

**STRATEGIC PLANNING,
SUSTAINABILITY &
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

12 June 2018

Swale Borough Council Local Plan consultation: 'Looking Ahead'

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Stuart Watson, Planning Officer (Strategic Planning)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Swale Borough Council intends to review its Local Plan with a target date for adoption of the summer of 2022 and is seeking early views now on what should be included. This report provides a summary of the consultation and puts forward proposed responses to the issues relevant to Maidstone Borough.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the responses set out in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.15 of this report be agreed as a basis for the Council's consultation response to the Swale Borough Council Local Plan consultation 'Looking Ahead'.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	12 June 2018

Swale Borough Council Local Plan consultation: 'Looking Ahead'

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Swale Borough Council's recent Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) was adopted in July 2017 and sets out the development strategy for Swale up to 2031. Swale Borough Council, in anticipation of the proposed Government requirement to review Local Plans every 5 years as set out within the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018, is now seeking views through consultation to help inform the next steps in its Local Plan process.
- 1.2 The current Swale Local Plan consultation document 'Looking Ahead' seeks to address a number of key issues including those raised during the examination of their adopted Local Plan and also emerging Government policy. As part of the review process, Swale Borough Council intends to extend its Local Plan period up to 2038. The consultation can be viewed at: <https://swale-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/>.
- 1.3 The consultation period for 'Looking Ahead' ran from 27 April 2018 to 8 June 2018. Officers sought, and have been allowed, to submit the Council's response to the consultation after the 12 June SPS&T Committee meeting.
- 1.4 Following on from the 'Looking Ahead' consultation, Swale Borough Council state that the next intended steps will be: a consultation on the detailed options for the development strategies in the summer of 2019, a consultation on a full draft plan for the spring of 2020, with submission of the Local Plan for examination in the Autumn/Winter of 2020.
- 1.5 The Swale Borough Council consultation is therefore an early engagement exercise and does not contain any specific development proposals, however it does ask for views on detailed matters including existing and future strategies. Including strategic matters, the consultation also attempts to identify a number of future issues known as 'big future' challenges. The purpose of these issues is to try and understand what the future may have in store, whilst learning from lessons in the past. The identified issues include:

"Crystal ball gazing" –	being flexible to unexpected changes;
The economy –	adapting to changes in the markets and economic growth rates;
Population and social change –	addressing changes in population and the impact on social need;
Climate change –	limiting climate change through new responses to planning and designing developments;
Transport –	attempting to predict transport growth and demand; and
The environment –	importance of a healthy environment;

- 1.6 The consultation is pre-emptive in that it acknowledges recent draft Government proposals including a requirement for Local Plans to be reviewed every 5 years and the proposed standardised housing need methodology. The consultation goes further in considering measures for capturing the uplift of land value through development that goes beyond existing measures. The consideration includes a master developer approach, where a single developer is responsible for an overarching masterplan. That developer then packages up different sized parcels of land for other developers to purchase with the uplift value gained then used to provide infrastructure.
- 1.7 Although not part of the 'Looking Ahead' consultation, Swale Borough Council has also published a '[New Garden Communities Prospectus April 2018](#)'. The prospectus gives landowners and developers an opportunity to submit proposals for new standalone settlements that can be considered as part of a shortlist of possible ways forward within their Local Plan review. The closing date for submissions is the 3 August 2018.
- 1.8 Whilst the Swale Local Plan consultation is an early engagement exercise, the consultation does contain 46 questions. The questions are general in nature seeking views on the local challenges for Swale, progress on existing allocated sites and approaches Swale Borough Council could take towards proposals within the draft NPPF 2018. The following paragraphs contain the questions considered most relevant to Maidstone borough and recommendations for comments that will form the Council's response to the consultation.
- 1.9 **Question 7. The next generation of employment sites:** Where should we be locating the next generation of employment sites?

