

Local Plan Panel Meeting	
Meeting Date	11 June 2020
Report Title	Preparation of Swale Infrastructure Delivery Plan
Cabinet Member	Cllr Mike Baldock, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	James Freeman
Head of Service	James Freeman
Lead Officer	Karen Sinclair
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the report is noted.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The provision of the right type and level of infrastructure in the right place and at the right time is essential to support the delivery of new homes, economic growth and for the creation of sustainable communities.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) clearly sets out that the delivery of infrastructure is key to sustainable communities and that a Local Plan's strategic policies should make sufficient provision for infrastructure. There is also an expectation that the identification and delivery of infrastructure will be undertaken through effective collaboration with infrastructure providers from early in the plan making process.
- 1.3 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will establish what improved or new infrastructure and service needs are required to support the level of development to be included in the reviewed Swale Local Plan over the plan period (to 2038). It will form part of the technical evidence base to support the preparation and then implementation of the Local Plan, helping to ensure that the identified additional infrastructure and service needs are delivered in a timely, co-ordinated, and sustainable way.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to briefly outline the stages of preparing the IDP.

2 Background

- 1.1. The purpose of the IDP is to identify the infrastructure schemes that are required to successfully deliver planned growth across the Borough. At the examination in public, the Inspector will need to be satisfied that the growth proposals and delivery of the proposed housing supply are consistent with existing and where necessary increased infrastructure and service provision and that there is a reasonable prospect of any new infrastructure being delivered over the plan period. The IDP will form, therefore, a key part of the evidence base underpinning the delivery of the Swale Local Plan.

1.2. The preparation of the IDP will draw on the outcomes from other pieces of Local Plan evidence base work including the transport modelling, Swale Transport Strategy and air quality evidence work and there will be close links with the Whole Plan Viability Assessment (WPVA), ensuring a co-ordinated approach to the development of the Local Plan. The latter is particularly important as the WPVA provides a consideration of the impact of policies in the Local Plan on site viability and consequently the ability to fund necessary infrastructure. As these various pieces of evidence base work come before Members over the next several months then the outcomes of this engagement will be reflected in the preparation of the IDP.

1.1. Infrastructure can be grouped into three main types:

- Physical infrastructure such as: transport infrastructure (roads, public transport, cycling and walking routes), gas and electricity infrastructure, water supply and wastewater treatment;
- Social infrastructure such as: primary and secondary schools, healthcare, emergency services, libraries, sports and recreational facilities, community facilities, cultural services; and
- Green infrastructure such as: open space, formal and informal green space, green and blue corridors.

1.2. It should be recognised that the IDP is not intended to be a comprehensive list to capture every infrastructure project being planned across the Borough or a 'shopping list' for developer contributions. It will focus on the types of infrastructure that will be fundamental to the delivery of the Local Plan development strategy and to support the intended levels and locations of growth. It is not intended, therefore, that the IDP will consider: the provision of infrastructure that would be part of the normal site development process i.e. water supply or utility connections, unless this were a strategic issue having a cumulative impact on a number of sites and potentially impacting on when sites could be delivered; open space or recreation/sports provision in accordance with relevant adopted standards; or affordable housing provision.

1.3. A three-stage approach is being taken to preparing the IDP, as set out below. The preparation of the IDP is tied to progress on the Local Plan review i.e. agreeing the preferred development strategy and site allocations, but an indicative timescale for completing each of the stages is given.

- *Evidence base gathering and analysis of current infrastructure provision (May-June 2020)*

The IDP will build upon the previous Implementation and Delivery Schedule (IDS), which was produced to support 'Bearing Fruits 2031'. Given the relatively recent adoption of the Bearing Fruits Plan, it is likely several of the infrastructure projects identified in the IDS will be carried forward into the IDP. As a starting point, therefore, through monitoring of relevant planning applications (both permitted and current) and engagement with those infrastructure providers and service delivery organisations identified in the IDS as being the lead delivery agency, an up to date position on the delivery of the identified infrastructure is currently being established.

The initial stage of preparation is also looking at an overview of current infrastructure quality and capacity to identify any infrastructure issues which could be barriers to growth. This is drawing from the responses to the 2018 'Looking Ahead' consultation, the outcomes of a workshop held with infrastructure providers in June 2018 (see Section 5) and completed and emerging Local Plan evidence base reports, such as the ongoing traffic modelling work.

The 'Looking Ahead' consultation and infrastructure workshop identified the following key infrastructure issues as matters to be addressed:

- M2 Junction 7
- M2 Junction 5/A249
- Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road
- A2 and A249 corridors
- Education provision, particularly the provision of secondary school places
- Primary healthcare provision
- Rail station improvements

This early discussion with infrastructure providers did not identify any 'show stoppers' but as part of the engagement with infrastructure providers and service delivery organisations referred to above, they have been asked to provide an updated position on any significant infrastructure capacity/delivery issues that may limit growth or options for growth across the Borough. They have also been asked to advise of any plans or investment strategies that could inform the preparation of the IDP and provide details of any key infrastructure investments and improvements that are planned to serve Swale Borough. By undertaking this exercise, the Council can establish the current baseline and anticipate any trends which may emerge when the location of final sites is known. At the time of writing this report, the information requested from infrastructure providers was awaited.

