key Local Plan Milestones may reflect matters which the Council will need to respond to. For example, in the case of housing, other sites may need to be brought forward, but a wider persistent and widespread structural problem either with a site or sites or in the wider economy may be clear signals of a need to review the Local Plan.”
  - Lists a series of risks, along with contingency measures (with Local Plan Review discussed as a contingency for dealing with certain main risks). Risks listed are -
    - Poor growth in private sector employment
    - Fragility in housing market/market capacity delays investment
    - Investment in central Sittingbourne falls behind investment in urban extensions at Sittingbourne creating further leakage in retail spending
    - Key Infrastructure lags behind growth leading to unacceptable consequences
    - The need for the alignment of jobs and homes.
  - Presents monitoring indicators for each policy within the Local Plan.
- 3.1.3 Table 3.1 presents a short selection of proposed monitoring indicators that are of particular relevance, in that they will serve to monitor effects predicted (or discussed as uncertain) through the SA process.

Table 3.1: A selection of monitoring indicators

Issue/objective	Select indicators
Agricultural land	Amount of best and most versatile agricultural land lost to significant scales of development
Air quality	Frequency of air pollution standards violations
	New designations of Air Quality Management Areas
Biodiversity	Change to overall condition of SSSIs
	Levels of new open space provided, especially natural/semi-natural greenspace.
	The established SPA Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy
Flooding	Number of planning permissions granted for residential development in flood risk areas contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency.
	Number of developments which use sustainable drainage systems.
	Number of developments permitted within the Coastal Change Management Area and the number relocated away from it.
Sustainable transport	Implementation of planned transport improvement projects
	Change in method of travel to work, distance travelled, car ownership (where data outside Census is available).
	Per capita expenditure on roads, parking and traffic services
	Number of schools with walking/cycling to school scheme

## 4 CONCLUSIONS ON THE SA PROCESS

- 4.1.1 This SA Statement demonstrates that a robust SA process has been progressed alongside plan-making, with appraisal findings feeding in to decision-making at numerous junctures, and numerous reports having been published for consultation alongside plan documents, in order to help ensure informed and effective consultation.
- 4.1.2 In summary, the following reports were published as part of the SA process -
- Three Interim SA Reports (2011, 2012 and 2013)
  - The SA Report (published in 2014, and then submitted in 2015)
  - Three Post submission Interim SA Reports (2015 and 2017)
  - One SA Report Addendum (2016).
- 4.1.3 Most importantly, from a perspective of complying with both the SEA and Local Planning Regulations, the SA Report was published alongside the ‘Publication’ version of the plan in 2014, presenting the required information. The report served to inform representations on the plan, and then served to inform plan finalisation.
- 4.1.4 This SA Statement is the final step in the SA process. Its aim is to explain the ‘story’ of the plan-making / SA process, and also present measures decided concerning monitoring. Also, this report is prepared for the benefit of Elected Councillors of Swale Borough Council, who are tasked with making a decision regarding adoption of the Plan.
- 4.1.5 The Regulations require that this report presents certain information. **Table 4.1** serves to demonstrate that this report does present the required information.

Table 4.1: Regulatory checklist

The SA Statement must...	How has this report presented the required information?
Summarise how environmental (and wider sustainability) considerations have been integrated into the plan	This report has sought to provide examples of key sustainability considerations that have been highlighted through appraisal and consultation at each of the main stages of the plan-making / SA process. The appraisal of spatial strategy alternatives, in particular, served to highlight a range of significant negative effects, enabling the Council to then take steps to avoid (by selecting a better performing strategy) or mitigate the effect (through development management and/or site specific policy).
Summarise how the SA Report and consultation responses received, as part of the Draft Plan / SA Report consultation, have been taken into account when finalising the plan.	Most importantly, the discussion within Section 2.9 discusses how the Inspector took account of the SA Report and consultation responses received when finalising the plan, i.e. deciding on the necessary modifications. Furthermore, as discussed within Sections 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 representations received on the Proposed Submission Plan / SA Report, and discussions over the course of the Examination, led directly to targeted post submission SA work.
Summarise the reasons for choosing the plan as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.”	The SA Report (2015) presented the Council’s reasons for supporting the Submission Plan (see Para 2.5.6, above). The SA Report Addendum (2016) presented the Council’s reasons for supporting Proposed Modifications (see Para 2.7.10, above). The Inspector’s Report (2017) presented the Inspector’s reasons for supporting the final plan (see Section 2.9, above).

## APPENDIX I: MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

### 8.1 The implementation and delivery plan

#### Introduction

**8.1.1** This chapter sets out our implementation and delivery plan. It provides our approach toward ensuring that the strategy of the Local Plan is delivered, what the risks to it are and how they will be minimised. It also ensures the co-ordination and delivery of the necessary infrastructure. This feeds into our implementation and delivery schedule which we have provided in a separately published document. We have also provided a monitoring framework which provides those indicators we intend to use to measure the success or otherwise of key policies in the Local Plan.

#### The implementation and delivery plan

**8.1.2** The Local Plan implementation and delivery plan (IDP) sets out the main actions needed to achieve the Local Plan's aims and objectives. It assesses the most important of the relationships between the policies and proposals, examining who does what, recognising the key role of the Council as planning authority as well as an implementation agency in its own right. This will involve strong working and robust actions with the Council's full range of partners to deliver the levels of growth envisaged. Key milestones are identified which will be subject to monitoring by the Council and its partners to trigger intervention if required.

**8.1.3** The IDP:

- sets out the delivery framework within which the strategy of the Local Plan will be delivered, including the main activities and time-frames to achieve the plan's aim and objectives;
- covers the delivery mechanisms that will be used for the implementation of proposals to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan's aims and objectives;
- identifies a delivery programme and critical path for proposals, a sequence of events in which proposals must occur for Swale to function and grow, including key housing, employment and supporting infrastructure projects;
- identifies the infrastructure priorities for the first five years of the Local Plan;
- outlines the key risks involved in the delivery of the Local Plan and the actions that will be undertaken to mitigate these risks plus contingencies which might be employed if required; and
- details the programme management, monitoring and review processes that will be used by the Council, including the use of key indicators, time scales and milestones that will be managed by the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

**8.1.4** A separate [implementation and delivery schedule](#) (IDS) is published alongside the Local Plan which sets out the key pieces of infrastructure that will be required, including who the responsible parties are for their delivery, their indicative costs and funding sources (as far as we are able), and when we expect to be able to bring the infrastructure forward. This will be updated annually as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. The IDS will be used as the basis to justify the Council's future proposed Community Infrastructure Levy schedule (CIL). At this stage, the IDS does not definitively specify those matters likely to be funded by CIL, Section 106 agreement or Section 278 agreement (Highways contributions). However, the Council is pursuing preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule and preparation of a Regulation 123 list, which will specify those matters expected to be funded from CIL contributions.

