

SWANLEY AND HEXTABLE MASTER VISION

Planning Advisory Committee - 25 January 2017

Report of	Chief Planning Officer
Status:	For Recommendation to Cabinet
Also considered by:	Cabinet - 9 February 2017
Key Decision:	Yes

This report supports the Key Aim of support and develop the local economy

Portfolio Holder Cllr Piper

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Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee: To support the following recommendations to Cabinet

Recommendations to Cabinet:

- a) To note the public and stakeholder responses made to the Master Vision consultation and the observations made on the stakeholder response
 - b) To support the overall principle of regeneration and growth in Swanley and Hextable.
 - c) To agree that all elements of the Master Vision are now addressed further within a Local Plan 'Issues and Options' consultation to be undertaken during 2017 with the exception of unsupported aspects, namely, facilitating new or improved Public/Town Council facilities and building a new hotel on the edge of the recreation ground.
 - d) To support the undertaking of further studies to assess in more detail the following specific aspects:
 - A development brief focussed on Swanley town centre
 - More detailed master-planning for a new garden village
 - More detailed modelling of transport implications
 - More detailed feasibility work related to the main elements of infrastructure
 - Financial assessment to refine the scale of development required to achieve a 'critical mass'
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Reason for recommendation:

To enable Committee Members to consider both public and stakeholder responses made to the Master Vision and to recommend to Cabinet that more detailed work is now continued through the new Local Plan process.

Introduction

- 1 This report provides an update on the Master Vision consultation agreed by the Planning Advisory Committee in July 2016 and Cabinet in August 2016.
- 2 It sets out how consultation was undertaken and provides a summary of the analysis of responses undertaken by the Council's consultants, both in terms of quantitative data taken from direct responses to the questions posed in the survey and more qualitative information taken from the range of comments and representations returned from the public and stakeholders.
- 3 Based on the consultation responses received, the report provides a recommendation for the next stages of progressing the Master Vision work. It discusses how the regeneration work for Swanley and Hextable can be taken forward and refined as an element within the Local Plan preparation.
- 4 The report also outlines some of the detailed work now needed to be commissioned if supported aspects of the Vision are to progress successfully.

Background to the Master Vision

- 5 The PAC report of July 2016 set out the reasons for taking a regeneration process forward and is not repeated in this report.
- 6 Early consultation in February 2016, prior to the development of any scenarios gave sufficient support for progressing ideas towards regeneration and growth, particularly where this would lead to new affordable and family homes and retirement properties, improved health facilities, better public transport and initiatives to cut road congestion, a better range of shops and restaurants as well as retention of leisure facilities and open spaces.
- 7 The PAC report of July 2016 was clear that if these issues are to be addressed effectively the scale of any regeneration would need to have a 'critical mass' capable of attracting sufficient development funding to support a step change in Swanley's infrastructure.
- 8 The ideas contained within the Tibbalds report presented as part of the July 2016 PAC report formed the basis of the public consultation taken forward. The Master Vision has been informed by the views of the people of Swanley and Hextable as expressed at early consultation in February 2016.
- 9 A new Garden Village was specifically suggested so as to ensure new growth did not form another suburban extension of Swanley but rather it could provide a new well designed village containing community features such as

shops and primary school provision with landscaping and buffer zones to ensure separation from the nearby settlements; Hextable and Swanley Village would remain separate communities.

- 10 If development akin to garden village principles were to be progressed in what is currently Green Belt, as part of a new Local Plan, this could be justified as representing an exceptional circumstance required to make the regeneration and growth of Swanley and Hextable a viable proposition.

Representation received by the District Council

- 11 A document described as a petition, directed to local MP Michael Fallon, has been presented to the District Council. The document is headed *Sevenoaks Vision Plan for Swanley* and contains 1,843 signatures from people giving an address within Sevenoaks District. Details are presented at the head of this Master Vision report in order to enable discussion on its contents prior to consideration of the responses received to the consultation survey.
- 12 Each page is headed *'We the undersigned object to the Sevenoaks Vision for Swanley on the following grounds. We do not want to see Swanley's population more than doubled (by 20,000), to see 4,500 homes built on our Green Belt/Prime Agricultural Land, to see high rise apartments and, potentially, to see an additional 9,000 cars on our already congested roads or our air quality to suffer'*.