- *Infrastructure testing and drafting IDP (June – August 2020)*

The second stage will be to assess the implications of potential growth scenarios/development options to inform the selection of a preferred growth strategy and development sites. This will result in a more detailed position on infrastructure, detailing the specific infrastructure requirements of the Council's preferred growth strategy and development sites. The IDP will also provide information on the agencies involved in implementation, an overview of the risks and contingencies associated with each infrastructure type or specific project and, where known, delivery timescales, costs, and likely sources of funding.

This will be informed by further engagement with infrastructure providers, Duty to Co-operate discussions where there are cross boundary implications for infrastructure requirements and engagement with site promoters of preferred site allocations.

- *Informal consultation on draft IDP with infrastructure providers/service delivery organisations (September 2020)*

The third stage will involve focussed consultation with infrastructure providers to confirm the understanding of the identified infrastructure issues. The IDP will be updated to reflect any feedback.

1.3. Identifying infrastructure over the period of the local plan can be difficult as few infrastructure providers actively plan for that length of timeframe and infrastructure needs may be influenced by changes in technology and changes to the arrangements for the planning and delivery of infrastructure. It is also the case that where growth is planned for through significant new developments there may not be the certainty and/or funding secured for any necessary strategic infrastructure at the time the plan is produced. Therefore, whilst the Council will need to be clear on the infrastructure needed to deliver growth in the early stages of the plan period and to be able to demonstrate that this is deliverable in a timely manner, in the later stages of the plan period there is a degree of flexibility in that for any strategic infrastructure requirements the Council will need to demonstrate these are not beyond what could reasonably be considered to be achievable within the timescales envisaged.

1.1. Planning for infrastructure is therefore, a continuous and iterative process. The IDP will be a 'live' document that will be updated at appropriate stages during and beyond the plan making process to reflect the latest available information on infrastructure requirements and provision. The updating of the IDP will feed back into the legal requirement to review Local Plans every five years (to assess whether it needs to be updated), providing evidence as to whether the Local Plan remains deliverable.

3 Proposals

3.1 The proposal is for the report to be noted.

3 Alternative Options

1.1. National policy and guidance require local planning authorities to assess and set out the infrastructure needed to support growth over the plan period. The infrastructure requirements to support the emerging Local Plan will be set out in the IDP: it is, therefore, an important document which will demonstrate due consideration has been given to the infrastructure needed to underpin the delivery of the Local Plan.

1.2. There would be no benefit for Members to disregard the content of this report as it sets out the various stages of preparing the IDP and is for information purposes only. It highlights that the proposed approach is in accordance with national policy and without the IDP the Local Plan review would fail at examination. Should the Council decide not to proceed with a Local Plan review as per the NPPF and national planning policy guidance this could place the Council at risk of intervention by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and potentially increase the risk of ad-hoc unplanned development taking place.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The ‘Looking Ahead’ consultation, which ran between April and June 2018, included specific questions on the future social and physical infrastructure priorities for the Borough and how these could be delivered. An Infrastructure Workshop was also held in June 2018 with neighbouring local authorities and infrastructure providers and service delivery organisations, including representatives from: Highways England, the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), Southern Water, Network Rail and Kent County Council (KCC). The workshop provided an opportunity for an initial discussion about infrastructure constraints and potential barriers to growth in the Borough.
- 1.4. As set out in Section 2, there will be ongoing engagement and consultation with infrastructure providers throughout the preparation of the IDP. In addition to those identified above, approaches have also been made to South East Water, National Grid, UK Power Networks and SGN.
- 1.5. The information in the IDP is based on factual information and the professional opinion provided by the relevant infrastructure providers using their own assessment methodologies and mitigation assessments. As a technical evidence base document, therefore, it does not require public consultation although it will form part of the submission documents and part of the future examination in public.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The IDP preparation supports the Council’s corporate priorities of: Building the right homes in the right places and supporting quality jobs for all (Priority 1) Investing in our environment and responding positively to global challenges (Priority 2) Tackling deprivation and creating equal opportunities for everyone (Priority 3)
Financial, Resource and Property	There are no direct financial implications in preparing the IDP.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	None identified at this stage.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Local Plan will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Health and Wellbeing	It is expected that the IDP will include infrastructure requirements for health and social care reflecting the outcome of discussions with Kent and Medway CCG and KCC.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	The Local Plan will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment at appropriate stages. Preparing the IDP will help demonstrate delivery of the reviewed Local Plan and assist the Council and its delivery partners in achieving the timely and effective delivery of infrastructure to meet the future needs of all residents in the Borough.
Privacy and Data Protection	None identified at this stage.

7 Appendices

7.1 None.

8 Background Papers

Bearing Fruits: Implementation and Delivery Schedule (2016) can be found online at:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s14530/Interim%20Policy%20Statement%20Residential%20Park%20Homes%20REPORT%2028.04.20.pdf>

Responses to 'Looking Ahead' Consultation can be found online at:

<https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s14530/Interim%20Policy%20Statement%20Residential%20Park%20Homes%20REPORT%2028.04.20.pdf>