#### Delivery mechanism and priorities

**8.1.5** The IDP has been developed to demonstrate how planning objectives can be delivered by showing how public policy, and particularly planning policy, can shape development implementation through:

- developing and creating new partnerships to work to a single agenda and planning policy frameworks;

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

- ensuring that partnerships assist the Council in securing major infrastructure investment, both public and private, for the implementation of key strategic development sites;
- ensuring a supply of land is readily available for development, and where necessary, the Council using its powers, including site acquisition, to ensure this land can come forward; and
- ensuring planning procedures assist in the timely and efficient delivery of development and the establishment of specific arrangements to work on the most complex strategic development sites.

**8.1.6** The Council will take a business planning perspective on achieving growth. This will entail understanding how and when key infrastructure proposals will be paid for and by whom. The Council will continue to seek to secure public sector infrastructure funding through, for example, lobbying and bidding through the Local Economic Partnership. However, this will be within the context of a time of considerable constraint on the public sector purse and development viability in Swale.

**8.1.7** Whilst every opportunity will be taken to bid for appropriate funding and to co-ordinate investment plans of public and private bodies, public funding will not be available to meet all infrastructure requirements. Through its evidence prepared to justify the imposition of its Community Infrastructure Levy, the Council will show a shortfall in funding, notably because of the need for and overall cost of a new through-school for Sittingbourne. However, the Council will also continue to pursue the use of Section 106 and 278 agreements to secure appropriate developer contributions. These mechanisms will be subject to viability concerns in the early years of the Local Plan, affecting the amount of CIL that can be charged and the priorities for the use of S106 monies. In the short term, the Council's priorities for developer contributions from all sources will be transport, education, health and social care.

**8.1.8** S106 agreements will not be able to be used in support of those projects identified by the Regulation 123 List, whilst for projects outside of the List, S106 agreements are subject to a pooling restriction by which only five such agreements may be used to fund a single item. S106 agreements will continue to be used by the Council to address site specific developer contribution issues and are most likely to include open space provision, more localised or site specific transport issues and contributions to NHS and County Council infrastructure requirements.

**8.1.9** In the case of major highway projects, such as the proposed improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange on the A249, the primary funding mechanisms will be the use of S278 of The Highways Act 1980, which are not subject to the same restrictions as S106 agreements. In addition, the Council and its partners will also utilise bids for funding from such initiatives as the Local Growth Fund operated by the SE Local Enterprise Partnership.

**8.1.10** Sitting outside of both the CIL and S106 mechanisms, are the tariff payments required to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Directive. These are used where potential likely significant effects are identified, particularly as a result of recreational pressures on Special Protection Areas/Ramsar sites, and the tariff payment is applied to deal with the mitigation of impacts off-site. As this enables the development to comply with European Law, these payments are not classed as developer contributions for infrastructure or subject to the restrictions affecting CIL and S106; neither are they taken into account for purposes of assessing the viability of development. Currently the most convenient mechanism for paying this tariff are S106 agreements.

**8.1.11** The Council cannot implement the Local Plan strategy alone. It will work with public, private and voluntary sector agencies to draw together resources and priorities to deliver growth. This may include the need to identify alternative and creative funding sources for infrastructure provision. The Council has established strong partnerships, which have assisted in the process of producing the Local Plan and its supporting evidence base. It will continue to strengthen these arrangements.

**8.1.12** The Council proposes to develop a number of existing mechanisms to assist delivery of Local Plan objectives, with particular focus on key sites and infrastructure. These include:

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

## 8

- Major Sites and Infrastructure Group: The Borough and County Councils meet quarterly to discuss the progress on major sites and their support with County services and any joint funding bids. The Council is to request that NHS England join this grouping.
- North Kent Environmental Planning Group: Will continue to operate to ensure that developer contributions are steered toward implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.
- Development Partnership for Sittingbourne town centre regeneration: Will continue to meet monthly to review progress and ensure co-ordination between development and infrastructure providers.
- Queenborough and Rushenden Steering Group: Will continue to meet quarterly to review progress with the Homes and Communities Agency and Kent County Council to ensure co-ordination between development and infrastructure providers. A separate sub-group will continue to monitor the spending of developer contributions within the regeneration area.
- Swale Development Team: Meets regularly to discuss at an early stage pending and active planning applications and presents an opportunity for infrastructure providers to give input into infrastructure needs.
- Swale Design Panel: Meets to consider major development proposals at an early stage so as to provide developers with design advice and commentary which can be taken forward into planning applications.

**8.1.13** To narrow the likely funding gaps, the Council will work with its partners to secure funding for its infrastructure priorities from a number of potential sources. Currently, these include:

- Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan: Provides the overall framework and basis for bids for transport funding of major projects.
- Kent & Medway's Growth & Infrastructure Framework: Likely to provide the overall framework and basis for bids for funding for all infrastructure priorities, whilst exploring the capacity for cross-boundary co-operation on strategic infrastructure.
- Local Growth Fund: The Government fund for the bidding of major and local infrastructure projects. In the case of the large local major schemes element, funding will be allocated via Local Enterprise Partnerships.

### Public Sector Intervention

**8.1.14** To deliver the Local Plan, the Council may be required to intervene to ensure that key proposals come forward. Examples of this will include:

- promoting development opportunities through effective marketing and promotion;
- developing closer working arrangements between public sector organisations and with the private sector;
- developing and implementing strategies to tackle particular issues, such as affordable housing, transport and Gypsy and Traveller issues;
- aligning priorities and using existing public sector funding to meet common objectives;
- preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Masterplans to investigate and identify the issues of developing a particular site and provide a clear and more detailed level of planning policy guidance on how they should be resolved. This also enables local communities to be more involved and prepares the way for the submission of a planning application;
- buying land by agreement in order to make it available for development or compulsorily purchase it when agreement is not possible;
- preparing land for development e.g. removing contamination or providing new infrastructure;
- securing public sector funding as 'enabling development';
- entering into development partnerships with the private sector and/or other public bodies to implement key development proposals; and
- carrying out development directly or with partners.

