

Appendix II – Summaries of main issues raised in respect of the Swale Borough Council Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) Pre-submission Consultation: statutory consultees and neighbouring authorities

The summaries below aim to draw out the ‘headline’ issues raised during the Swale Borough Council Local Plan Review (Regulation 19) Pre-submission Consultation, which took place between 08 February and 30 April 2021. The representations received expressing support for the Local Plan Review have, on the whole, not been listed here.

Table 1 – Summary of main issues raised by key consultees.

Consultee	Main Issues
Environment Agency (EA)	The EA made no comments against the proposed development allocations, however minor amendments were suggested regarding the amplification/clarification of Policy DM 34 – Pollution and Land Stability, DM 37 – Sustainable Drainage and Policy ST10 – Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment.
Historic England (HE)	<p>HE raised concern about the impact of the proposed Faversham allocation and Teynham Area of Opportunity on heritage assets and suggested additional wording to protect and enhance them, including farmstead and field patterns in the sounding areas. Amended wording was also suggested for various policies to reduce or remove the risk to Swale’s designated heritage assets and require greater consideration of development impacts.</p> <p>HE was of the view that a masterplan should be prepared for the Port of Sheerness and wider Sheerness area to support the regeneration of heritage assets at risk. The masterplan of 2014 should be updated if Peel Ports do not intend to complete it. It was also considered that there should be a specific policy to support and drive the regeneration of Sheerness Town.</p>
Natural England (NE)	For the development strategy as a whole, NE highlighted opportunities for green and blue infrastructure, nature recovery networks and gave advice for considering impacts on international and national designations. It was considered that housing development should be provided in less sensitive areas of the Borough or in neighbouring borough’s under the Duty to Co-operate. It should be evidenced that options brought forward can demonstrate the least environmental impact and comply with the mitigation hierarchy and any large settlements should include substantive means of improving and providing sustainable transport.

	<p>In terms of specific allocations, the following issues were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed Rushenden South allocation includes considerable development directly adjacent to and including The Medway Estuary and Marshes Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Ramsar site and it was considered that the supporting evidence is inadequate to conclude that the development will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of these designations • the proposed Teynham Area of Opportunity should reference and take full account of the North Kent Strategic Access and Management Strategy; and • considered that, in relation to the proposed Neames Forstal allocation, allocations in, and adjacent to, the AONB should be a last resort and that further consideration should be given to the impact of proposals affecting it – this should include looking at alternative options for higher densities and different development sites elsewhere.
<p>Highways England (HE)</p>	<p>HE noted that they will be concerned with plans proposals that have the potential to impact the safe and efficient operation of the SRN, in this case, particularly the M2 J5, J6 and J7 (Brenley Corner), and the A249, Key Street, A249 Bobbing and Grovehurst Junctions. It was also noted that impacts arising from growth and development in Swale will be felt much further afield; for example, the M2 towards and beyond Medway, the A2 towards and beyond Canterbury and the A249 corridor to Maidstone and the M20. Development proposals that would impact the SRN network would need to be robustly assessed and mitigated via the appropriate channels. The local junctions were referenced as follows:</p> <p>M2J5</p> <p>Assuming the upgrade proceeds, the M2J5 will have capacity to support the delivery of the current adopted Local Plan level of housing growth. As yet, no assessment has been agreed regarding how much further growth could be accommodated. The Council will need to lead capacity assessments and, as necessary, further mitigation.</p> <p>M2J6</p>

M2J6 currently has some spare capacity. However, HE are commenting on applications which impact on the KCC A2/A251 because of the risk of queues blocking back to M2J6. The Local Plan Review may need to bring forward mitigation over and above the currently under construction KCC A2/A251 junction improvement.

M2J7

M2J7 (Brenley Corner) is currently operating at capacity level and experiences regular peak hour congestion. There is no current improvement scheme to mitigate the known issues. There are some KCC led funding/designs for minor improvements in the local roads approaching the junction. The junction was listed within RIS2 for study and possible action and has delegated to the RIS3 Pipeline. Until proposals are promoted and consented, the Council should not rely on RIS to mitigate Local Plan development, and funding is not yet committed. As such, developers will be required to self-mitigate and/or collectively mitigate.

A249 Key Street, Bobbing and Grovehurst Junctions

The Key Street A249/(KCC) A2 junction has been operating at capacity and requires mitigation. Phase 1 of a HIF/development contributions funded scheme was implemented in 2020. KCC carried out a consultation of Phase 2 proposals between December 2020 to January 2021. HE continues to work with Swale and KCC regarding working up the details so that the modelling demonstrates what mitigation is required and the design of that mitigation complies with the Design manual for Roads and Bridges. The design will also be influenced by the recently permitted Wises Lane (MUX1) development.

