

Policy and Resources Committee	
Meeting Date	13 th July 2026
Report Title	Local Plan Review – Regulation 19 Consultation Launch
EMT Lead	Emma Wiggins – Director of Regeneration & Neighbourhoods
Head of Service	Joanne Johnson – Head of Place
Lead Officer	Natalie Earl – Planning Manager (Policy)
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To recommend the changes to the proposed housing and employment allocations as set out in table I and paragraphs 2.2 – 2.6 to Full Council for approval; 2. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) Chair, any required updates to and/or deletions of sites with extant planning permissions; 3. To note that the completion of the transport and air quality modelling is awaited and that engagement between PTPWG and the consultants will be ongoing; 4. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any required updates and/or deletions to policies (Development Management, Strategic or Allocation) if required, once the transport and air quality modelling, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment are complete; 5. To note that the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is awaited and may recommend mitigations which will need to be added to relevant allocation policies and recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any required updates to policies (Development Management, Strategic or Allocation) if required, once assessment is complete; 6. To provide comment on, as appropriate, and recommend the Local Plan Regulation 19 document in Appendix I, the draft Sustainability Appraisal in Appendix II, the draft Habitat Regulation Assessment in Appendix III and the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan in Appendix IV to Full Council for approval for consultation purposes; and

	7. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any minor amendments and corrections to the Local Plan Regulation 19 document prior to the start of the consultation period.
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background to the recommendations made by the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) during its meeting on 30th June 2026 with regard to the start of the Local Plan Regulation 19 (Reg 19) consultation.
- 1.2 The purpose of that report was to present the Regulation 19 Local Plan (Reg 19) (Appendix I), the Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix II), the Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix III) and the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Appendix IV).
- 1.3 This is a formal Regulation 19 consultation stage that seeks feedback from stakeholders and the public. This is the final consultation stage before the plan is submitted to the government who will appoint a planning inspector to run an Examination In Public ¹ which is likely to take place next year. The report also set out what evidence base work remained to be completed for the Local Plan, and sought delegation to the Head of Planning to make minor amendments to the draft Regulation 19 in consultation with the Chair of PTPWG.
- 1.4 Members discussed this report at the Planning and Transportation Working Group (PTPWG) meeting on 30th June 2026 and voted in favour of the recommendations in the report with an amendment to recommendation 3 in that evidence on transport and air quality is now awaited.

2 Background

- 2.1 The PTPWG report set out the recent history of the progress of the Local Plan and the relevant decisions that have been taken since consultation on the Regulation 18 Local Plan (Reg 18) earlier this year. It explained how the Reg 19 differed from Reg 18, set out the structure of the Reg 19 document and described the additional policies for the Reg 19 on strategic matters and sites for allocation.
- 2.2 The report then set out amendments to housing and employment sites that were agreed for allocation by the Council on 1st April 2026 as part of the Reg 19 drafting process. Table I (housing) and relevant paragraphs from the report are repeated below. For the Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Area sites it should be noted that the adopted masterplan from 2015 made provision for 898 dwellings from these sites and this has been a long standing

¹ For further information on the Examination in Public (legacy system) see [Local plans: the examination process legacy system - GOV.UK](#)

expectation. As part of the Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation earlier this year Homes England, who own these sites, responded stating the sites would now only deliver a total of around 500 dwellings. This amended delivery would result in a loss of 398 dwellings from these sites. As a result of this the Council have used the density of development multiplier used in the Council's HELAA² that was used for similar sites to inform the drafting of the Local Plan. This multiplier sets out that the sites could deliver 754 dwellings and this would result in a loss 144 dwellings. The delivery expectation discussion for these sites will be ongoing between the Council and Homes England setting out what the evidence base supporting the Local Plan has determined is deliverable for these types of sites.