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

### Phasing, milestones and contingencies

**8.1.15** There is a relationship between the different types of development proposed in the Local Plan and the provision of infrastructure. More specifically, there is a relationship between job creation, new homes, labour supply, town centre improvements and infrastructure. Table 8.1.1 illustrates the relationships between development and infrastructure, whilst Table 8.1.2 indicated infrastructure critical for the first five years of the plan following its 2018 adoption. Establishing the actual relationships and the timings for both development and infrastructure is challenging and both tables should therefore be regarded as a 'snapshot' in time.

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Local Plan Milestones		
Phase	Progress of major development	Progress of infrastructure
Phase 1 - 2014-18/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sittingbourne town centre - commencement of retail and leisure phases and commencement of new housing, cultural and civic facilities and improvements to public realm.</li> <li>• New retail provision on west Sheppey complete. Employment sites commence at Eurolink V, land north of Swale Way, south of Kemsley Mill and industrial development at Neatscourt.</li> <li>• Planning permissions in place for regeneration at Queenborough and Rushenden to the west of Rushenden Road and at Istil.</li> <li>• Planning permissions in place for NW and SW Sittingbourne, Crown Quay Lane, High Street Newington and Iwade expansion.</li> <li>• Development commences at Milton Pipes and Stones Farm, Sittingbourne</li> <li>• Planning permission(s) in place for land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster.</li> <li>• Planning permission(s) in place at Preston Fields, Faversham.</li> <li>• Development commencements at Western Link, Oare gravel workings, Perry Court Farm and land east of Love Lane allocations at Faversham.</li> <li>• Housing completions on outstanding planning permissions on-going.</li> <li>• Employment provision completed at Lady Dane Farm and commenced at Perry Court Farm, Faversham.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place in national roads programme major improvement for junction 5 of the M2.</li> <li>• Minor interim transport improvement at junctions 5 and 7 of M2 commenced.</li> <li>• Key Street/A249 junction improvement commenced.</li> <li>• Commencement of phase I of A2500 Lower Road improvements.</li> <li>• Junction enhancements to Love Lane/A2, A2/A251 and A2/Brogdale Road Faversham completed.</li> <li>• Cycle and pedestrian link Western Link to Lower Road Faversham commenced.</li> <li>• Enhancements to create public space and public transport interchange at Sittingbourne station commenced.</li> <li>• Quality Bus Partnership for Swale in place.</li> <li>• Expansion of Bysing Wood Primary School commenced.</li> <li>• Expansion of Faversham library commenced.</li> <li>• Finalisation of developer contributions approach across North Kent to secure implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</li> <li>• Extension to Milton Creek country park commenced.</li> </ul>
Phase 2 - 2019-23/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Main housing development phases with significant completions at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Queenborough and Rushenden.</li> <li>• NW Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• SW Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Stones Farm, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Barton Hill Drive, Minster.</li> <li>• Perry Court Farm, Faversham.</li> <li>• Preston Fields, Faversham.</li> <li>• Oare gravel workings, Faversham.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commencement (subject to review) of adult education and/or university technical college in Sittingbourne town centre.</li> <li>• Land reservations secured, with potential commencement of improvements to remaining A249 junctions west of Sittingbourne, notably interim improvements to Grovehurst Interchange.</li> <li>• Completion of phase 1 of improvements to A2500 Lower Road, Minster, together with commencement of phase 2.</li> <li>• Improvements to junction of Station Street/A2 Teynham completed and new access to Froggnal Lane west of Teynham established.</li> <li>• New access A2 east of Faversham for second phase of employment development at Lady Dane Farm commenced.</li> </ul>

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Local Plan Milestones		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frognal Lane and Station Road, Teynham.</li> <li>• Iwade expansion.</li> <li>• Newington High Street.</li> <li>• Completion of housing sites at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milton Pipes, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Western Link, Faversham.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Employment sites completed at Eurolink V, south of Kemsley Mill, Neatscourt and Ridham and Kemsley.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents parking in Station street and Barrow Green, Teynham completed.</li> <li>• Access improvements to Sheerness, Queenborough and Kemsley rail stations commenced.</li> <li>• On-going implementation of Quality Bus Partnership initiatives.</li> <li>• Primary school provision commenced/completed at Warden Bay (expansion), Murston (expansion), Regis Manor (expansion), Queenborough and Rushenden (new) and SW Sittingbourne (new).</li> <li>• Commencement of new primary school at NW Sittingbourne (phase 1 of through-school).</li> <li>• Youth services provided at Faversham (Bysing Wood and St. Mary's), Sittingbourne (New House) and Isle of Sheppey (Sheerness, Minster and Leysdown).</li> <li>• Expanded GP provision commenced/complete at east Sheppey (consolidation), The Bell Centre, Sittingbourne (new or alternative option), Grovehurst (extension), The Meads (extension), Sheppey Community Hospital (extension), Queenborough (extension) Iwade (extension), Teynham (extension or new), Newton Place or Faversham Health Centre (extension).</li> <li>• Implementation of management measures within and around the SPA in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</li> <li>• Strategic open space completed at NW Sittingbourne and Iwade.</li> <li>• Strategic open space between Sittingbourne and Bapchild (as part of Stones Farm allocation) complete.</li> <li>• Implementation of ecological management plan at Oare gravel workings commencing.</li> <li>• Completion of new pavilion at Frognal Lane, Teynham.</li> <li>• Additional capacity in swimming pool provision completed as part of review of leisure centre provision.</li> <li>• Additional burial space on Sheppey provided.</li> <li>• Townscape and streetscape enhancement schemes in town centres commenced.</li> </ul>
Phase 3 - 2024-28/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Sittingbourne regeneration continues with focus on new housing offer.</li> <li>• On going housing completions at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queenborough and Rushenden.</li> <li>• NW and SW Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Stones Farm, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>• Barton Hill Drive, Minster.</li> <li>• Iwade expansion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to J5 of the M2 completed.</li> <li>• Commencement of new secondary school at NW Sittingbourne (phase 2).</li> <li>• Funding secured and commencement of major improvements at Grovehurst A249 junction (subject to further investigation).</li> <li>• Cycle and pedestrian link to Parsonage Chase completed.</li> <li>• On-going implementation of Quality Bus Partnership initiatives.</li> <li>• New civic building completed within Sittingbourne town centre.</li> <li>• On-going implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway</li> </ul>