The KCC A2 remains a major route though Swale connecting several key settlements. However, in doing so, in many areas it is heavily congested and heavily constrained, such that any major improvements are unlikely to be deliverable. This in turn places additional pressures on the ASR for east – west movements and at the junctions between the A2 and the SRN. The Local Plan Review evidence base will need to consider this matter and potentially bring forward means to reduce or mitigate the impacts.

While historically the Bobbing junction has not been congested, recent and planned development in the B2006 corridor and increases in traffic using the corridor as an alternative to the A2 have meant that capacity is being used up and mitigation is necessary. The North West Sittingbourne allocation will be delivering a mitigation

scheme for the junction, but the Local Plan Review evidence base will need to assess what further mitigations may be required by the end of the plan period.

The A249 Grovehurst junction was subject to the same recent KCC consultation on emerging designs and is also funded by HIF/development contributions. HE continue to work with KCC to work up the designs.

Until the Key Street and Grovehurst improvements are completed, it is necessary to consider using Grampian conditions to manage the rate of residential and/or commercial occupations to ensure the junctions maintain the required level of safety, reliability and operational efficiency.

Notwithstanding these various SRN improvements, HE strongly advises that the emphasis within the Local Plan Review should be placed upon reducing the need to travel and, where travel is necessary, to use more sustainable modes rather than relying on improvements being in place.

Any necessary further improvements required because of proposed development would need to be identified, designed, managed, and fully funded via the individual proposals or via a Local Plan mechanism.

Teynham Area of Opportunity

The Local Plan Review and any subsequent master-planning work will need to assess the impacts of this growth on the SRN and, as necessary, mitigate it.

Faversham

Key strategic issues relating to transport is the capacity of M2J6 and M2J7 to be able to cope within the increase in growth. Funding will be required to provide improvements to M2J7, and HE has identified that this will be required to come from developers. Increasing bus linkages into Sittingbourne and Canterbury as well as improvements to active travel linkages to the surrounding area will benefit Faversham in reducing overall trips.

The Local Plan Review states that development would need to be sensitive to the impacts upon the SRN network and a phased approach, supported by masterplanning in the area, would ensure that sufficient mitigation is in

	<p>place prior to occupation and to allow Faversham to grow sustainably in tandem with Policy DM 10 and Policy ST 1.</p> <p>HE supports the proposed holistic strategy for transport around Faversham to reduce the impact of private vehicles, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the improvement of pedestrian and cycling facilities and infrastructure • the '20's plenty' speed limit reductions • the speed reduction or restricted routing for vehicles along rural lanes – to improve pedestrian/cycling links and environment; and • the improvements of the rights of way network within the area. <p>Transport will be expected to contribute to the overall development at Faversham through developer funding or provision of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mitigation of the A2 (including junction improvements and us prioritisation) based upon modelling assessments • air quality mitigation • cycle/pedestrian network between Sittingbourne/Faversham • M2J6 capacity improvements over and above those currently planned in the KCC's A2/A251 scheme; and • M2J7 capacity improvements (via developer funding). <p>HE will continue to work with all parties to assess and agree robustly produced evidence in support of particular allocations and the overall future of the Faversham area.</p>
Kent County Council (KCC)	<p>KCC was concerned that the consultation was missing critical highway evidence to the justify the Local Plan Review strategy and that, as a consequence, it is currently supported by an inaccurate evidence base. There were fundamental changes from the modelling used as evidence for the Local Plan Review, and the housing proposals within it. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the housing numbers are higher in the Teynham area

- there are greater levels of employment land; and
- the design solution given for Brenley Corner cannot be relied upon at this stage.

KCC committed to working further with the Council to carry out further transport modelling that accurately reflects the development proposals before making fully informed comments.

Teynham Area of Opportunity

KCC expected a second Regulation 18 consultation which would have offered further opportunity to shape the Local Plan Review. By moving straight to Regulation 19, with a new strategic proposal at Teynham, there has been a lack of continuity and limited opportunity for residents to influence the type and scale of growth here.

A link road for through traffic would facilitate increased flows of vehicular traffic along the A2 corridor. In turn, this would be expected to have considerable detrimental impacts on congestion and air quality, particularly for the communities of Bapchild and Ospringe, two of the A2's other AQMAs. The evidence presented in the submitted Air Quality document demonstrates that the AQMAs with the most detrimental impact for both NO₂ and PM₁₀ are at Ospringe, Teynham and East Street. The air quality modelling report uses the 1054 transport model that would appear to have considerably less housing allocated in the village of Teynham than was proposed within Regulation 19 consultation. As such, it can only be assumed that the air quality data is not providing a true reflection of the traffic related air quality levels for the strategic housing strategy proposed.

