

A Vision for Swanley and Hextable

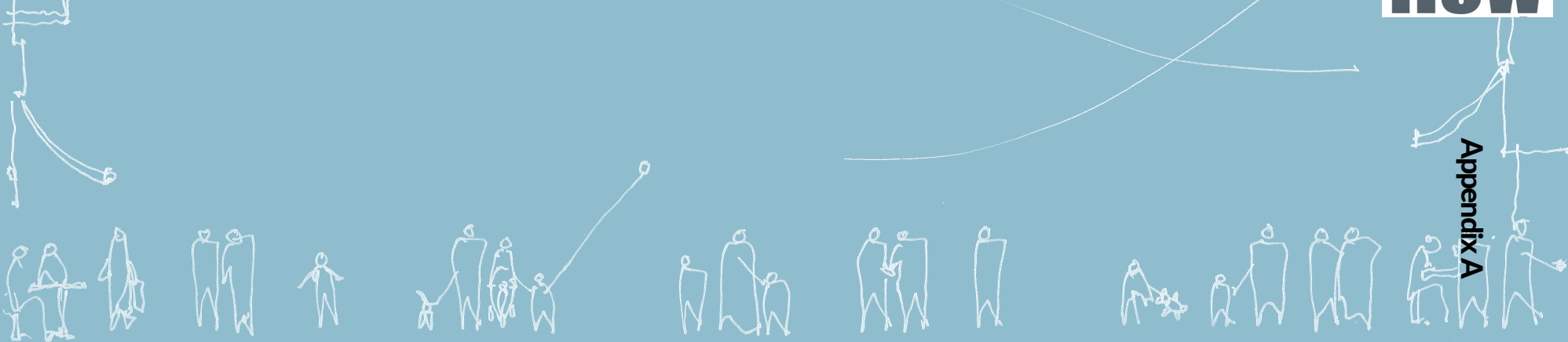
Final Report

July 2016

Tibbalds
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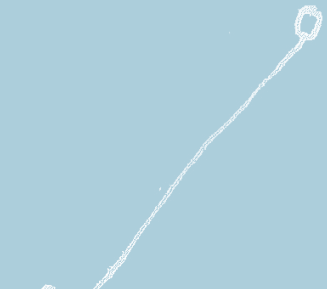
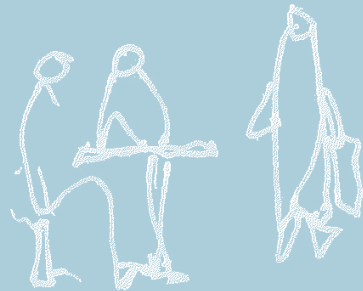
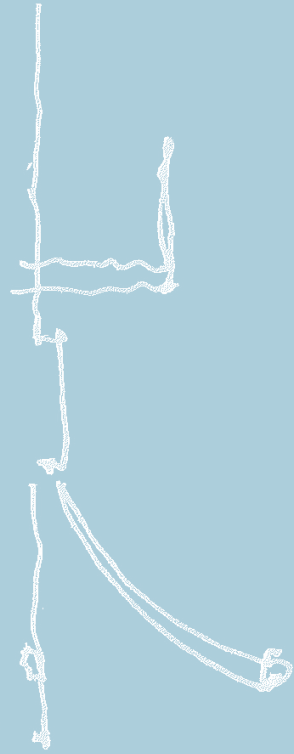
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1: Introduction



1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Purpose of this report

Swanley and Hextable present an exciting opportunity. Swanley is Sevenoaks Districts' second largest town and together the population of the two settlements exceeds that of Sevenoaks town itself. They occupy a strategic location just within the M25 and on a direct rail link into central London. There are signs of interest in investment in Swanley Town Centre and the time seems right to consider how the settlements can improve and grow.

Within this context, a consultant team led by Tibbalds Planning and Urban Design (Tibbalds) in association with BBP Regeneration and Urban Flow have been appointed by Sevenoaks District Council to prepare a Vision for Swanley and Hextable. The key aim of the vision is to support the regeneration of both areas, in particular Swanley town centre, housing, retail and transport infrastructure and consider the replacement of Swanley's leisure centre.

This first report presents a summary of the issues and opportunities that have been identified and which are being considered to help prepare a vision for regeneration in Swanley and Hextable.

This study does not carry any statutory weight but will identify options for growth and development to help inform the emerging Local Plan for Sevenoaks district. It will form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan and needs to be considered alongside the suite of other technical evidence documents being prepared by the Council. This will then help shape a preferred direction of growth, new policies and investment opportunities in the town.

1.2 Clarifications:

The Consultant Team were specifically tasked by Sevenoaks District Council to not be constrained by current policies and conditions, but to be bold and stretch ambition for the area to a level necessary to achieve a positive transformation in terms of critical mass, facilities, diversity of offer and infrastructure improvements.

Clearly we are at an early stage and further detailed masterplanning work needs to take place to establish the capacity and viability of the proposals. Further consultation with the public and stakeholders is also required.