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8

Local Plan Milestones		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing developments completed at:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preston Fields, Faversham.</li> <li>Perry Court Farm, Faversham.</li> <li>Oare gravel workings, Faversham.</li> <li>Frogna Lane, Teynham.</li> <li>Newington High Street.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Outstanding large site planning permissions completed.</li> </ul>	and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New primary school complete at Faversham.</li> <li>Early Help Centre complete at Faversham (Lady Dane Farm proposed primary school).</li> <li>Provision of open space and footbridge across Milton Creek (as part of Crown Quay Lane and Milton Pipes allocations).</li> <li>New primary school expansion complete at Teynham.</li> <li>Expanded GP provision commenced/complete at Milton Regis (reconfiguration), Memorial medical centre (reconfiguration) and London Road surgery (reconfiguration).</li> <li>Habitat/landscape restoration initiative commenced.</li> </ul>
Phase 4 - 2029-31 (onwards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing developments complete at:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Queenborough and Rushenden.</li> <li>NW Sittingbourne (beyond plan period).</li> <li>SW Sittingbourne.</li> <li>Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>Stones Farm, Sittingbourne.</li> <li>Barton Hill Drive, Minster.</li> <li>Iwade expansion.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On-going implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</li> <li>Commencement of phase 3 NW Sittingbourne secondary school.</li> <li>On-going implementation of Quality Bus Partnership initiatives.</li> <li>Investment in water resources by the water companies.</li> </ul>

Table 8.1.1

**8.1.16** A change in the delivery of one or more of the Key Local Plan Milestones milestones may reflect matters which the Council will need to respond to. For example, in the case of housing, other sites may need to be brought forward, but a wider persistent and widespread structural problem either with a site or sites or in the wider economy may be clear signals of a need to review the Local Plan.

### Infrastructure delivery for the five year period following adoption of the Local Plan

**8.1.17** Based on adoption of the Local Plan in 2017/18, Table 8.1.1 is intended to illustrate the most important infrastructure needing to be in place during that period the immediate five years to 2021/22. Readers should refer to the Council's separately published implementation and delivery schedule which will be regularly updated.

Infrastructure project	Commentary
Quality Bus Partnership improvements (bus priority and punctuality improvements).	Already in place.
Interim transport improvement at Junctions 5 and 7 of M2 at Stockbury and Brenley Corner.	Monies already secured through planning permissions.
Land reserved for junction improvements at A249/Grovehurst Road junction.	Improvement not triggered within 5-year period, however, land is likely to be reserved as part of planning permissions on allocations at NW Sittingbourne and at Iwade.

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Infrastructure project	Commentary
Completion of A2/A249 Key Street, Sittingbourne junction improvement.	On-going monies being secured through S106/S278 from planning permissions.
Completion of phase 1 A2500 Lower Road improvement, Minster, Isle of Sheppey.	To be secured by Local Growth Fund award and S106 from pending sites and allocations.
Completion of 'Station Square', Sittingbourne, public space enhancements.	Award of funding by South East Local Enterprise Partnership and as a result of regeneration of town centre.
Completion of junction improvement at Love Lane/A2 Faversham.	To be secured by development of Lady Dane Farm allocation.
Completion of junction improvement A251/A2, Brogdale Road, Faversham.	To be secured by development of Perry Court Farm allocation.
Completion of cycle pedestrian link Western Link to Lower Road, Faversham.	To be secured by development of Western Link allocation.
Completion of Bysing Wood Primary School expansion, Faversham.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Commencement of new primary school, Queenborough and Rushenden.	To be secured by KCC, HCA and S106 contributions.
Commencement of new primary school SW Sittingbourne.	To be secured from S106 agreement from allocation at SW Sittingbourne.
Completion of Warden Bay Primary School expansion, Warden.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Completion of Faversham library expansion.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Completions of adaptations at Faversham, Minster and Leysdown Children's Centres.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Commencement of refurbishment at New House Centre, Sittingbourne.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Completion of consolidation of surgeries on east Sheppey.	To be secured by S106 contributions and CCG forward funding.
Commencement of extension to Milton Creek Countrypark.	Secured by development of land south of Kemsley Mill.
Completion of junction improvement, A2/Station Street, Teynham.	Secured by development of land at Station Road, Teynham.
Completion of new roundabout west of Teynham for access to Frogmal Lane site.	Secured by development of land at Frogmal Lane, Teynham.
Completion of residents parking at Station Road and Barrow Green, Teynham.	Secured by development of land at Station Road and Barrow Green Farm, Teynham.
Begin implementation of rail access improvements at Kemsley, Queenborough and Sheerness.	To be secured by S106 contributions.
Completion of primary school at Queenborough and Rushenden.	Secured by KCC and development of Queenborough and Rushenden regeneration area.
Completion of refurbishment Sittingbourne library.	To be secured by S106 agreements.

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8

Infrastructure project	Commentary
Completion of community, learning and skills classrooms at Sittingbourne and Sheppey.	To be secured by S106 agreements.
Commencement of improvements to youth and children's centres at Sittingbourne, Minster and Leysdown, together with enhancements to outdoor education across the Borough.	To be secured by S106 agreements and CIL.
Completion of Bell Centre Health Centre, Sittingbourne.	To be secured by Swale CCG and from S106 agreements.
Commencement of surgery expansion, Iwade.	To be secured by Swale CCG and from S106 agreements.
Completion expansion of surgery, Faversham.	To be secured by Canterbury and Coastal CCG and from S106 agreements.
Commencement of increased swimming pool capacity.	To be confirmed as part of future leisure review and to be provided as part of re-provision of leisure centre facilities for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Likely to be secured by CIL.
Site secured for Sheppey burial space.	To be secured by CIL.
Commencement of urban greening project - street trees, Sittingbourne.	Likely to be secured by CIL and from relevant development sites.
Establishment of townscape environmental enhancement grants – town centres.	Supporting local plan objectives. Likely to be secured by CIL.
Securing tariff/CIL mechanism for implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.	On site provision being made on site as appropriate and via on-going tariff for off-site mitigation.