The proposals in this chapter appeared to promote private vehicular use and overall, are in contrast to policies ST 7, 4 and 9 in respect of promoting active travel, public transport and addressing air quality concerns.

Education

KCC confirmed the identified education provision/needs as discussed during the preparation of the Local Plan Review. Additional housing development will have to provide both sites and contributions towards new primary schools, particularly in Teynham and Faversham.

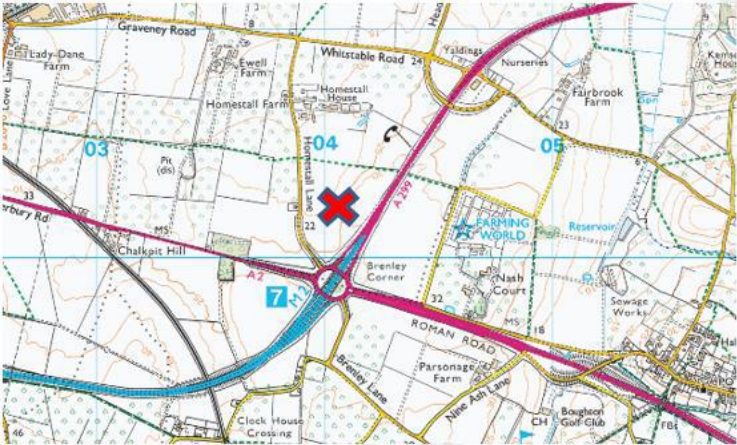
The position in Sittingbourne from a secondary provision perspective was noted as being serious. The site for the all-through school to the north of the A249 is still not due to transfer until 2023. Original plans to meet current demand were through the transfer of this site by 2019 allowing the opening of a new school for 2021 or 2022. It is likely that 2025 will be the earliest that this new school will be able to open. By 2023, there will be more students requiring secondary school places than places available in Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey schools. Temporary measures will have to be put into place until the new school can be brought forward but these put additional pressure on the schools and on the road network around the schools. Current proposals do not enable a re-balance between secondary education provision in Sittingbourne and on the Isle of Sheppey. There are more secondary age pupils on the Isle of Sheppey than there are secondary school places, and KCC has more secondary school places in Sittingbourne than resident children. The result of this is that children travel off the Isle of Sheppey and into Sittingbourne in large numbers. A site for a secondary school on the Isle of Sheppey would provide the opportunity to re-balance the school travel flows and provide more sustainable future secondary provision for Swale.

It was noted that there is no current available capacity for special education requirements for any of the proposed new housing developments. Financial contributions and a new site of two hectares will be required to accommodate the additional special education need pupils arising from these proposals.

Waste Management

KCC noted that additional capacity at both its Sittingbourne Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and three Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) facilities across the Borough is urgently needed. Without expansion of these facilities the growth proposed by the Local Plan Review is not sustainable. Current pressures are such that operational delays are the norm and these will significantly deteriorate over the duration of the Local Plan Review. Further consideration of how this essential infrastructure can be provided to ensure a sustainable service in the future needs to be made a high priority. An infrastructure first approach was highlighted.

Support was stated for the provision of overnight lorry parking and suggested the location shown below.



<p>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC)</p>	<p>TWBC were supportive of Swale’s intention to meet its own housing requirements and noted that the development strategy presented within the consultation document sought to provide for an increased housing need of 6,290 dwellings. Based on the presented strategy and the location and distribution of development, it was considered there would be no significant or direct strategic impact on Tunbridge Wells Borough, including on the A228.</p>
<p>Medway Council</p>	<p>Medway Council were supportive of Swale’s intention to meet its own housing requirements and recognised the pressure on the authority which is shared across Kent. The Council noted that the Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area aims to maintain and enhance the Port of Sheerness as a gateway port to Europe and that the priority will be to safeguard its function and to encourage investment in infrastructure that supports water and rail freight connections. Medway Council’s own policy position in respect of Medway Ports will be detailed by its emerging Local Plan and the Council therefore welcomed further engagement to ensure a strategic approach to planning for port facilities and uses across the area.</p>
<p>Ashford Borough Council (ABC)</p>	<p>ABC had no comments to make.</p>

<p>Canterbury City Council (CCC)</p>	<p>CCC were supportive of Swale's focus on improving Brenley Corner over the period of the Local Plan Review and recognised that interim improvements are sought to ensure that capacity issues are not exacerbated through development in the meantime. This approach was noted as being consistent with Canterbury's emerging Statement of Common Ground.</p>
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