Response: Maidstone Borough Council would welcome a commitment by Swale Borough Council to meet its employment needs within the Swale administrative boundary. Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement discussions on any cross-administrative boundary issues on employment need.

- 1.10 **Question 13. Co-operating with other councils to meet their development needs:** Do you believe that Swale should consider asking its council neighbours to provide for its unmet development needs? If so, what reasons would the Council give, who would it ask and why would they be well placed to help? Likewise, if asked by a neighbouring council to consider meeting their unmet development needs, what should be our response and why?

Response: In considering any future spatial alternatives, Maidstone Borough Council would welcome a commitment by Swale Borough Council to meet its development needs, including housing within its own administrative boundary. Maidstone Borough Council is alive to the challenges faced, but like Swale Borough Council must accommodate high levels of development in its own Local Plan.

- 1.11 **Question 17. Meeting the future needs for Gypsies and Travellers:** What approach should we be considering to making further site provision for Gypsies and Travellers?

Response: Maidstone Borough Council would welcome a commitment by Swale Borough Council to meet its Gypsy and Traveller needs within its own administrative boundary. Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement discussions on any cross-administrative boundary issues on Gypsy and Traveller needs.

- 1.12 **Question 28. Improving the capacity and environment of the A2 corridor:** What solutions should we be considering for improving the A2 corridor?

Response: The A249 is a major road linking Maidstone and Sittingbourne as well as the M20 and M2, and Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement and discussions regarding any transport modelling work and the resultant impact these may identify for Maidstone Borough.

- 1.13 **Question 30. Sustainable transport projects:** What are the next big sustainable transport projects that should be being considered?

Response: Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement discussions regarding sustainable transport projects and the implications that will be created on Maidstone's transport infrastructure. Swale Borough Council's future highways mitigation schemes should also consider mitigation for any impact upon Maidstone Borough.

- 1.14 **Question 31. Planning, congestion and air quality:** How much should we be relying on future technological fixes to address air quality and congestion problems? What can be practically achieved by the planning system to mitigate or remove the adverse impacts upon air quality?

Response: Maidstone Borough Council would welcome early engagement to assess the implications of proposed future development patterns in Swale and the potential traffic congestion and air quality impacts upon Maidstone. In any future strategic air quality modelling associated with Swale's growth plans, the assessment and any identification of mitigation measures should extend to include the impacts on air quality within Maidstone Borough.

- 1.15 **Question 42. Elements that could be included in our future spatial alternatives for the distribution and location of development:** What elements should be further considered for inclusion as spatial alternatives for the distribution of development in Swale?

Response: In considering any future spatial alternatives the implications of congestion including air quality and the impacts on habitats should be considered, including the impact upon neighbouring authorities.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Option A: the Committee could decide that no consultation responses should be submitted.
- 2.2 Option B: the Committee could decide to submit responses to Swale Borough Council Local Plan consultation.
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3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Option B is the preferred option, since submitting a consultation response will ensure that the Council's viewpoint can be taken into account by Swale Borough Council as they move forward in their Local Plan preparation.
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4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.
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5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 Subject to the Committee's agreement, the consultation responses will be submitted via email on 13 June 2018. Swale Borough Council states that the results of the consultation will be reported to Councillors in Autumn 2018, and that together with technical research, will go on to be used to draft the next stage of their Local Plan.
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6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.</p> <p>However, they will contribute the Council's overall requirement to have a 'duty to cooperate' with other prescribed</p>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development

	bodies on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.	
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Financial	Responding to the Swale Borough Council consultation can be done within existing resources.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Responding to the Swale Borough Council consultation can be done within existing resources.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Legal	There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.	Cheryl Parks, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific implications for privacy and data protection.	Cheryl Parks, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Equalities	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific or differential implications for the different communities within Maidstone.	Policy & Information Manager
Crime and Disorder	Responding to this consultation as recommended would not have specific implications for Crime and Disorder in the borough.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Procurement	Responding to this consultation as recommended does not require the procurement of any services, expertise or materials	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development