Table 8.1.2 Infrastructure necessary to deliver the Local Plan planned growth for 2017/18-2021/22

**8.1.18** Accepting that there are inevitable uncertainties associated with both the delivery of development and infrastructure, the Council believes that the five year period from adoption of the development strategy, 2017-22, is deliverable despite the current poor market viability of a significant part of the Borough, without the need for major items of strategic infrastructure to be provided in full. It does however, present the starting point for a number of infrastructure projects that need to support the main phase of growth in the Local Plan period post 2022. These include, in particular, the infrastructure associated with growth at NW and SW Sittingbourne and Iwade. Beyond this point, deliverability will be much less certain, particularly if poor viability persists. Proposals to manage these risks are outlined in paragraph 8.1.22 onwards.

### Longer term development opportunities

**8.1.19** Policies Regen 3 and 4 identify the broad potential that may be present at the Port of Sheerness and Kent Science Park in Sittingbourne. The amount of and location of development that could arise from these longer term proposals do not form part of the Local Plan, however, progress in bringing forward the evidence to secure regeneration at these locations will be monitored and, if necessary, a Local Plan review, will be initiated.

### Contingencies

**8.1.20** Even with the highest level of public sector intervention and flexibility there is a possibility that development proposals may fail to come forward due to reasons beyond local control. At this stage a number of strategic areas of risk have been identified along with appropriate contingency measures.

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

### Risk I: Poor growth in private sector employment

**8.1.21** Given the portfolio of economic development sites, it is not considered likely that poor growth will be due to any lack of available sites to meet market demands. The following contingencies are identified:

- consider loosening of use class restrictions in policies to allow other commercial uses;
- strengthen inward investment promotional campaign; and
- Council corporate policy initiatives to improve the skills of the local population.

### Risk II: Fragility in housing market/market capacity delays investment

**8.1.22** The risks for Swale arise from sluggish levels of completions at the start of the plan period and the impacts that poor viability may have on house construction.

**8.1.23** As at 2014 there were encouraging signs in the recovery of the housing market locally, although there remain uncertainties as to its strength, durability and capacity. For Swale, the poor market is forecast as impacting upon the performance of the Local Plan in its first three years and will present challenges moving forward. There are five inter-related risks:

1. With the majority of the housing growth proposed in areas of current poorer viability, this, alongside the more challenging urban regeneration sites of central Sittingbourne and Queenborough and Rushenden, mean that early on, a large proportion of the Local Plan housing supply may be vulnerable to delay;
2. National requirements to continuously achieve a five year supply of housing land mean that existing shortfalls in housing completions must be remedied. A failure to do so may lead to sites outside of the Local Plan process coming forward and being permitted, despite the considerable levels of development land allocated by the Local Plan judged as viable and deliverable;
3. The phasing of completions at key sites on the western side of Sittingbourne, Iwade and, potentially, the Isle of Sheppey may be impacted upon by the timing of transport improvements to A249 junctions;
4. Numbers of housing completions from the latter part of phase 1 of the Local Plan onwards are forecast to be at levels that could challenge both the private and public sectors ability to deliver. Achieving these levels consistently over a significant number of years will be hugely dependent upon both market capacity and the national or regional investment decisions of housing developers that the Council cannot forecast; and
5. Ideally, the Council's projection of housing delivery, taking account of housing market recovery and long lead in times, should provide a smooth transition from current low level of completions in phase 1 of the Local Plan to the peak years of phases 2 and 3. In contrast to this, the immediate forecast for completions in the next few years are at levels below the annualised housing target, which, to achieve the necessary five year supply of housing, requires a considerable leap to significantly higher levels of completions which need to be consistently maintained. Whilst a smoother transition could occur as the housing market takes decisions about the totality of the sites likely to be available at the end of phase I, such an outcome could well leave the Council with challenges to its five year supply over a considerable period of the plan.

**8.1.24** In terms of the first risk, it is possible that viability will recover more quickly and not result in significant risks to urban regeneration projects. In the short term, the Council will consider carefully the viability concerns of developers at the planning application stage in order to ensure that completions can proceed as far as possible. In the specific cases of the regeneration projects, public sector involvement has increased confidence that they can be delivered, although the compromises that may still be needed to ensure delivery could impact upon the creation of new sustainable communities. In the case of the regeneration of central Sittingbourne, a development partnership involving the Council and The Spirit of Sittingbourne is in place and local growth fund monies are to fund a significant new area of public realm. A planning permission for phase 1 of the regeneration proposals should also be in place soon. At Queenborough and Rushenden, the involvement of the Homes and Communities Agency is now likely to deliver a first phase of development as a planning application in 2016-17.

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8

**8.1.25** The Council will manage any delays in these projects via the mechanisms in paragraph 8.1.13. Any serious deferral may be a matter that leads to a review of the Local Plan. Outside this process, other market delays will be responded to by the following contingencies:

- considering innovative development partnerships and funding initiatives through the Homes and Communities Agency; and
- reviewing previously unavailable and/or unsuitable sites identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

**8.1.26** Overall, the remaining four risks will be managed by minimising the barriers that may impact upon the phasing of development and permitting other developments where in accordance with the Local Plan. However significant parts of these risks lie outside of the direct control of the Council and rely upon the private sector to deliver both the overall scale of growth and the level of completions that have been indicated as achievable by them. Policy ST2 indicates that should shortfalls in the five year supply of housing land seriously compromise the ability of the Local Plan to achieve its housing target, this may be a matter for a Local Plan review.

**8.1.27** The Council will also monitor its five year supply using the 'Liverpool' method, by which any shortfalls in completions will be made up during the remainder of the plan period. This will also minimise the risks associated with unrealistic annualised levels of housing completions. The Council will monitor its use to ensure that this approach to calculating housing land supply is kept in place for the minimum time possible, having regard to local circumstances on site phasing and viability evidence.

**8.1.28** In the specific case of the second and third identified risks, these will be managed, in part, by the proposed 'over-allocation' of sites by the Council as a means to boost the overall supply and address the possibility of unforeseen delay or problems with other allocated sites. It is also assisted by the number and variety of individual sites allocated which means there are potentially many outlets which can maximise delivery. Where sites have been phased for reasons of infrastructure provision, the Council will continue to keep these under review and, where justified, allow sites to come forward earlier where this will not result in significantly harmful outcomes.

