
Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 12 March 2026 from 7.00 pm - 8.55 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock, Monique Bonney, Simon Clark, Charles Gibson (Chair), Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, Angela Harrison (Substitute for Councillor Hayden Brawn), Peter MacDonald, Julien Speed and Mike Whiting.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Lisa Fillery, Onawale Kuforiji, Larissa Reed, Philippa Richardson and Stuart Watson.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Chris Mansfield.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY): Councillor Dolley Wooster.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Hayden Brawn and James Hunt.

805 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

806 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 18 December 2025 (Minute Nos. 591 – 595) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 22 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 638 – 644) were not taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record. Some Members thought the minutes were incorrect in terms of reference to allocations and the Highsted Park application. The Chair said the recording would be listened to and the minutes would be re-considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Planning & Transportation Policy Working Group.

Post Meeting Note: the recording of the meeting was listened to and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 22 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 638 - 644) were correct in terms of reference to allocations and the Highsted Park application.

807 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Monique Bonney declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in respect of the items on the agenda as she was Chair of the Five Parishes Group.

808 **High Level Early Feedback on the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation**

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) introduced the report which provided an early picture of how many representations were received to the recent Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation and to provide some high level feedback on the comments made.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions and make comments, and these included:

- Had received some feedback from residents who had said that when they had

responded to the consultation via the portal, the question number was wrong in certain instances, with the questions relating to a different subject, which made the consultation difficult to understand;

- it was hard work looking at all the questions;
- suggested future consultations were scrutinised in more detail on the portal before they went live;
- hoped that officers were able to assess from the responses which questions had been responded to and get them in the right context;
- welcomed the updated report;
- there might have been some drop-out from the consultation if people had found the process confusing;
- referring to the 90% response rate noted in paragraph 2.6 of the report, it would be beneficial to have some context on that; and
- suggested Members be given the opportunity to test consultations before they went live.

The Chair welcomed the suggestion that Members tested future consultations before they went live.

Councillor Angela Harrison proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Peter MacDonald.

Resolved:

(1) That the number of representations received to the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation and the high level early feedback be noted.

809 Densification study and identification of new sites for HELAA assessment

The Project Manager, Planning Policy, introduced the report which set out the findings of the Densification Study 2023 carried out by consultants BPTW and how those findings can be considered within the next Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) update. The Densification Study identified that there were 42 sites with development potential, with four sites suitable for the HELAA.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions and make comments, and these included:

- The Queenborough & Rushenden site had not delivered the amount of housing allocated to the site and considered it important that pressure was put on Homes England (HE) to increase the density of housing and it was deplorable that a government-owned site had caused so much damage to the Council's housing numbers;
- this needed to be escalated, with HE being invited to attend a Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) meeting;
- this issue meant that a brownfield site (Queenborough & Rushenden) was not being built on, with greenfield sites built on instead;
- this was impacting the Council's Local Plan;
- understood the density of that site was no where near the 60 dwellings per hectare criteria for central urban areas;
- HE were potentially setting a precedent for developers by having a lower density of housing on the Queenborough & Rushenden site;

- not achieving the required housing mix had an impact on densification; and
- referring to the sites set out in paragraph 2.17 of the report, considered the SMC site in Sittingbourne was suitable for high density housing, but the Appleyard, Sittingbourne should be treated with some sympathy in terms of density of dwellings.

Councillor Harrison proposed the recommendations, which were seconded by Councillor Mike Whiting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Densification Study 2023 be noted.**
- (2) That the early indication of new sites for the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment be noted.**

810 Local Green Space Assessments 2026

The Principal Planning Officer (Policy) introduced the report which presented the updated assessment of Local Green Spaces for noting and inclusion as part of the evidence supporting the emerging Local Plan.

The Chair invited Members to ask questions and make comments, and these included:

- Considered the report to be disappointing, with inaccuracies;
- clarification sought on what was being designated;
- some green spaces had been removed, without consultation with Ward Members;
- suggested the sites be listed under their parishes to make it clearer;
- referring to page 205 in the report and that Maylam Gardens, Borden had previously been included, but was no longer and clarification sought on what had changed;
- Members needed to be given the opportunity to assess all the sites in the report before they were included as part of the Regulation (Reg) 19 Local Plan Consultation;
- referring to page 291 of the report and Land between the A2 and Grove Park Avenue, Sittingbourne and considered the report did not reflect the local community need for the site;
- considered the report was not fit as it stood for Reg 19;
- Queenborough Lines and Barton's Point were important public open spaces;
- clarification sought on why previous green spaces from the Local Plan were not listed in the report;
- Land at Bapchild needed some land management and considered it was an important site, and it was considered to be a village green;
- disputed that Land west of Farm Cottages, Rodmersham could not be seen from the road;
- it was important that Stones Farm, Bapchild remained as a green space designation;
- Queenborough Lines and Beachfields, Sheerness should be designated as local green spaces; and
- Callum Hill, Lower Halstow, should be recognised as being the highest point between London and Dunkirk, and its historic status should be noted.

In response, the Principal Planning Officer said there was still an opportunity for Members' comments to be included in the document, and he explained that the sites listed were in addition to what was already in the Local Plan. He also outlined the specific criteria that sites needed to have to be designated green spaces. These included being reasonably close to a community and to be small in size. He added that it was an evidence-based document which could be challenged.

The Chief Executive said the document could be sent out to Members with a clear explanation as to what had already been designated. In terms of the timetable for Reg 19, the Project Manager explained that as this was an informal consultation there would not be an impact. He confirmed that a robust approach had been taken on the sites and they needed to meet the criteria for designated local green spaces.

The Chair moved the following motion: That information be sent to Members on what was already designated and what was proposed as a Local Green Space, and an informal consultation be carried out with Members and Parish and Town Councils, with the information listed parish-by-parish. This was seconded by Councillor Mike Baldock and on being put to the vote was agreed.

Resolved:

(1) That information be sent to Members on what was already designated and what was proposed as a Local Green Space, and an informal consultation be carried out with Members and Parish and Town Councils, with the information listed parish-by-parish.

Chair

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All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel