

## SWANLEY AND HEXTABLE MASTERPLAN - VISION

20 July 2016 - Planning Advisory Committee

Report of Chief Planning Officer

Status: For Consideration

Also considered by: Cabinet - 9 August 2016

Key Decision: Yes

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Protecting the Green Belt**

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Piper (Planning)

Contact Officer Antony Lancaster, Strategic Planning Manager Ext.7326

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### Recommendation to Planning Advisory Committee:

- a) To consider a Masterplan presented for the future regeneration and growth of Swanley and Hextable and to agree that the Vision be presented to Cabinet with a recommendation that it is taken to a full public consultation.
- b) To recommend to Cabinet to delegate authority to the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder to make any subsequent changes to the Masterplan as necessary.

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### Recommendation to Cabinet

- a) To consider a Masterplan presented for the future regeneration and growth of Swanley and Hextable and to agree that the Vision be taken to a full public consultation.
- b) To delegate authority to the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder to make any subsequent changes to the Masterplan as necessary.

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**Reason for recommendation:** In order to enable consideration of a Vision for the regeneration of Swanley and Hextable prior to a period of public consultation.

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### Introduction and Background

- 1 Sevenoaks District Council has for some time had a priority of achieving the regeneration of Swanley. This has been formalised within the Core Strategy adopted in 2011. The upturn in the economy, rekindled interest by the key

landowner in Swanley town centre (U&I), emerging proposals for the District Council's sites together with the interests of Swanley Town Council and those for the improvement of Swanley Station all add up to form the case that this is now the right time to advance a long-term, 20 year regeneration ambition for the town. Hextable is included because of its close relationship with Swanley, in terms of use of services and facilities, although physically separated by Green Belt, including Swanley Park.

- 2 Government planning policy has been attaching increasingly greater weight to quickening the pace for delivery of housing and jobs. The development pressures on Sevenoaks District are therefore likely to continue to grow. In order to maximise the improvements in infrastructure and facilities that Swanley and Hextable deserve it is important to develop a cohesive framework for the mid to longer term. The alternative will be un-planned growth occurring incrementally without any of the infrastructure and community benefits identified as important to the local community.
- 3 A consultant's team led by Tibbalds was appointed in late 2015 to develop a Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable. This aims to set out a **20 year Vision for regeneration**. Recruitment of consultants involved both the Planning and Economic development Portfolio Holders and lead local Members for both Swanley and Hextable.
- 4 An intensive period of both stakeholder and public consultation began on 8 February. The Communities and Business team led a programme of public consultation; stakeholder consultation was led by Tibbalds. In total there were about 1,500 visitors to the events. A summary of the consultation findings is included within the document at Appendix A, together with a summary of how the Vision has responded to the consultation findings.
- 5 Planning Advisory Committee Members are being recommended to both consider the Vision and agree that it then be presented to a special meeting of Cabinet on 9 August seeking authority to progress to a detailed public consultation of at least six weeks, again led by the Communities and Business Team. This is anticipated to be undertaken during September and October when all residents of the area will be invited to make comments on the Vision in order to assess local levels of support.
- 6 The Vision has been arrived at by working through different levels of growth (for Swanley town centre and for the wider Swanley town and Hextable parish) but ultimately settling at an **ambitious scale of regeneration to allow a 'critical mass' sufficient to facilitate delivery**.
- 7 Key elements for Swanley include:
  - Prioritisation of an **improved health-hub** provision to help reduce waiting lists
  - a **relocated, modern railway station** which recognises the excellent links into London, but which also relates much better to Swanley town centre