**8.1.29** Even with these measures in place, the Council may need to ensure that any planning application on non-allocated sites is considered having regard to the Council's position concerning its five year housing land supply. Where there are shortfalls in this supply, this may mean that it will be necessary to grant planning permission on sites outside of the local plan framework of allocations where in accordance with national policy.

**8.1.30** Whilst these measures are intended to address risks that may lead to slower housing delivery than forecast, the Council will keep all matters under close review. However, the Local Plan will have met its objectively assessed need for housing in full with allocations found sound in terms of their being both deliverable and developable. Should, despite this, shortfalls in the land supply continue to occur, the Council will consider whether it is appropriate to continue to permit housing sites that do not accord with the Local Plan where there is no compelling reason evident as to why unimplemented housing commitments and/or allocated Local Plan sites are not coming forward - in other words where there may be evidence of failure in market delivery rather than planning related reasons for the shortfall in land supply. The Council will, also potentially commence an immediate Local Plan review, as signalled by Policy ST2.

### **Risk III: Investment in central Sittingbourne falls behind investment in urban extensions at Sittingbourne creating further leakage in retail spending**

**8.1.31** Achieving a sustainable relationship between investment in central Sittingbourne and new development on urban extensions is desirable, but difficult in practical terms. As already indicated, serious deferral of development within the regeneration area is likely to be a key signal to review the Local Plan. However, outside of this process, the following contingencies are identified:

- review town centre schemes to identify and resolve issues;

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

- consider increased public sector intervention as required; and
- ensure out of centre proposals do not prejudice the delivery of town centre retail and leisure development.

### **Risk IV: Key Infrastructure lags behind growth leading to unacceptable consequences**

**8.1.32** Poor levels of viability could lead to a reduced amount of developer contributions and therefore delays in bringing forward some infrastructure needs. There is some evidence of such deficiencies having arisen from past growth in the Borough that has resulted in congestion in parts of the strategic road network, a shortage of affordable housing and poor access to key community facilities. Deferral in the delivery of infrastructure can also affect the sustainability of development, the quality of the places created and people's quality of life. In the long term this would ultimately affect and alter perceptions of the area as a place to live, work or invest, even potentially acting as a bottleneck on further development.

**8.1.33** Pressures on the Council to ensure a readily available supply of housing land are likely to lead to developer contributions being reduced or deferred. Likewise restrictions on Section 106 Agreements for pooled contributions will also act to curb infrastructure investment ahead of the Council adopting a CIL charging schedule. Once such a schedule is adopted, the overall fund will need to be prioritised and, in the absence of significant public funding, there will be a shortfall against the total infrastructure needed.

**8.1.34** These risks may be minimal in the short term as development delivery for the first five years of the Local Plan does not require major levels of infrastructure investment. However, it is in the second period of the plan where a significant burst of development activity is expected and when the most significant infrastructure will be required. The main strategic risk to the plan overall relates to any significant deferral in the improvement to Junction 5 of the M2, alongside the possibility of other significant issues arising on the strategic and local road networks. Other risks to the Local Plan arise from potential delays in education and health provision.

**8.1.35** In the case of the highway network, the risks arise beyond the first five years after adoption of the Local Plan. For the strategic road network, mitigation schemes are likely to be delivered that will support the Plan, but implementing them will be in tandem with the build out of development schemes. For the local road network, whilst the likely traffic impact of growth can be accommodated in the medium term, there is a risk of stresses occurring in the A2 corridor toward the end of the plan period. Managing these risks will require an early review of the Local Plan, with the aim of completing this by the end of March 2022. This review will be underpinned by both the necessary transport evidence gathering and the adoption by the Borough and the County Council of a Transport Strategy.

**8.1.36** Further, details of the appropriate mitigation measures required for each individual allocation will become clearer at the time that the relevant planning application is made. Therefore, Swale Borough Council (who will lead on all matters) will continue to work with Highways England and Kent County Council (who will carefully monitor the local network and the implementation of permissions). This work will ensure that:

- a. if the mitigation permissions are implemented, the mitigation occurs in a timely fashion; or
- b. if the mitigation permissions are not implemented (at all or to a different timetable), then alternative mitigation schemes are prepared and implemented in a timely fashion; and
- c. the Keycol, Bobbing and Grovehurst Junctions on the A249, and the A2 corridor continue to be monitored, including for the individual and cumulative impacts from development, with action taken to mitigate them as necessary.

**8.1.37** The implementation and delivery schedule will also identify whether there are risks associated with any funding gaps between the infrastructure required to support the plan and the funding available. This is though a snapshot in time and will exclude the possibility of further future public funding being made as well as the S106 monies from the identified development sites. These, together, will act to reduce any gaps identified.

## Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8

**8.1.38** Other matters will work toward the management and reduction of this risk. It is anticipated that as the economic recovery continues and viability improves, revenue from S106 is likely to increase. It will also be the case that a review of the proposed CIL charge will be undertaken regularly and will present opportunities for amended CIL rates as the economy improves, particularly for Sittingbourne and Sheppey. Together, over time, these should help increase the developer based funding being made from these areas which will be particularly important as both areas are the main focus for growth and infrastructure needs and currently less able to significantly contribute.

**8.1.39** Notwithstanding the above, the combination of public funding, development contributions via S106/S278 and direct provision of infrastructure is considered sufficient to deliver the provision identified as necessary to support the first five years of the Local Plan. In the longer term, subject to a review of CIL and increased revenues from CIL and S106 as a result of improved viability, the overall infrastructure programme set out in the draft Local Plan and IDP/IDS should be able to be fully implemented. Failing this, were such matters to lead to significant delays in development coming forward, this would be a strong indicator of a need to review the Local Plan.

**8.1.40** To further manage risks, through Policy CP6, the Council will build into the legal agreements of developments, where policy requirements have been significantly reduced, the means to claw back contributions at a later date should values improve at levels notably higher than at the point the permission was granted. For affordable housing, Policy DM8 considers the possibility of commuting provision from more viable areas and using the monies to support provision in areas of poorer viability that are those in greatest need. The policy will also allow the Council to increase affordable housing provision in individual circumstances where improved viability can be demonstrated at the detailed level, having regard to individual site circumstances and/or micro considerations relating to its location.

