

Full Council	
Meeting Date	1 st April 2026
Report Title	Local Plan Review - Growth Strategy and Sites for Allocation
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods
SMT Lead	Joanne Johnson Head of Place
Lead Officer	Stuart Watson Project Manager, Planning Policy
Classification	Open
Recommendations	• To agree Growth Option 4 as the growth strategy for the drafting of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation. • To agree the non-strategic allocations set out in appendices I to VI for the drafting of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation: ○ Non-strategic housing allocations. ○ Gypsy and Traveller allocations. ○ Employment land allocations.

1. Introduction and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background to the recommendation that Full Council agree Growth Option 4 and a suite of non-strategic allocations (as set out in appendices I to VI) in order to progress the Local Plan to the Regulation 19 stage.

2. Background

- 2.1 These recommendations follow consideration by Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) on 11th March 2026 (informed by Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) who debated these recommendations on 22nd January 2026).
- 2.2 Discussions were informed by previously discussed growth options (see Table 1, below), what housing delivery could indicatively be delivered against each option after known existing supply had been considered and what the balance of housing need would be on non-strategic sites for allocation. Prior reports set out a number of live planning applications for strategic sites, their proposed development, potential planning committee dates and how they would align with the growth options. Appendices set out the non-strategic sites members could consider for

the Local Plan, taken from the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

- 2.3 At the P&R meeting members discussed in depth the growth strategy options (Table 1 below). Members of P&R voted to recommended to Full Council Growth Option 4, “Strategic sites in east and west of Borough/settlement hierarchy hybrid”.
- 2.4 Members of P&R chose to recommend to Full Council the non-strategic sites for housing, gypsy and traveller and employment need as set out in appendices I to VI.

Table 1. Growth Options – strategic and non-strategic housing contributions

	Growth option	Strategic contribution (potential dwellings)	Potential strategic site options	Residual required from non strategic sites
1	Continue Bearing Fruits Local Plan approach	0	N/A	8,068
2	Strategic site in west of Borough/settlement hierarchy hybrid	2,500	22/503654 Land to the west of Bobbing (2,500 dwellings)	5,568
3	Strategic site in east of Borough/settlement hierarchy hybrid	2,500	23/505533 South East Faversham (2,500 dwellings)	5,568
4	Strategic sites in east and west of Borough/settlement hierarchy hybrid	5,000	23/505533 South East Faversham (2,500 dwellings) 22/503654 Land to the west of Bobbing (2,500 dwellings)	3,068
5	Strategic scale new settlement/settlement hierarchy hybrid	2,000 ¹	21/503914 Highsted (south 750 dwellings) 21/503906 Highsted (north 1,250 dwellings)	6,068

¹ This figure is corrected from 2,500 to 2,000 as previously set out in the PTPWG and P&R reports. The residual need figure is accordingly amended from 5,568 to 6,068.

6	Very large strategic site in east of Borough/settlement hierarchy hybrid	4,000	23/505533 South East Faversham (2,500 dwellings) +one or two major sites totalling 1,500 dwellings	4,068
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2.4 As part of the discussion on growth options and non-strategic sites members of P&R were reminded of the tight timetable for submitting a Local Plan under the current plan-making system of 31 December 2026 and that any delays now would result in either:

- the need for delegated authority for officers to submit the Local Plan for examination at the Regulation 19 stage (following consultation), or,
- the need to amend the timetable for preparing the Local Plan, and to submit for examination under the new plan-making system. Any Local Plan developed under the new plan-making system will likely be adopted after local government reorganisation and subsequently Swale Borough Council will no longer be the decision maker.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To agree Growth Option 4 as the growth strategy for the drafting of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation.

3.2 To agree the non-strategic allocations set out in appendices I to VI for the drafting of the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation:

- Non-strategic housing allocations.
- Gypsy and Traveller allocations.
- Employment land allocations.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

4.1 Members could choose a different growth option and different allocations to those recommended by P&R. It should be noted that PTPWG had recommended Growth Option 6 to P&R. A change is not recommended, as these recommendations are the result of considerable deliberation at P&R.