Some pages contain a footer that states *'This Petition has no political bias. It solely represents the opinions of Swanley residents'*. For absolute clarity the document contains signatures that have been accepted from residents in other parts of Sevenoaks District (including West Kingsdown, Eynsford, Farningham and Fawkham) not just Swanley, Hextable and Crockenhill.

- 13 The District Council's Monitoring Officer advised the Chairman prior to District Council on 22 November 2016 *'that the petition does not meet the requirements of our Constitution and is invalid as it does not state what action it wishes the Council to take, it is a petition to the local MP and not the Council, the statement which accompanied it differs substantially from that which was signed and as a comment on a live planning application it would be wrong for the Council to debate it. The representation will however be brought to Members attention at the Planning Advisory Committee in January. I have carefully considered this as a constitutional matter and am satisfied with the advice I have given, which I will not alter'*.
- 14 The District Council's Chairman agreed with this position and considered that the petition *'is in fact a representation on a consultation and will accordingly be brought to Members attention at the Planning Advisory Committee in January'*.
- 15 With reference to the specific grounds to which signatories are objecting:
- *Swanley's population more than doubled (by 20,000)*. The Master Vision does not set forward an increase in Swanley's population of 20,000. It

goes no further than suggesting up to 1,500 new homes around the centre of Swanley and 3,000 as part of a new garden village to the east. On this basis therefore a 20,000 increase in population would represent an average household size of 4.44 in new development and more if single person accommodation and homes for older people are excluded. Current average household size in all wards in Swanley and Hextable is 2.5 other than Swanley White Oak which is 2.2 (2011 census, ONS).

- *4,500 homes built on our Green Belt/Prime Agricultural Land.* The Master Vision does not propose 4,500 homes to be built on Green Belt/Prime Agricultural Land. (The figure for the suggested Garden Village is up to 3,000 homes).
- *High rise apartments.* The covering statement makes reference to the U+I planning application in Swanley town centre. This is not part of the Master Vision. As a comment on a live planning application it would be wrong for the Council to debate it, as has been advised by the Monitoring Officer. The U+I application has now been withdrawn.
- *An additional 9,000 cars on our already congested roads or our air quality to suffer.* The Master Vision does not propose an additional 9,000 cars. (It places an emphasis on improvements to public transport and reducing the need to travel and identifying that further detailed feasibility work will need to be undertaken in order to set out how sustainable transport solutions will be achieved).

- 16 It therefore seems clear that the scale of Vision around which the representation has been structured goes some distance beyond that which has actually been set out and consulted upon in the Master Vision.
- 17 The statement added to the front of the representation states that *‘The signatories wish Swanley to remain, as it is, a small rural market town, we do not want to see a massive increase in our population as the infrastructure could never cope. However, we all appreciate that the town does need to be revitalized and refurbished. We are looking for our agricultural land and Green Belt to be protected and any additional housing to be provided from Brown Field development’.*
- 18 It is not absolutely clear what interpretation should be given to the representation as the context given when seeking signatures doesn’t accurately reflect the details in the Master Vision consultation and in part it was intended as an objection to a planning application. The already established policy position that supports regeneration of the town centre is not referenced; nor is the need to manage the increasing pressures for growth (reflecting Government’s national priorities) that are facing Swanley and Hextable. In this regard, no viable alternatives to the Master Vision approach are offered for establishing the ‘critical mass’ needed for funding a ‘revitalized and refurbished’ town with the infrastructure it needs.