Site Name	Proposed Number of Dwellings (As at FC 1 st April)	Issues Arising
SHELAA/270 Land at Tonge Road, Sittingbourne	19 dwellings	Further investigation has identified this site as having extant outline planning consent and so it is considered within the existing housing land supply and must be removed as a new allocation. This results in a loss of 19 dwellings.
SHELAA/421 Land at West Minster off Brielle Way, Sheerness	76 dwellings	As part of detailed design considerations whilst preparing the site allocation policy, it is considered that the presence of overhead power cables constrains this site to a capacity of up to 30 dwellings. This results in a loss of 46 dwellings.
Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Area sites		
The Council has been in ongoing discussions with Homes England over the revised dwelling capacities for these sites, as is best practice. Homes England have recently shared with the Council that due to viability issues and discussions with developers, they do not feel that they can deliver the number of dwellings proposed in the adopted masterplan. They have proposed capacities lower than the adopted masterplan; around 500 dwellings across the whole site. Due to a potential change in numbers, the Council have used the density multiplier used in the HELAA for similar sites and which they would consider deliverable. The figures are shown below for each of the sites. The Council position is that the HELAA approach provides the latest and most robust evidence on what the likely deliverability of those sites would be and the appropriate density multiplier to use and should be the starting point for what the sites can deliver. These figures will now be taken forward into the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation document. They total 754 ³ dwellings.		

² Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment is an appraisal of land within a local authority area that determines which sites are suitable on planning matters available for development during the Local Plan time period and are financially achievable for development against the policy criteria of the emerging Local Plan.

³ A Figure of 898 was presented in the PTPWG report 30th June. This figure was incorrect and reflected the existing masterplan delivery expectations from these sites. 754 dwellings reflects the delivery expectations for the Queenborough and Rushenden sites using the HELAA density multiplier. No other calculations are impacted by this or incorrect.

SHELAA/217 South of Queenborough Creek	380 dwellings	Up to 246 dwellings: a loss of 134 dwellings.
SHELAA/218 Former Istil site Rushenden Road	240 dwellings	Up to 140 dwellings: a loss of 100 dwellings.
SHELAA/220 West of Rushenden Road	278 dwellings	Up to 368 dwellings: a gain of 90 dwellings.

Table I: Amendments to proposed non-strategic housing sites

- 2.3 The revisions to these five housing sites have resulted in a net loss of 209 dwellings to the Council's housing land supply for the Regulation 19 Local Plan consultation. Whilst this loss is disappointing, revisions to site capacities and deliverability is part of the Local Plan drafting and consultation process. As mitigation, members previously agreed to apply a 5% buffer to the figures to allow for these types of matter and to avoid the need to consider adding sites late in the Local Plan drafting process. The housing land supply trajectory within the Regulation 19 Local Plan document, (Appendix I) at a base date 1st April 2025, sets out that there remains a buffer against the housing need for the Local Plan of 727 dwellings. The housing land supply position will be updated to a 1st April 2026 base date for the submission of the Local Plan in December 2026 that will include detailed site phasing from engagement with promoters of sites. The update will be reported to members when completed.

Amendments to proposed non-strategic sites - employment

- 2.4 After further, more detailed site work on the employment sites previously chosen for allocation by members, site CFS34 Land adj. Kemsley Substation, Sittingbourne – proposed for allocation for up to 5ha of employment land – has been withdrawn by the site promoter and owner, National Grid, making it no longer available. Site SBC17/005 Land at Pheasant Farm (west), Howt Green, Sittingbourne – proposed for allocation for 1.6ha of employment land - has also been removed as this site now has planning consent for 42 dwellings. This has resulted in a loss of 6.6ha of employment land from the supply.
- 2.5 Additionally, the employment site CFS50 Land East of Faversham Expansion - proposed for allocation for up to 21 ha of employment land - has had its site boundary amended from that presented in the HELAA and agreed by members. The boundary amendment reflects the site being considered for employment use only rather than the HELAA submission that considered a much a larger mixed use scheme. Through considering the design options for employment use on this site, it has been considered appropriate to locate the existing proposed quantum of employment use within the southeastern portion of the site (as shown in Appendix V) to reflect best access to the strategic road network. The name for this site has been amended to "Land at A2/M2 junction" to more accurately reflect its location.
- 2.6 In a similar context to housing land supply the loss of 6.6ha⁴ of employment land is disappointing, however a buffer was applied to the supply for Local

⁴ This is amended from the 5ha as set out in the PTPWG report to accurately reflect the loss of the two employment sites set out in the preceding paragraphs.