Sevenoaks District Council recognises that:

- there is an economic regeneration priority for Swanley town centre;
- There are major growth pressures within the district and the neighbouring authorities; and
- That if really transformational development and regeneration, with the maximum social and economic benefits, is to be delivered, then it needs to go hand-in-hand with the larger scale growth scenarios proposed.
- There needs to be a transformation in infrastructure provision, particularly for transport, health, education and open space.



Fig 1.1: The existing central market square



Fig 1.2: The dominating ASDA store



Fig 1.3: Hextable Village sign

1.3 The study area

Swanley is Sevenoaks district's second town centre, with a population of approximately 16,000 people. It sits just inside the M25 and alongside the A20. It is close to London and trains from Swanley station go into London Victoria and St Pancras. It is surrounded by open countryside (all of it forming part of London's Metropolitan Green Belt). To the north it benefits from Swanley Park: a large town park with children's play areas, a miniature railway and boating lake. This acts as a buffer to Hextable, which is a separate village from Swanley.

Swanley grew up around the railway line. The splitting of the lines here was originally called Sevenoaks Junction before becoming known as Swanley Junction and, more recently, Swanley. The town has a history of horticulture and there still remain several nurseries in and around the area, mainly on the edge of the settlement boundaries. It also became a location for convalescing hospitals, with three large hospitals opened between 1885 and 1897. Asda, in the town centre, stands on the site of what was formerly the Kettlewell Hospital.

-  Settlement boundaries
-  Swanley Village Conservation Area
-  Railway
-  M25
-  A20



Fig 1.4: The Study Area and existing settlement boundaries and Conservation area boundary