The form of public consultation

- 19 The consultation undertaken for the Master Vision represents one of the largest ever undertaken by Sevenoaks District Council. It was specifically designed to be as inclusive as possible allowing the opportunity for representation from all people living and working in and around Swanley and Hextable. Taking this approach has helped to ensure a high response rate and a very high level of statistical confidence can be attributed to the data provided which in turn will be able to contribute to a robust evidence base for any future work on the new Local Plan.
- 20 Public consultation was undertaken between 7 September and 2 November 2016 and was masterminded by the District Council's Communities and Business Team. An extended consultation period was undertaken to help provide sufficient opportunity for responses to be made. The focus of consultation was a public survey. The survey was shared with Members on 6 September 2016, prior to issue, in order to allow any concerns to be raised.
- 21 The survey was sent to 9,800 households and businesses in postcode areas BR8 7 and BR8 8 together with stamped, addressed return envelopes. Multiple returns could be provided from individual households as long as each return could be attributed to a different household member.
- 22 An external company, Lake, were employed to process the responses to the survey. This included quantitative assessment of responses to questions and more qualitative analysis of comments returned.
- 23 Details of the consultation were provided as part of the Swanley and Hextable newsletter delivered to homes and businesses in the BR8 7 and BR8 8 postcode areas (Swanley, Hextable, Crockenhill and Swanley Village) from 12 to 16 September.
- 24 Half page adverts were taken out in the Dartford and Swanley News Shopper on 14 and 21 September and a briefing was held with a News Shopper reporter on 2 September 2016. The consultation was promoted widely over social media including Twitter and Facebook.
- 25 Residents were invited to find out more by:
 - Attending one of the drop in sessions in Swanley town centre and Hextable (see details below)
 - Viewing the Master Vision online at www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/swanley&hextable
 - Viewing a copy at Swanley Link
- 26 Drop in events in Swanley took place at 38/39 Swanley Centre (next to Wilko) from 11am to 4pm on Thursday 22 September, Friday 23 September and Saturday 24 September. Immediately in advance of the drop in sessions

- (20 and 21 September) postcards publicising the consultation were handed out to both outgoing and returning commuters at Swanley Station.
- 27 Drop in events in Hextable took place at Hextable Village Hall from 9am to 9pm on Friday 23 September.
 - 28 Drop in events at the White Oak Leisure Centre took place on Tuesday 27 September (11am to 9pm) and Saturday 1 October (11am to 4pm). Information about the consultation was left (unmanned) at White Oak Leisure Centre until Wednesday 2 November.
 - 29 Following a request from Crockenhill Parish Council a further drop in session was arranged for Crockenhill Village Hall on Tuesday 18 October (6pm to 9pm). Some of the more southern, rural parts of Crockenhill Parish lie in postcode area BR8 6 and did not receive the mailed out survey. For these areas copies of the survey were both made available through, and promoted via, Crockenhill Parish Council. The District Council was later thanked by the Parish Council for facilitating this process.
 - 30 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheets anticipating the main enquiries likely to be forthcoming, were made available to all staff and to those dropping in at these sessions.
 - 31 Staff involved in the consultations have advised that the groups of people visiting the sessions were wide ranging; see appendix 4.
 - 32 As the Master Vision concerns Swanley and Hextable over the next 20 years, responses were particularly encouraged from younger age groups. To help enable responses from younger, harder to reach people a visit was made to Orchards Academy where the survey questions, with simplified explanatory text, were completed by 107 pupils in one session held on 22 November 2016.
 - 33 The survey also allowed space for respondents to return comments and this has helped to provide a qualitative response. Lake consultants have provided an analysis of the comments returned.
 - 34 Stakeholders on the District Council's database were invited to return more focussed comments around their particular areas of interest or expertise. This included Swanley Town Council and surrounding Parish Councils.
 - 35 Stakeholders were advised by email of the forthcoming consultation before it began and were then invited to a separate stakeholder consultation which was held in the evening of Thursday 27 October 2016 at Swanley Link. Those attending were able to find out more and were encouraged to respond to the consultation.
 - 36 A business breakfast was held on Wednesday 19 October 2016 at Swanley Town Council. This provided an opportunity for the local business community to find out more about the Master Vision and to focus on issues of direct interest such as implications for employees, premises etc.