Plan drafting and resilience. The supply of employment sites as presented to Full Council on 1st April 2026 was a net supply position of 96ha once land lost for residential allocations had been considered and the revised figure following the loss of the two sites results in a net position of 89.4ha for employment allocations. This is still in excess of the 73ha target set for the Local Plan.

- 2.7 The 30th June PTPWG meeting also heard and received written updates on the evidence base for transport, air quality and flood risk. Whilst these evidence base pieces remain to be finalised, work on them is scheduled to be completed for submission of the Local Plan.
- 2.8 The report set out core documents that accompany the Local Plan and are being prepared for the Reg 19 consultation. They are:
- The draft non-technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal with a full detailed Sustainability Appraisal available for consideration by the Policy and Resources committee (Appendix II). The Sustainability Appraisal presents an appraisal of the plan comparing the preferred growth scenario to other potentially reasonable alternative scenarios for growth in the Borough;
 - The draft Habitats Regulation Assessment (Appendix III) that identifies aspects of the plan that will result in likely significant effects and adverse effects on habitat sites, special areas of conservation and special protection areas, and proposes appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation; and
 - The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Appendix IV) that strategically analyses and assesses the future infrastructure needs arising from development set out and planned for in the Local Plan. (NB. It cannot deal with current deficits in infrastructure provision.)
- 2.9 The PTPWG report concludes by setting out the timeline and consultation process of the Local Plan. This included the government deadline for submitting plans under the existing 'legacy' plan making system by the end of December 2026 and the type of consultation process and feedback considered as part of a Regulation 19 consultation.
- 2.10 At the PTPWG meeting, Members raised a number of issues and asked questions on a variety of sections of the report and Reg 19 including:
- querying the deductions to site allocation numbers as set out in the PTPWG covering report;
 - housing delivery assumptions as a result of site amendments;
 - Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration area and making clearer the Councils position with regards to these sites;
 - infrastructure funding for Queenborough and Rushenden and the role of Homes England;
 - transport modelling and evidence preparation;
 - water infrastructure, and welcomed the revisions to related Policy C10;
 - agricultural land protection through Policy B6 of the Regulation 19 Local Plan document;
 - archaeology and heritage assets and how large archaeological finds are considered;
 - Kent Science Park allocation matters on and around the site;

- a pre-action protocol letter received by the Council regarding the Local Plan process;
 - Transport aspirations including Swale railway station parking, Crown Quay Lane Bridge and a northern entrance to Sittingbourne railway station; and
 - a request to include in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan aspirations relating to improved parking provision at Swale railway station; improvement and widening of Crown Quay Lane bridge, and provision of a northern entrance to Sittingbourne railway station.
- 2.11 Following debate, Members agreed that Recommendation 3 of the PTPWG report be amended to state that completion of the transport and air quality modelling was awaited. All other recommendations were agreed as written in the PTPWG report.
- 2.12 A list of the changes requested by members at PTPWG on 30th June and amendments made by officers in response to those requests are included at Appendix VI.
- 2.13 A requirement of a Local Plan's Examination in Public is to produce and submit alongside the Plan a Policies map. The map should set out geographically, where relevant, the policies within the Local Plan. This should include showing how the adopted policies map would be changed as a result of the new plan. The policies map is required to be reproduced from, or based on, an Ordnance Survey map.
- 2.14 As part of preparing the Regulation 19 Local Plan for consultation an interactive policies map is being produced and **a draft can be viewed from the 13th July** at: <https://maps.swale.gov.uk/>. The visual standards for this Regulation 19 policies map will differ from the Local Plan Bearing Fruits standards as they have been developed to align with [government recommended standards](#) updated in February 2025⁵. These recommended standards seek to align ways in which Local Planning Authorities produce their policies map to make them quicker and easier to produce, understand and compare with different authorities.