- An **improved shopping centre** providing a much better retail and leisure offer linked to new residential quarters for around 1,500 new homes brought forward, in part, by the Town Centre owners U&I. U&I have been in pre-app discussions with a view to submitting a planning application for their land in Swanley Town Centre. There remains the potential to link this to the Masterplan work through shared production of a development brief for the site.
- Recognition of the importance of the recreation ground area to local people (as evidenced through early public consultation) and making it the focus of a **new civic space**. The civic space has the potential to be set within an improved Civic Complex for Swanley Town Council including conference facilities, a new Leisure Centre and Health Club, a hotel near a new railway station and a residential quarter brought forward by the Town Centre owners U&I.
- New growth to the east of Swanley, towards the M25, for around 3,000 new homes as **garden village(s)** sympathetic in scale and design to the majority view coming forward in public consultation. The Vision presents broad areas for growth rather than specific sites. There is also potential for a new linked '**Swanley Halt station**'.
- **Significant reduction in congestion** along London Road to the M25 addressed via modal shift to a new guided/prioritised bus route between Swanley station/town centre and broad areas identified for new village(s).
- A **Halt Station located at the current crossing**, serving new communities in the garden villages.
- **Improved and rationalised education campus at Orchards Academy**, potentially incorporating **St Mary's Primary School** on the site and thereby freeing up the existing St Mary's site for more town centre buildings linked to Government grants or developer funding.
- **New gateway development** at Bevan Place car park/working men's club site, London Road owned and promoted by The District Council to include a restaurant offer.
- The formation of a **new open space** provided over the railway cutting next to a new station. This allows the town centre to relate much better to areas east of the railway including the joining of the parade of shops at Station Road to the town centre.
- **New green linkages** between Swanley and Hextable and improvement to open spaces using the current Park and Avenue of Limes.

## 8 Key elements for Hextable include:

- **Maintaining separation and village identity**
- **Potential for a new Parish complex 'park hub'** at Hextable Park
- **Redevelopment of the current Parish Council complex**

- **Supporting, retaining and where possible improving levels of local service provision**
- **Allowing for growth from NW to NE towards Dartford (rather than South)**
- **Smaller scale regeneration opportunities at former nurseries/market garden sites.**

An important consideration has been for the Vision for Hextable to reflect the work undertaken so far on the Hextable Parish Plan.

9 Initial ball park costs for the three main infrastructure projects are:

1. Relocation of Swanley Station £30m
2. Swanley Halt Station £5m
3. Guided Bus route £20m per mile (3 miles)

Total cost approx £100m

Potential funding sources are likely to include:

- Site development by three key landowners
- Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) finance (funded from Central Government) linked to the scale of ambition. Potential to make a case for securing £30 to £50million over (say) a 5 to 10 year period in specific amounts for the three main infrastructure projects identified above from government and developers
- Developer contributions/CIL receipts - top-up funding. Initial estimates suggest this could be in the order of at least £20 million

10 Briefings

The following briefings have been made by the Tibbalds consultants team to Councillors

24 May	Cabinet Members
25 May	Local Ward members (including adjoining Ward members)
26 May	Hextable Parish Council and Swanley Town Council

11 Next steps and timescales:

9 August - Report to Cabinet - recommendation for public consultation

September/October - Public Consultation of at least six weeks - programme to be arranged and led by the Communities and Business team in consultation with Planning Policy.

## **Other Options Considered and/or Rejected**

Preparation of a Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable provides the means of formulating a cohesive and ambitious Vision for their medium to longer term regeneration and growth. It also provides a focus on the large scale infrastructure projects needed to help achieve a positive transformation. Not producing a Masterplan and Vision leaves Swanley and Hextable more open to incremental development coming forward without achieving the infrastructure benefits needed.

## **Key Implications**

### Financial

Production of the Masterplan and Vision is being funded from the Local Plan reserve budget.

### Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Subject to the outcome of public consultation the Masterplan Vision will be refined as an Area Action Plan element of the 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. As above, subject to the outcome of public consultation the Masterplan Vision will be refined as an Area Action Plan element of the new Local Plan. The preparation and adoption 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**

Sevenoaks District Council has for some time had a priority of achieving the regeneration of Swanley. Development pressures are growing and in order to maximise improvements in infrastructure and facilities for Swanley and Hextable it is important to develop a cohesive framework for the mid to longer term. The Masterplan sets out a 20 year Vision for regeneration. Planning Advisory Committee Members are being asked to consider the Vision and agree that it be presented to Cabinet with a recommendation for a full public consultation.

**Appendices**

Appendix A - Swanley and Hextable Masterplan  
Vision document

**Background Papers**

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

**Richard Morris**  
**Chief Planning Officer**