- 37 In addition to the survey being undertaken by pupils at Orchards Academy a visit was made to Downsview Primary School on Wednesday 19 October 2016. This does not form part of the consultant's analysis but summary details are attached at appendix 5 for information.
- 38 A meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership on 29 September 2016 was given over to a workshop for the Master Vision and the results provide useful evidence behind the views of those stakeholders represented at the event.
- 39 Finally a meeting was held on 10 October 2016 with the Head Teachers and Governors of Orchards Academy and St Mary's Primary School together with the Business Manager from Orchards Academy, KCC, the diocese of Rochester and TKAT the Academy Chain of which Orchards forms part. Follow up discussions were then held at each school to encourage responses.

Consultation results - public

- 40 The consultant's report has been attached as appendix 1 and provides details of methodology and data. The profile of respondents, including by age, is set out on page 10 of the report. The report summarises the comparative unweighted data (raw data) as compiled by the consultant.
- 41 A summary chart of findings for all respondents can be found on page 8 of appendix 1 based on a sample size of 1,838 respondents.
- 42 Overall, the level of response has been such that the margin of error (confidence interval) in the figures being reported is +/-2.42% and that one can be 95% sure of accuracy (confidence level). The low confidence interval and high confidence level can both be taken as indicators of the robustness of the results coming out of the consultation exercise undertaken. Further detail is given on page 7 of appendix 1.
- 43 **In summary there is support for the principle of regeneration of Swanley and Hextable, although not all elements suggested in the Master Vision were seen as attractive propositions. The following, larger items contained in the survey attracted a strong level of support with the gap between the agrees and disagrees being at least 15 percentage points (and in some cases much more):**
- A new garden village with spacious family friendly housing.
 - A new health/medical and leisure facilities built on a small part of the existing recreation ground.
 - An improved education campus at Orchards Academy.
 - Redevelopment of the Bevan Place car park and former Working Men's Club site with active ground floor uses.
 - Improvements to the range and opening hours of shops and restaurants in Swanley town centre.
- 44 There were exceptions to this level of support in the following cases:

- Options for new or improved Public/Town Council facilities and building a new hotel on the edge of the recreation ground were not supported;
- There was a divided response for building apartments in Swanley Town Centre possibly influenced by the U+I planning application;
- Strong support was returned by Orchards pupils but responses were otherwise more divided for:
 - moving Swanley Station
 - creating a station halt as part of a new garden village;

Observations from drop-in sessions

45 Observations on comments made by people at the drop-in sessions also provide useful additional, information about people's interests and concerns:

- Many people were confused by the U+I application and concern about '13 storey' blocks of housing.
- People were concerned about the impact of the Master Vision on infrastructure and services. This includes:
 - Roads, cars and traffic flow
 - Health care facilities
 - Education facilities
- Local people had very strong views about the closure of local community facilities in Swanley and did not understand the different roles of the tiers of local government structure operating in their area.
- Many local people also used the consultations as a means to voice local concerns that did not relate to the Master Vision.
- Some people expressed concerns about their perceived high level of development in Swanley compared to other areas of the District.
- There was a concern about the lack of affordable homes in Swanley and people were clear this wasn't social housing. Many wanted to make sure local people had an opportunity to get their foot onto the property ladder. Shared ownership options were popular. Some families were concerned about the lack of more spacious housing for them to move into and stay in the area.
- There was a general lack of understanding from some people about the nature of a Master Vision. Many expected it to go into detail about infrastructure, or didn't understand that development was necessary to facilitate improvements in infrastructure.

- Most people wanted to see some type of improvements to Swanley station, however, there was a split between those seeing the benefit of moving it closer to the town centre, while others preferred to see links with the town centre being improved.
- People in Hextable were concerned about whether Kent County Council was going to build on the Oasis Academy site.
- People were positive about how good the local schools were and wanted to see improvements for Orchards Academy.
- People wanted to see the recreation ground feel safer and find ways to encourage better community use of the space.

