

Eastern Area Committee – Local Plan update – February 2026

The Reg 18 consultation was open from 12 January until 23 February 2026. Regulation 18 is the first round of consultation where the public, stakeholders, businesses, statutory bodies and other local authorities can make comments to shape an area's Local Plan. This draft covered the vision and objectives of the Plan, and draft Development Management policies. These policies will influence the type and impact of development by setting design standards, mitigating environmental impacts, promoting social and community development and addressing infrastructure requirements. They also provide a framework for local authorities to help assess planning applications.

Responses to the Reg 18 consultation will be reviewed and will inform the Reg 19 consultation planned for the summer. This next stage of consultation will include proposed sites for housing allocations, as well as employment land and gypsy and traveller plots and pitches. Members of the Council's Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group agreed a growth strategy to recommend to Policy and Resources Committee during its meeting of 22 January 2026. This growth option is referred to as 'very large strategic site in the east of the Borough / settlement hierarchy hybrid'. It would provide for c. 4,000 homes in the east of the Borough, and require just over 4,000 homes to be allocated on non-strategic sites within Swale. This growth option will need to be approved by Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council before forming a part of the Regulation 19 consultation document.

Swale Borough Council intends to submit its draft Local Plan for examination in December 2026. This will ensure it is adopted under the existing National Planning Policy Framework, and by Swale Borough Council, rather than a successor authority following local government reorganisation.