
Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Wednesday, 27 May 2026 from 7.00 pm - 7.49 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Hayden Brawn (Vice-Chair), Charles Gibson (Chair), Kieran Golding, Alastair Gould, James Hunt, Julien Speed and Mike Whiting.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Natalie Earl, Ian Harrison, Joanne Johnson, Kellie MacKenzie and Stuart Watson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Simon Clark and Peter MacDonald.

48 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

49 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2026 (Minute Nos. 638 – 644) and 12 March 2026 (Minute Nos. 805 – 810) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair as correct records.

50 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

51 **Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document - for adoption**

The Planning Manager (Planning Applications) introduced the report which set out the final Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) set out at Appendix I. The report presented a summary of the responses received during the four week consultation which ran from 30 March 2026 to 29 April 2026, and these were summarised at Appendix II. No changes were recommended to the HMO SPD and Members were asked to note the report and that the Policy and Resource Committee recommended that Full Council adopted the HMO SPD.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members and these included:

- Referred to Sheerness Town Council's response set out on page 42 of the report and asked what the HMO figure would be if the radius for Sheerness was moved to Marine Town where a high percentage of the HMOs in Sheerness were? Unsure how the Council could argue it was sustainable development when there was no available car parking in that area;
- thanked officers for the report and considered it was a good document; and
- how was the Article 4(1) Direction progressing?

Officers responded and advised that:

- The radius approach involved identifying properties within a 100 metre radius around an application property and then undertaking an assessment of HMO concentration to establish if more than 10% of the properties would be HMOs. It

was advised that this approach would be taken, whether the site was in Marine Town or Sheerness;

- parking would be considered under other sections of the SPD where there was a requirement for an applicant to demonstrate that there was sufficient parking; and
- the Article 4(1) report had been considered by the Council's Planning Committee and they had agreed to defer for further evidence. It was due to be considered again by the Planning Committee on 18 June 2026.

Resolved:

(1) That the responses received to the public consultation undertaken in relation to the Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) be noted.

Recommended:

(1) That the Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Full Council that the HMO Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (as set out in Appendix I of the report) be adopted.

52 Housing Market Assessment update 2026

The Project Manager (Planning Policy) introduced the report which set out the main findings of the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) update 2026 set out at Appendix I of the report.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members and these included:

- Referred to page 76 of the report and noted there was a lack of flats in the borough compared to the rest of the country;
- referred to the graph set out on page 77 of the report which showed that there was a 'massive' shortage of one bedroom dwellings and flats in Swale;
- referred to page 52 of the report which demonstrated a lack of social housing in Swale compared to other areas;
- referred to page 80 of the report and noted that one bedroom social rents had dropped by 12%. The Council were not meeting the social housing needed;
- referred to the standard method calculation which appeared to demand more houses than were needed?;
- it appeared that affordability would be addressed by flooding the market with more homes than the population required in order to try and drop the price with having a lot of empty homes?;
- the tenure figures were from the 2021 census and outdated, were more up-to-date figures available?; and
- would the market assessment/need sit alongside the similar documents that existed within Neighbourhood Plans (NPs)?

Officers responded and advised that:

- For this evidence base the Government standard method calculation for Local Housing Need was the starting base and then disaggregated into the various needs of housing types and mix of the communities. There might be some discrepancy between natural household growth and what was required through

- the government standard method of calculating local housing need;
- alongside household growth the calculation also considered the affordability factor by looking at how the average house prices compared to workplace earnings and applying an adjustment factor. The household growth and adds on an extra element of housing requirement to address the affordability issues;
- the Government considers that delivering more housing than projected household growth would help to address affordability by slowing the increase in the cost of houses and allowing time for earnings to catch-up;
- the census was the primary data source for identifying what the tenures were of the existing stock at the time of the census. However, secondary statistics had been used in the assessment which provided more current data where available and relevant; and
- NPs can produce their own housing need assessments that covered their neighbourhood areas, and could use more localised gathered data. The NPs were considered up to date within five years of them being made and they should be broadly in line with the adopted Local Plan (LP) adopted before they were made. They should be considered as part of the drafting of this LP.