46 Observations made by staff who facilitated the drop-ins is also of interest:

- We had to negotiate with a local protest group to ensure people had fair and open access to the consultation.
- There were many people who came to the drop ins for information as they had not yet submitted their response and wished to consider all the issues fully before they did so.
- People seemed interested that the Master Vision would be a template that would ensure a greater sense of local control over the way development and resulting future infrastructure improvements would happen.
- People supported encouragement of the number of people using rail and bus transportation but were unsure of whether we would actually be able to encourage people away from cars.
- Most people felt very strongly about the recreation ground and valued it as a community space. However, people who visited the consultations did appear to find the artist's impression of the health and leisure facilities on the edge of an improved recreation ground useful. Some of the issues raised by people included:
 - Feeling safe was important. Having an overlooked space might help this.
 - Positive reactions to a community hub and improved open space that might encourage different and greater community uses, such as music performances, open air cinema or places to enjoy lunch and meet friends.
 - Positive reactions to a new health and leisure centre on the edge of the recreation ground.
- People didn't appear to find the 'blue blob' on the map particularly helpful in understanding the Garden Village proposal, which in concept, is meant to provide lower density housing, surrounded by

parks and open spaces. It led to many thinking this would have considerably more development than was actually envisaged. The strongest feelings on this proposal came from those who live on the eastern side of Swanley, particularly those in on near Archer Way and Swanley Village.

47 Key messages recorded from businesses at the breakfast drop-in session were:

- Some concern that the Master Vision should consider the need for more modern industrial space in Swanley, particularly small modern units of 2,000-3,000 m² in size.
- Wanted to ensure leisure facilities were within easy reach.
- Concerned about the lack of vibrancy in Swanley town centre and the dominance of Asda.
- Recognized need for housing with more room and space and something that works in the local context.

48 Key messages from young people at Orchards Academy:

- Young people at Orchard's Academy for years 7, 8, 9 and 10 were encouraged to think about Swanley as a place over the next 20 years; somewhere they will need to find housing, work, start and raise a family and the types of facilities that would be important to them.
- Pupils were generally very positive about the Master Vision for Swanley reflected in the survey results in appendix 1.
- 107 pupils completed the survey.

49 The results of the consultation are being made available on the District Council's website and will be publicised more widely in the February issue of the Swanley and Hextable Newsletter and via a brief summary in the April issue of In Shape.

Consultation results - stakeholders

50 Stakeholders responses are compiled and summarised in appendix 2. Observations on the key points raised are as follows:

51 **Swanley Town Council** - It is encouraging that Swanley Town Council accept the need for regeneration and the points made about scale of ambition and potential impact on the local community are extremely valid. Concerns about the level of detail set out in the Master Vision and the need for landowner consultation are noted; current work has been 'high level' and if taken forward the next stages will need to be developed in much more detail via the new Local Plan.

- 52 **Hextable Parish Council** - The objection to development of nursery sites and the Egerton Nursery site in particular is noted as is the preference for growth to the north and east of the settlement as being set out in the emerging neighbourhood plan. The objections to the development of prime agricultural land and Oasis School playing fields are also noted as is the 'no objection' to development of previously developed land at Oasis School.
- 53 **Crockenhill Parish Council** - The recognition that Swanley needs updating and improving is noted as is the concern that the scale proposed is seen as being over ambitious and will impact on green belt and green spaces. The importance of identifying a timescale to sequence events, of ensuring direct consultation with landowners and providing for any essential infrastructure is recognised and more detail will need to follow as part of any further work to take the Master Vision forward.
- 54 **Swanley Village Residents' Association** - Concerns that are expressed about maintaining identity by separation of Swanley Village from other settlements are noted, as is the importance given by residents to the surrounding countryside.
- 55 **Kent County Council - KCC Highways** - Support for the vision is welcome as is concern expressed about pressure on services linked to funding availability for infrastructure. SDC will be pleased to discuss further with KCC. Support for improvements to highways and transport service infrastructure and provision of residential development around Swanley Railway and town centre is welcomed. The need for further detail on traffic management action, parking provision, bus and rail integration, cycle and pedestrian links and access to bus stops is noted. SDC welcome working with KCC on the detail needed in relation to achieving more sustainable traffic movements and managing potential future travel demand.
- 56 KCC support for transformational growth as long as sustainability measures are achievable is welcomed as is the recognition that a new rail halt and relocating the station could help to do this.
- 57 Reference to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership funding package secured from the Government's Local Growth Fund in 2014 is noted. It is understood by SDC that this is specifically for improvements to the existing Swanley Railway station in addition to CIL and s106 contributions, as would need to be agreed through the CIL governance board, and additionally that the funding proposed by SDC for the development must be secured before proceeding.
- 58 **KCC Education** - KCC confirmation that they do not envisage the closure of the Oasis Hextable Academy to be 'temporary' is noted as is the expansion of Orchards Academy to 6 forms of entry causing a number of issues. SDC will welcome involvement in further discussions around potential options for St Mary's CE School and Orchards Academy.

- 59 The commentary on provision and funding implications for scenarios 1 to 3 for both primary and secondary education provision is very useful and welcome.
- 60 **KCC Property and Land Ownership** - Concerns regarding the movement of St Mary's CE Primary School to redevelop the site and replacement of the youth hub are noted.
- 61 **KCC Minerals and Waste** - Consideration needing to be given to 'identify and safeguard mineral reserves - specific regard to Policy DM7: Safeguarding of Minerals' is noted and can be addressed via the new Local Plan. The information that the County Council's waste management facilities will be close to operating capacity is also noted. SDC will be happy to enter further discussion with KCC on mitigation projects and quantum of additional demand.
- 62 **KCC Biodiversity** - The more detailed consideration needed for specific biodiversity elements and landscape connectivity is noted.
- 63 **Kent County Council Property (separate response)** - Support for the Master Vision's ambitions is welcomed and it is noted that the medium scenario is preferred. Confirmation of KCC's promotion for redevelopment of two former school sites (former Birchwood Primary School and Oasis Academy) is noted as is the preference for housing development rather than a new sports hub at the Birchwood location. The suggested focus on redundant agricultural, nursery and education sites is noted as is the suggested review of other Greenfield land parcels that no longer contribute to the open character of the Green Belt would also help.
- 64 **Orchards Academy** - As a central part of the community, the School recognises the need for investment in the future growth of Swanley and in general are in support of the Master Vision. The school buildings are not capable of taking large numbers so there would need to be substantial investment in the school to accommodate a potential influx of new families. Orchards would also welcome the addition of a sports centre on site that could be shared between the school pupils and local community. Further investment in infrastructure is required with the immediate need for a better bus service to the more rural parts of Swanley. Working alongside outside agencies such as Supajam and Walk Tall Orchards are also providing education for those pupils who would have fallen into the NEET category so are providing a service to the Local authority as well as pupils.
- 65 **St Mary's CE Primary School** - The Governing Body confirm, for the purposes of the Master Vision that it is the intention to increase the size of the school and nursery from one to two form entry, as soon as possible. They understand that this may necessitate building onto the existing school, or starting a new school building whilst using the existing school building; and that any new build, using the same site, may involve two stories. It is not an intention to share the site with housing, for example, at any stage and consider the site size to meet present needs. The Governing Body are aware that the adjacent site (known as St Mary's Youth and Community Centre) is

also designated for school use, but has not been used as such since 1993. They would appreciate increasing the present site to include this site, and understand that this would mean that further building was not necessary.

- 66 **Dartford, Gravesham, Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)** - Acknowledgement of the suggested transformational growth is encouraging as is the openness to an integrated health and wellbeing facility for the current two GP practices. Concerns over funding and reducing congestion are noted and further detail on these aspects will form part of the next stages of work if developed through the new Local Plan.
- 67 **The Oaks Partnership** - The support of the Oaks Partnership for new development in Swanley is welcomed as is recognition of the need to focus on the benefits of increased health and wellbeing provision. It is noted that the volunteer sector and commissioned community resources will have a key role to play.
- 68 Support for the health centre being part of a leisure centre is particularly welcomed and it is noted that the health and wellbeing centre would need to be large enough to house community services, commissioned health services (GP services, community nursing, physiotherapy, podiatry, school nursing, speech and language therapy and health visitors). The preference for a central location is noted as is the need to resolve traffic concerns and accessibility.
- 69 Comments on aspects of site suitability are welcomed and noted; in particular the importance of staff wellbeing, noise control, natural light, ground floor access for the elderly, car parking, green spaces with plenty of trees and the need for flexible space.
- 70 **South Eastern** - Observations on the option of rebuilding the station in its current location are noted. SDC have been party to the discussions setting out how the scheme is realistic in terms of deliverable benefits, value for money and can be delivered within the restraints of the funding conditions. South Eastern uncertainties around the station halt and relocated Swanley Station options are noted and further more detailed discussion would be welcomed.
- 71 The South Eastern preference to continue with improvements at Swanley Station in its current position as a realistic deliverable scheme is noted, including specific points about ensuring better aesthetics and security, improved pedestrian access and cycle routes to the station, improved street furniture and lighting and improved bus service provision and access to the current station.
- 72 **Network Rail** - Support for the preparation of the Master Vision, for development and growth in the area and the key principles of maximising rail links and investing in transport infrastructure is welcomed. The support for the high level objectives of the proposed improvements to the station design and its environments is also welcomed and it is understood that the costs and impacts of any new infrastructure will need to be fully addressed

particularly the feasibility and viability of any relocation of the station. Network Rail's openness to further discussion for the relocation of the station and halt station options is welcomed.

- 73 **CPRE** - The clear concern about development in the Green Belt is noted; development of a Garden Village in the Green Belt cannot be progressed unless 'exceptional circumstances' are identified. Air quality, congestion and adequate car parking are all recognised as concerns that would need to be addressed in more detail if work on the Master Vision is progressed. Similarly concern around Swanley's many green spaces is well represented and this is an issue where more detailed work on the Master Vision could play a positive role around improvements to both the quality and inter-relationship of green infrastructure.
- 74 **White Oak Bowls Centre** - A range of concerns and observations are raised and are noted :
- Railway cuts the town in half; solution - deck over the railway
 - Opposition to development on recreation ground. Hotel not suitable
 - Concerns about the absence of affordable housing
 - Concerns about the provision of medical clinics for Hextable residents
 - Propose College Road nursery (brownfield site) for development instead of Green Belt
 - More information needed regarding Garden Village
 - Railway halt will clog the new residential streets with traffic
 - New care home must be affordable and provide sufficient parking
 - More parking must be considered elsewhere for station with the loss of Bevan Place car park and relocating near town centre - 200 additional spaces (multi-storey)
 - Leisure site (Hilda May Avenue) should remain for its current use
 - Entrance to Swanley lies closer to the motorway intersection than proposed in the plans
 - Hextable Gardens should remain as an open space
- 75 At the Local Strategic Partnership meeting of 29 September 2016 a group discussion was facilitated around the Master Vision consultation. As well as Sevenoaks District Council, the following stakeholders were represented: Kent County Council (including Public Health, Early Help and Prevention and Area Schools Officer), Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Police, West Kent Extra, West Kent Housing, Moat Housing, Sencio Community Leisure, Age UK, Imago and Sevenoaks Churches Together.
- 76 LSP minutes are attached as appendix 3 and item 5 of the minutes refers. All key messages of the consultation were supported in principle.

Relationship to the Local Plan

- 77 To date the Master Vision has been progressed as a piece of work distinct and separate from the new Local Plan as it has been a long held ambition by SDC to regenerate Swanley. Consultants have advised on the potential elements which, taken together, might lead to regeneration and growth.
- 78 Public and stakeholder views have provided important evidence behind which elements of the Master Vision might be taken forward. It would now be appropriate for those elements that are to be developed further to be progressed as part of the new Local Plan process.
- 79 The new Local Plan has been underway since June 2015. Early stages of plan making have been concerned with gathering together a wide ranging evidence base in order to help inform future decision making. An important principle is that the plan will be led by the evidence and it is important to note that not all findings will be consistent. Hard choices lie ahead in terms of the balance in weight that will need to be given to differing evidence. This will be a key role for the Local Plan process.
- 80 The work and consultations undertaken on the Master Vision so far can represent an important addition to the Local Plan evidence base for the potential regeneration and growth at Swanley and Hextable.
- 81 The next stage for the Local Plan will be to set out, amongst other things, options for a District wide development strategy to 2035 and in forming this strategy the role to be played by Swanley and Hextable will form one distinctive and important element.