4.2 Members could choose not to select a growth option or non-strategic allocations. Members have previously rejected the option of not submitting a Local Plan under the current plan making system (as part of agreeing the Council's Local Development Scheme in July 2025) so this option is not recommended.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The report's recommendations are the result of considerable debate by PTPWG and P&R.
- 5.2 Moving forward, the Local Plan Regulation 19 consultation documents will be subject to scrutiny with members when they are considered by PTPWG, P&R and Full Council this summer where the decision is intended to be made regarding the launch of the Local Plan's public consultation. As part of the consultation members of the public, other stakeholders and key infrastructure providers will be urged to comment on the Local Plan.

6. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The proposals in the report align with the following Corporate Plan action: • A Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Local Plan work program is fully funded across a combination of base budget, committed reserves and a contribution from the Government's Local Plans Delivery Fund.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The timetable for the consultation is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) that was adopted in July 2025. The LDS is a legal requirement of the Council and must be kept up to date. It notifies key stakeholders, interested parties and members of the public of the Council's intentions toward Local Plan making. Not providing a growth and sites steer at this time will make completing the documentation for Summer consultation impossible and this would require an update to the Council's LDS. The only potential mitigation action would be for Full Council to delegate to officers the submission of the Reg 19 document following public consultation. P&R members were not supportive of this (although no recommendation was made / vote taken in this regard). Should revisions to the LDS set out that there is not enough time to submit a Local Plan for examination under the existing plan-making system, the Council would need to commence plan-making under the Government's new system.

	Swale Borough Council would not exist under the local government reorganisation proposals and subsequently would not be the decision making authority for the adoption of a Local Plan under the new system. The Secretary of State has wide-ranging plan-making intervention powers under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Secretary of State intervention can range from giving a direction in relation to the preparation or revision of a Local Plan to taking awaiting responsibility for Plan making from the Local Authority.
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder impacts arising from this report. There will be policies within the Local Plan that will positively affect crime and disorder within Swale.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	The Local Plan will be supported by its own Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment at each key stage in decision making and these assess the environmental impact of the Local Plan as a whole. Five expanded and innovative climate change policies are proposed on: • Sustainable design and adaptation principles, • Net zero operational carbon in new build residential development, • Net zero operational carbon in new build non-domestic development, • Embodied carbon and waste and • Renewable energy development and infrastructure.
Health and Wellbeing	There are no direct health and wellbeing impacts arising from this report. There will be policies within the Local Plan that will positively affect the health and wellbeing of local residents. The recently declared Mental Health Emergency has been referred to within the Reg 18 Local Plan.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The risks of delaying a Local Plan have been highlighted in previous reports and include Ministerial intervention and the growth of speculative applications on non-allocated land.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage, although the Local Plan Review itself will be subject to equality impact assessment at the next stage – Regulation 19.

Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	The agreed timetable for the Local Plan sets out that the Local Plan will be examined in public by the government's Planning Inspectorate before implementation of local government reorganisation.

7. Appendices

Appendix I: Housing sites allocations list

Appendix II: Housing site allocation maps

Appendix III: Gypsy and Traveller site allocations list

Appendix IV: Gypsy and Traveller site allocation maps

Appendix V: Employment site allocations list

Appendix VI: Employment allocation maps

Appendix VII: Local Plan Review high level timetable to December 2026

8. Background Documents

8.1 [PTPWG report Housing Economic Land Availability Assessment 2025 findings, Local Plan growth strategy and sites for allocation 22 January 2026](#)

8.2 [Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group draft minutes 22 January 2026](#)

8.3 [P&R Local Plan Review Growth Strategy and sites for allocation report 11 March 2026](#)

8.4 P&R minutes to follow

8.5 [Local Development Scheme July 2025](#)