Sustainability Appraisal update

- 2.15 The PTPWG report contained an appendix on the non technical summary for the sustainability appraisal (SA) with the provision that a complete draft appraisal will be brought to P&R. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a core document that must be submitted alongside the Local Plan for examination. For the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan the SA must be fully up to date at the point of consultation. The SA has now been updated to reflect the reasonable alternative growth scenarios which is the centrepiece of the report, and to reflect the most up-to-date position on the Land West of Bobbing strategic site taking account of the recent Resolution to Grant on the site made by Planning Committee on 24th June 2026. The implication of this resolution is to rule out alternative growth scenarios within the SA which do not include the Land West of Bobbing. The appraisal of Scenarios 1, 2 and 3 of the SA will be essentially remain unchanged.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-present-your-policies-map>

- 2.16 The additional time taken to update the SA to reflect the Land West of Bobbing resolution to grant has meant the Sustainability Appraisal Report, (Appendix II) has had to be a late item to this Policy and Resources committee, and will be published on Monday 6th July 2026.

3 Recommendations

1. To recommend the changes to the proposed housing and employment allocations as set out in table I and paragraphs 2.2 – 2.6 to Full Council for approval;
2. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group (PTPWG) Chair, any required updates to and/or deletions of sites with extant planning permissions;
3. To note that the completion of the transport and air quality modelling is awaited and that engagement between PTPWG and the consultants will be ongoing;
4. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any required updates and/or deletions to policies (Development Management, Strategic or Allocation) if required, once the transport and air quality modelling, Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment are complete;
5. To note that the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is awaited and may recommend mitigations which will need to be added to relevant allocation policies and recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any required updates to policies (Development Management, Strategic or Allocation) if required, once assessment is complete;
6. To provide comment on, as appropriate, and recommend the Local Plan Regulation 19 document in Appendix I, the draft Sustainability Appraisal in Appendix II, the draft Habitat Regulation Assessment in Appendix III and the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan in Appendix IV to Full Council for approval for consultation purposes; and
7. To recommend that Full Council delegate to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the PTPWG Chair, any minor amendments and corrections to the Local Plan Regulation 19 document prior to the start of the consultation period.

4 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

- 4.1 The alternative option is for members not to progress with a Local Plan review and not to publish the Regulation 19 Local Plan for consultation. This would be contrary to central government expectations, and to the Council's Corporate

Plan objective to “progress a Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.” This would also be contrary to the Local Development Scheme (Local Plan timescale) adopted by Full Council.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 All formal stages of a Local Plan go through statutory consultation with the public, Parish/Town Councils, Statutory and Non-Statutory Consultees and local interest groups. Details of this can be seen in the [Swale Statement of Community Involvement](#)

5.2 A consultation strategy is being developed for the Regulation 19 Local Plan, in line with the recently adopted Statement of Community Involvement, and will include:

- Emails sent out setting out the forthcoming dates to those on the Council’s Local Plan consultation database ahead of the start of the consultation;
- Officers will attend the Swale Local Parish Council Liaison Forum;
- Printed copies of the documents will be placed at all of Swale’s libraries, including the mobile ones. They will also be provided with posters to display advertising the consultation;
- The team will produce another video explaining the consultation document, what a Local Plan is and how to get involved with the consultation;
- Emails will be sent to Swale’s Green Grid contacts;
- An article will be included in the Swale Means Business newsletter;
- An article will be included in the new resident newsletter and in Inside Swale;
- Posters will be made available to Parish and Town Councils and available to download from Swale’s website for other community groups to share;
- The communications team will share regular social media posts promoting the consultation;
- Regular email reminders will be sent throughout the consultation period to those on the database;
- The team will update the Frequently Asked Questions document from the Regulation 18 consultation to assist stakeholders;
- A Statement of Representations Procedure has to be produced which will cover:
 - When you can make representations
 - The deadline for making representations
 - How you can make representations
 - How you can view key documents.
- A guidance note on making a representation will be available which will explain what is meant by soundness and legal compliance and to explain to stakeholders how to make their points clear for the Planning Inspector.
- The documents will be available to read on the Objective portal and be downloaded and printed, or a copy can be purchased; and
- A separate document of the site plans of the proposed allocations will be placed on the website so that they can be viewed separately to the whole Local Plan document and they will be able to be downloaded for all stakeholders to print and share as required.

- 5.2 The vision, objectives and DM policies have been through public consultation as part of the recent Regulation 18 consultation. The representations and their summaries and draft responses were taken to PTPWG on 27th May and the responses and comments from PTPWG were fed into the policies where appropriate.
- 5.3 The draft Strategic Policies were taken to PTPWG on 27th May and comments from members were fed into policies where appropriate.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The Local Plan supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan, aligning with the following priorities: • Environment - To provide a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and enjoyable environment, and to prepare our borough for the challenges ahead. • Community - To enable our residents to live, work and enjoy their leisure time safely in our borough and to support community resilience. • Economy – Working with our businesses and community organisations to work towards a sustainable economy which delivers for local people. • Health and Housing - To aspire to be a borough where everyone has access to a decent home and improved health and wellbeing. The Corporate Plan contains a specific objective to ‘progress a Local Plan with local needs and capacity at its heart.’
Financial, Resource and Property	The Local Plan work programme 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	Preparation of a Local Plan is carried out under a national legislative and regulatory framework.
Crime and Disorder	There are no direct crime and disorder impacts arising from this decision.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	As part of the Local Plan, there will be a 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. The current documents are set out in Appendices II and II to this report.
Health and Wellbeing	No implications identified at this stage.
Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults	No implications identified at this stage.

Risk Management and Health and Safety	The risks of not submitting a Local Plan in line with the current Local Development Scheme have been previously debated by members and include needing to submit the Plan under the new planning framework, and Swale Borough Council not being the adopting authority. This is in addition to an increased risk of speculative applications and appeals as long as Swale's Local Plan is considered out of date. Judicial reviews to the Local Plan process and to the Plan itself are always possible and a relatively common course of action for parties not in agreement with decisions made. Any judicial reviews will be dealt with as they arise. Officers don't at this point perceive any vulnerabilities.
Equality and Diversity	No implications identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified at this stage.
Local Government Reorganisation	The current Local Plan timetable expects the Local Plan to be submitted for its Examination in Public and to be adopted before local government reorganisation is expected to be complete.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:
- Appendix I: Draft Regulation 19 Local Plan
 - Appendix II: Draft Sustainability Appraisal, June 2026
 - Appendix III: Draft Habitat Regulation Assessment, June 2026
 - Appendix IV: Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Schedule, June 2026
 - Appendix V: Reduced Employment Site at Land at A2/M2 Junction
 - Appendix VI: Table of Comments Made, Changes Requested and Officer Response following PTPWG 30th June 2026 on Local Plan Review – Regulation 19 Consultation Launch

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 [PTPWG report Local Plan Review - Regulation 19 Consultation Launch 30 June 2026](#)
- 8.2 PTPWG minutes 30th June 2026 to follow
- 8.3 [Full Council report Local Plan Review Growth Strategy and sites for allocation 1 April 2026](#)
- 8.4 [Local Development Scheme July 2025](#)
- 8.5 Interactive Local Plan Policies map link: <https://maps.swale.gov.uk/>