Summary and next steps

- 82 The consultation process for the Master Vision represents one of the largest undertaken by the District Council to date.
- 83 The responses to the survey questions indicate clear support for taking forward a process of regeneration and growth for Swanley and Hextable. Support is particularly strong amongst younger respondents, who are the ones most likely to be the beneficiaries of the new homes and infrastructure set forward in the Master Vision.
- 84 Some elements of the Master Vision attract greater support than others and a few are not supported. **In summary there is support for the principle of regeneration of Swanley and Hextable, although not all elements suggested in the Master Vision were seen as attractive propositions. The following, larger items contained in the survey attracted a strong level of support with the gap between the agrees and disagrees being at least 15 percentage points (and in some cases much more):**
- A new garden village with spacious family friendly housing.
 - A new health/medical and leisure facilities built on a small part of the existing recreation ground.

- An improved education campus at Orchards Academy.
- Redevelopment of the Bevan Place car park and former Working Men's Club site with active ground floor uses.
- Improvements to the range and opening hours of shops and restaurants in Swanley town centre.

- 85 A number of the representations returned express some caution around the final scale of regeneration that might eventually be taken forward and any disruption when work is being undertaken. This is clear in responses returned from Swanley Town Council, Hextable Parish Council and Crockenhill Parish Council and some of the infrastructure providers and stakeholders as well as members of the public. These are valid concerns will need to be considered sympathetically and in more detail as planning work progresses.
- 86 There is also an element of scepticism in public responses around the ability to actually achieve some of the project ideas set out within the Master Vision and whether existing infrastructure deficiencies can actually be resolved and not made worse as a result of further growth.
- 87 A key implication to be taken forward is that further work will be needed to fully understand the ambition and detail of each project in order to make sure that infrastructure remains sufficient to both cater for new development and address problems already existing in the area. As part of this, more detail will be needed around deliverability, in particular further clarity on the levels and timing of funding. This is not to say that individual project elements, such as a new leisure centre, cannot be taken forward in advance of further work related to the overall Vision.
- 88 For the forthcoming Issues and Options consultation on the Local Plan, to be undertaken during 2017, there remains sufficient support to progress much of what has been suggested in the Master Vision for further, more detailed, consideration. Members have already agreed to an Area Action Plan element within the new Local Plan at Planning Advisory Committee in July 2015).
- 89 The Master Vision makes further recommendations on taking forward the work and the areas where further detailed studies will be required if the process is to be informed effectively are likely to include:
- A development brief focussed on Swanley town centre
 - More detailed master-planning for a new garden village
 - More detailed modelling of transport implications
 - More detailed feasibility work related to the main elements of infrastructure
 - Further financial assessment to refine the scale required to achieve 'critical mass'

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

The Council has provided a policy commitment within its adopted development plan to taking forward a regeneration process for Swanley. Not undertaking work to assess options for regeneration and growth would therefore not accord with this commitment.

Key Implications

Financial

Production of the Master Vision work and any further related studies will be funded from the Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

There are legal implications if Master Vision work is progressed further as part of a new Local Plan. Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making which are considered when the plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with Local Plan making are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment.

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The further progression of a Master Vision as an element of a Local Plan will directly impact on end users. The impacts will be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Conclusions

A Master Vision has been prepared and consulted on for the regeneration and growth of Swanley and Hextable. Consultation responses provide sufficient support for progressing work as part of the new Local Plan.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Public Consultation Written Report - Lake Market Research

Appendix 2 - Summary of key issues raised in stakeholder responses

Appendix 3 - Minutes of the Sevenoaks District Local Strategic Partnership. Held at SDC Offices, 29 September 2016

Appendix 4 - Groups of people visiting the drop-

in sessions for the Swanley and Hextable Master Vision

Appendix 5 - Key messages from young people at Downsview Primary School

Background Papers

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee - 7 July 2015 - Local Plan work programme](#)

[Report to Planning Advisory Committee - 20 July 2016 - Swanley and Hextable Masterplan](#)

Richard Morris
Chief Officer for Planning