**8.1.41** More generally, the Council will monitor the situation and widening delays in community infrastructure provision relative to new development coming forward will, exceptionally, be a signal to defer other sites or, exceptionally, mean a review of the Local Plan.

### **Risk V: The need for the alignment of jobs and homes**

**8.1.42** Chapter 4 has highlighted the need to maintain the broad relationship between new jobs and homes. This is important to ensure an adequate supply of labour to meet economic needs and to minimise excessive levels of in or out commuting in line with the objective of achieving the sustainable development principles outlined in the NPPF. The Council will monitor the take up of land and commit itself to commencing a review of this Local Plan -if the indicators set out in Policy ST2 suggest it.

**8.1.43** Key policies within the Local Plan have also been set out with monitoring indicators intended to provide measures of progress. These are set out within the monitoring schedule in Section 8.2 Monitoring arrangements. Should monitoring find that progress is insufficient to meet current targets it may not automatically mean that a review of the Local Plan should take place. The Council will identify the relevant issues, analyse the problem and propose remedial action if necessary.

### **The Housing Implementation Strategy**

**8.1.44** National planning policy expects Councils to set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing.<sup>(8.1)</sup>

#### **The housing trajectory**

**8.1.45** Housing trajectories set out a projected schedule of housing delivery across the Borough up to 2031. The Council's housing trajectory and 5-year housing supply calculation is included (and updated) within its Annual Monitoring Report.

**8.1.46** Although the Council has taken into account all relevant factors in its anticipated phasing of housing delivery across the plan period, a housing trajectory may be subject to variations over time reflecting the actual level of completions that take place and unforeseen changes in likely delivery. As at 2015/16, the

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Council's housing trajectory indicated a potential and significant burst of development activity for the years 2019/20 onwards, reflecting a return to more stable market conditions, but at forecast levels previously unseen in the Borough over the previous 30 years. These very high expected levels of completions from 2019/20 onward will be monitored by the Council.

**8.1.47** For the Housing Implementation Strategy, for the short term at least, ensuring that a five year supply of housing land is maintained will be a considerable challenge. However, the Council will fully exploit the following measures intended to boost housing land supply by:

1. Not preventing sites phased outside the five year supply from coming forward unless there are critical infrastructure barriers that cannot be resolved within a reasonable timescale.
2. Responding positively to increases in density on sites where environmental quality is not significantly compromised.
3. Allowing windfall sites to come forward unless significantly detrimental to the workings of Policy ST3, or to the supply of employment land critical to the Local Plan strategy, or contrary to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy.
4. Despite having already reduced planning policy requirements to support viability, continuing to ensure that policy provisions are applied flexibly unless it would work significantly against the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy.

### Planning for Gypsies and Travellers

**8.1.48** Currently the Council has both a 5-year supply of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and a relatively low residual requirement for pitches in the remainder of the plan period. The Council will report on progress within its Annual Monitoring Report.

### Affordable housing

**8.1.49** Councils are required to produce a trajectory of expected affordable housing completions.<sup>(8.2)</sup> For Swale this issue comes at a complicated and uncertain time for policy making in this area. The difficulty of setting any form of target or trajectory for expected affordable housing completions is complicated by uncertainties over national policy initiatives, the overall impact of which are difficult to estimate. Furthermore, Registered Social Landlords are significantly contracting their investments in new affordable housing provision. With these major uncertainties, the Council does not consider it appropriate to set a target or an expected trajectory of completions for affordable houses at this stage; instead an overall target will be set within a review of its Housing Strategy, progress against of which will be monitored (including the take up of the Government's starter homes initiative) via the Council's Annual Monitoring process.

## Policy IMP 1

### Implementation and Delivery Plan

The Council will work with developers and other public agencies to deliver the vision, objectives and strategy of the Local Plan. Partners will:

1. Have regard to the priorities set for the first five years of the Local Plan and make provision for the infrastructure intended to deliver it;
2. Review annually the Local Plan implementation and delivery schedule;
3. Monitor the milestones set out by the Local Plan implementation delivery plan. Significant failures within such milestones may act as a need to review the Local Plan and/or a need to bring forward one or more of the measures identified by the Local Plan implementation and delivery plan;
4. Address the risks associated with:
  - a. poor growth in private sector employment;

- b. fragility in housing market/market capacity delaying investment in central Sittingbourne or Queenborough and Rushenden or other major housing sites;
- c. delays in central Sittingbourne regeneration creating further leakage in retail spending;
- d. key infrastructure lags behind growth leading to unacceptable consequences; and
- e. the alignment of jobs and housing.

## 8.2 Monitoring arrangements

**8.2.1** Monitoring is an essential and continuous part of the plan making process. The Council's [Annual Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) will assess whether the Local Plan strategy is being achieved. This will be closely aligned to the Council's corporate performance monitoring. The AMR will be used to identify where existing targets and indicators need to be amended or deleted and/or new ones included. The AMR will also identify the need for, and the scope of, a review of the policies.

**8.2.2** Table 8.2.1 sets out our proposed monitoring framework. The monitoring indicators identified are a mix of relevant indicators drawn from a number of sources:

- as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- indicators identified in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan; and
- local indicators identified in respect of key policies of the Local Plan.

Policy	Indicator
ST1 Delivering Sustainable Development	Monitored by key indicators from other policies.
ST2 Development targets for jobs and new homes 2014-31	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To monitor (at the Borough and Planning Area levels) appropriate indicators intended to measure past and future projected completions to demonstrate a Borough supply of specific deliverable housing sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against the Local Plan housing target with an additional buffer of 5%.</li> <li>2. To report on the number of affordable dwelling completions that are provided relative to the Council's estimated provision.</li> <li>3. Annual jobs change as reported by Annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) to demonstrate progress toward meeting the Council's job target.</li> <li>4. Reporting on the progress of individual allocations relative to their expected rate of delivery as identified by the housing trajectory and Local Plan Implementation and Delivery Plan.</li> </ol>
ST4 Meeting the Local Plan development targets	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Detailed reporting of major development sites by reference to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. progress with delivery of development on allocated and sites with planning permission;</li> <li>b. progress that has been made in removing constraints on development and whether a site is now considered to be deliverable or developable;</li> <li>c. unforeseen constraints that have emerged which now mean a site is no longer deliverable or developable, and how these could be addressed; and</li> <li>d. whether the windfall allowance for housing is coming forward as expected, or may need to be adjusted.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
CP1 Building a strong, competitive economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of economic and workforce structures to demonstrate improvements to the Borough's economy by reference to:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. employment by occupation to show stability in manufacturing, increased employment in retail, leisure, office and B1a use class activity;</li> <li>b. economic activity/inactivity/employment/unemployment to indicate change;</li> <li>c. total spend/no. of visitors/percentage of jobs in tourism (subject to release of Cambridge Model);</li> <li>d. change in number of companies/businesses (no. of VAT registered) located in the area;</li> <li>e. education qualifications to indicate improvements;</li> <li>f. job density (number of jobs filled to working age population) as indicator of greater levels of employment being achieved in Swale by locally living people);</li> <li>g. overall amount of floor space developed for employment by type to show on-going net gain;</li> <li>h. employment land availability by type;</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8