Councillor Brawn proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Hunt.

Resolved:

(1) That the Housing Market Assessment (HMA) update 2026 be noted.

53 Local Plan Review - Regulation 18 Representations, Summaries and Draft Responses

The Planning Manager (Policy) introduced the report which presented the representations, summaries and draft responses to the recent Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation. Appendix I set out where changes were proposed, and Appendix II where changes were not proposed. The Planning Manager referred to the table on pages 156 to 167 which provided some of the main issues arising and feedback given under the different topics areas.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members and these included:

- Considered the 'Vision' lacked detail in relation to infrastructure delivery;
- the vision was important and it was reasonable for the public to be able to understand them;
- the priorities were not clear and needed to be clearly understood by developers;
- concerned that South East Water had not responded to the consultation;
- referred to Policy C10 (water quality and water resources) in respect of the feedback received and concerned there was no proposal to change the wording on that policy in relation to infrastructure capacity and delivery;
- considered that Clause 5 should be broadened to include "possible water supply capacity"; and
- referred to the policies regarding carbon use in houses and queried whether they had been amended.

Officers responded and advised:

- The Vision needed to be concise and the detail on infrastructure would be provided in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which would be produced alongside the Regulation 19 as well as Strategic Policy 9 Planning for Infrastructure;
- the Regulation 19 would provide strategic policies and it would be clear what was requested in respect of infrastructure; and
- there were no major changes to the carbon use policies.

Councillor Speed proposed the following wording to Policy C10 relating to water supply, sewerage network capacity and wastewater treatment capacity: *“Planning permission will not be granted where adequate water supply, sewerage network capacity, or wastewater treatment capacity cannot be demonstrated, unless funded and deliverable mitigation or infrastructure upgrades are secured and operational prior to occupation.”*

The Planning Manager raised concern about including the wording as it was incumbent on water companies to meet demand. She explained it would likely be removed by the Planning Inspector at examination.

Members considered the proposal and points raised included:

- Kent was currently subject to water shortages and wastewater treatment issues the proposed wording to Policy C10 should be included and then at least it could be debated at the examination stage; and
- the wording should be included as currently it was too ‘cautious’.

The Planning Manager agreed that officers would look at what was achievable, and if possible provide a verbal update on their investigations at the next Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group meeting on 9 June 2026. If that was not possible the update would be emailed to Members.

Councillor Brawn proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Hunt.

Resolved:

- (1) That the representations received to the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation and the draft responses be noted.***

54 Local Plan Review - Draft Strategic Policies and Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Development Management Policy

The Planning Manager (Policy) introduced the report which presented the draft Strategic Policies which would be consulted on as part of the Regulation 19 Local Plan. It also included a draft House in Multiple Occupation Development Management (DM) policy.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members and these included:

- Referring to policies ST8 (Health and Wellbeing), ST9 (Planning for Infrastructure) and ST10 (Sustainable Drainage) these should be higher up the list of policies;

- it was important to note the policy numbers were not in order of importance;
- could the wording be made clearer with regard to HMOs as considered issues arose when HMOs were put in areas where there were no other HMOs; and
- referred to the transport section and asked that the Cycle infrastructure design LTN1/20 be included.

Officers responded and advised that:

- The policy numbering was similar to the order of the National Planning Policy Framework so kept the same for consistency and agreed to check the wording for Policy ST1 (Delivering Sustainable Development in Swale);
- agreed to check the wording regarding HMOs; and
- the LTN1/20 and the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) 2026 would be included in the preamble to the strategic policy if they were not already.

Councillor Whiting proposed the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Brawn.

Resolved:

- (1) That the draft strategic policies and the Houses in Multiple Occupation development management policy be noted.***

Chair

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