Policy	Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. employment land lost to other uses;</li> <li>j. GVA £ per capita;</li> <li>k. change in annual average wage; and</li> <li>l. town centre vacancy rates to show reductions.</li> </ul>
CP2 Promoting sustainable transport	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate progress and move to more sustainable transport modes by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. implementation of transport improvement projects from the Implementation and Delivery Schedule;</li> <li>b. change in method of travel to work, distance travelled, car ownership (where data outside Census is available);</li> <li>c. per capita expenditure on roads, parking and traffic services;</li> <li>d. change in extent of public rights of way in the Borough; and</li> <li>e. number of schools with walking/cycling to school scheme.</li> </ul>
CP3 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate progress on bringing forward a range of housing types by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. change in the total number of households;</li> <li>b. change in household size and type;</li> <li>c. percentage of homes not meeting the decent homes standard; and</li> <li>d. change in number of empty properties.</li> </ul>
CP5 Health and wellbeing	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators associated with healthy communities to show improved quality of life with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. population profile (age structure, ethnicity etc.);</li> <li>b. crime statistics and fear of crime;</li> <li>c. life expectancy at birth;</li> <li>d. health deprivation;</li> <li>e. mortality rates, inc. death rates by cause;</li> <li>f. numbers on welfare benefits (with reference to children and over 60s who are income deprived);</li> <li>g. levels of new open space and sports facilities provided;</li> <li>h. percentage of new development completed in Rural Local Service Centres; and</li> <li>i. progress on health facility provision from projects from the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.</li> </ul>

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
CP7 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate that the quality of the natural environment is maintained or enhanced with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. percentage of completions on previously developed land;</li> <li>b. average densities on permitted housing sites;</li> <li>c. amount of best and most versatile agricultural land lost to significant scales of development;</li> <li>d. planning permissions implemented involving planning condition(s) for remediation;</li> <li>e. frequency of air pollution standards violations;</li> <li>f. per capita emissions of 'conventional' air pollutants, including CO<sub>2</sub>, together with fuel consumption;</li> <li>g. new designations of Air Quality Management Areas;</li> <li>h. changes in landscape character area condition;</li> <li>i. change to overall condition of SSSIs;</li> <li>j. levels of new open space provided, especially natural/semi-natural greenspace. Review of open space assessment when required to determine access to local greenspace; and</li> <li>k. the monitoring framework for the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy established by the North Kent Environmental Planning Framework.</li> </ul>
CP8 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate the maintenance or improvement to the historic environment with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. number of Conservation Area Appraisals completed;</li> <li>b. number of assets added to the Local List of Heritage Assets;</li> <li>c. change to number of buildings on national and local lists of buildings at risk.</li> </ul>
DM8 Affordable housing	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate affordable housing provision relative to stated targets with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. average house price relative to average income;</li> <li>b. change in number on housing register; and</li> <li>c. affordable housing completions.</li> </ul>
DM9 Rural exceptions housing	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate an increase in the overall supply of rural affordable housing units and to measure the effectiveness of the policies enabling mechanisms with reference to:</p>

**Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements 8**

Policy	Indicator
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the numbers of affordable housing units relative to the number of market homes provided to achieve this as a percentage.</li> </ul>
DM17 Open space, sports pitches and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate provision in accordance with stated policy standards with reference to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the amount of open space/facility established by type relative to the standard.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
DM19 Sustainable design and construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate improved performance in sustainable design and construction standards with reference to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the number of BREEAM certificates; and</li> <li>b. the number of permissions granted and implemented for renewable and low-carbon schemes and their expected levels of generation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
DM21 Water, flooding and drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to ensure that the risk to communities from flood risk/contamination is not increased with reference to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the number of planning permissions granted for residential development in flood risk areas contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency;</li> <li>b. the number of developments which use sustainable drainage systems;</li> <li>c. the number of applications which do not receive approval for water supply and wastewater connection from the appropriate water company;</li> <li>d. levels of water quality;</li> <li>e. water consumption per capita (in so far as data collection is possible at Borough level); and</li> <li>f. waste water treatment capacity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
DM23 Coastal change management area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to ensure that the risk to communities from coastal change is minimised and managed with reference to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the number of developments permitted within the CCMA and the number relocated away from it.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
DM24 Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to conserve or enhance landscape condition with reference to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. changes in landscape condition as indicated by a review of the Council's landscape character assessment;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
DM28 Biodiversity and geological conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. a formal review of landscape designations undertaken; and</li> <li>c. a review of planning approvals where contrary to Policy.</li> </ul> <p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to conserve or enhance biodiversity within the overall context of achieving a net gain in biodiversity with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a review of planning approvals where contrary to Policy;</li> <li>b. the amount of new habitat created by new development, especially natural/semi-natural greenspace;</li> <li>c. the number of SSSIs in favourable condition and other monitoring of biodiversity designations; and</li> <li>d. any monitoring undertaken of Kent Biodiversity Action Plan/Kent Biodiversity Strategy, including habitats created.</li> </ul>
DM30 Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate improvements in biodiversity and/or landscape and the effectiveness of the policy with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. number of applications made on the basis of this policy;</li> <li>b. number of applications permitted;</li> <li>c. extent of land proposed for enhancement as a result of the policy; and</li> <li>d. Reporting on implementation of proposals via monitoring arrangements established within planning permissions.</li> </ul>

Table 8.2.1 Proposed monitoring framework

**End Notes**

- 8.1 Para. 47 of National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- 8.2 Para. 47 of National Planning Policy Framework 2012