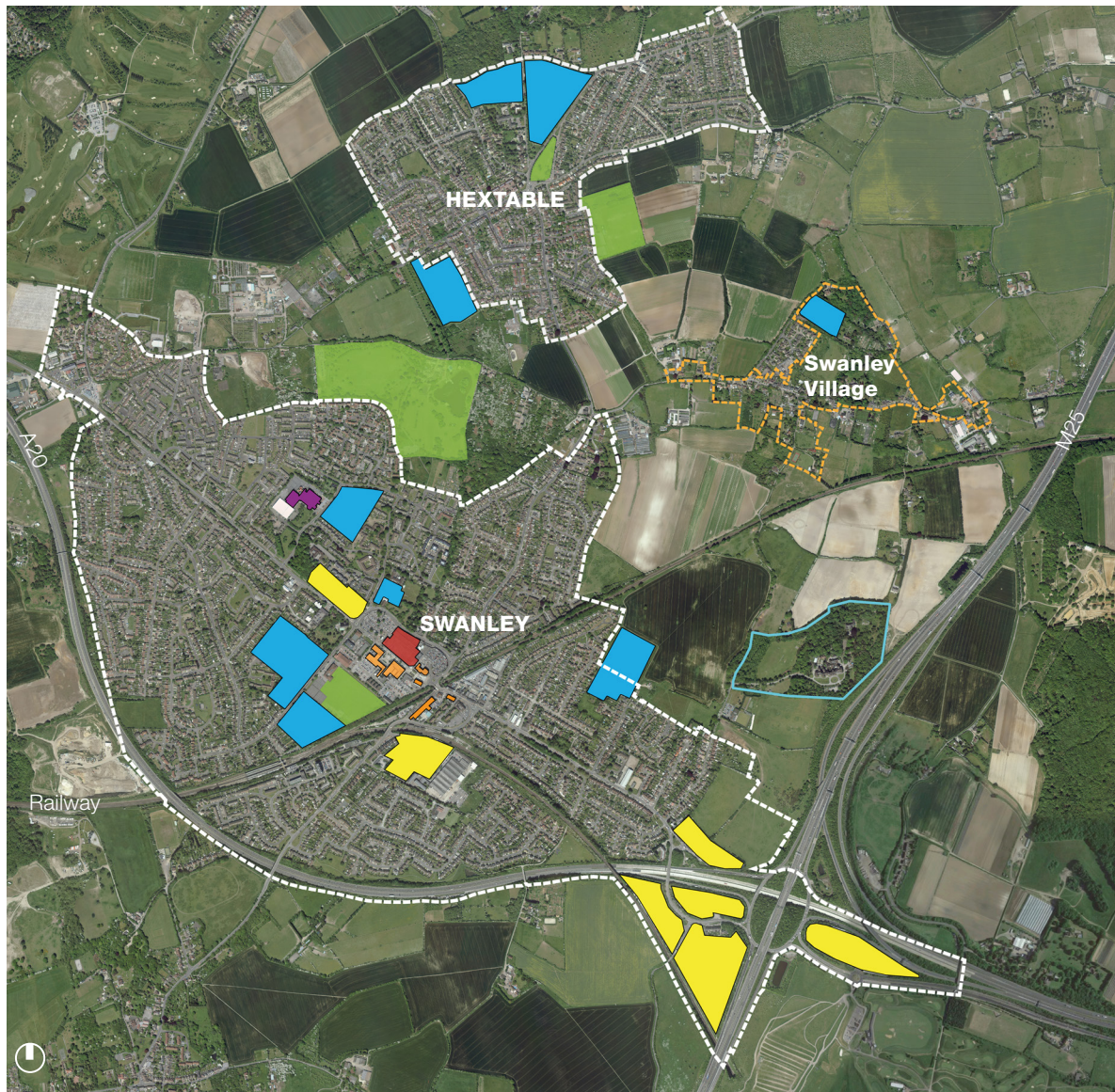


Fig 1.5: Key town elements

Swanley’s town centre is outdated and dominated by large food retail ‘boxes’ and surface car parking. The old High Street is no longer the centre of the town and the shops here and on Station Road face a car dominated public realm and competition from the pedestrianised town centre. The White Oak Leisure Centre is popular but in need of modernisation and repair, and links from the town centre to Swanley Park are indirect.

Hextable is a large village of approximately 4000 people situated to the north of Swanley on the other side of Swanley Park. It is largely residential and focused around a large village green. There is a primary school, a special needs school and a recently temporarily closed secondary academy school.

Swanley Village also forms part of the wider study area. It is mostly covered by a conservation area and is rural in character.

- Large Supermarket block
- Swanley town centre retail
- White Oak Leisure Centre
- Employment areas
- Key green spaces
- Existing School sites
- Parkwood Hall Co-operative Academy - residential school
- Settlement boundaries
- Swanley Village Conservation Area boundaries

1.4 Relationship with Local and neighbourhood plans

1.4.1 The local plan

The Sevenoaks Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011, covering the period up to 2026. Policy LO4 of the Core Strategy seeks to deliver new homes and jobs in Swanley as well as increasing the attractiveness of sustainable transport modes. The focus should be on regeneration and redevelopment within the urban area. Policy LO5 aims to bring about improvements in the town centre, including a mix of new uses, better links to the station and environmental improvements. A separate Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) was adopted as recently as February 2015, also covering the period up to 2026 to align with the Core Strategy.

These are now being reviewed and updated as part of the new Local Plan for Sevenoaks district, to remain consistent with the NPPF (2012). The Council is currently in the process of commissioning and undertaking a series of evidence base studies to help inform the next Local Plan.

It is envisaged that early public consultation on the Local Plan will take place during the late spring of 2017 and early 2018, followed by submission to the Planning Inspectorate later in 2018. Following examination and any necessary

modifications it is hoped that the new Local Plan will be adopted in 2019.

This study of Swanley and Hextable will form part of the evidence informing the production of the new Local Plan. It will be considered by the Council alongside the suite of evidence base documents to help derive new policies to direct and shape future change in the area.

1.4.2 Neighbourhood plans

Swanley neighbourhood plan area was designated in November 2014 and Hextable was designated in July 2013.

The draft Hextable neighbourhood plan was published in January 2016 and shared with Sevenoaks DC for comment and input. The plan includes draft policies with regard to the green belt, open space and buildings of heritage interest. It also identifies a potential site for future development.

This vision for Swanley and Hextable will help create the strategic framework for future change and transformation. It will provide the basis upon which more locally specific plan and policies in the neighbourhood plan can be developed. The vision will also reflect work done on Neighbourhood Planning to date.

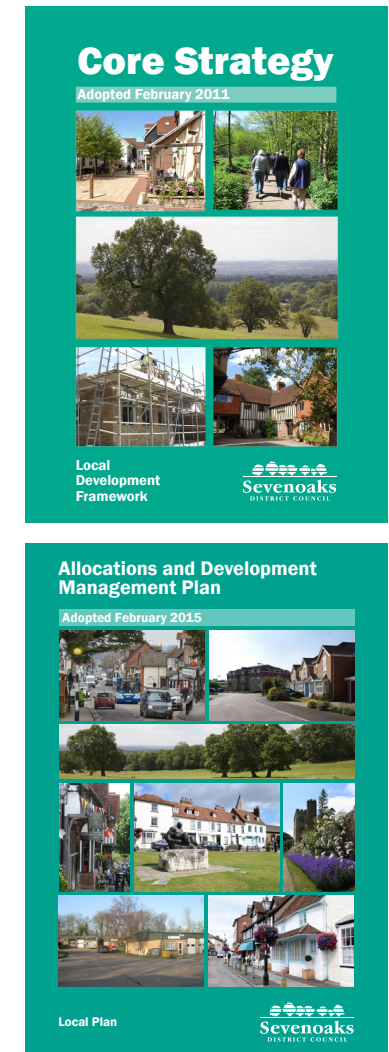


Fig 1.6: Current Policy guidance

1.5 The Vision

The vision for Swanley contained in the currently adopted Core Strategy is:

Swanley will be regenerated to create a town centre that better meets the needs of the community and supports the economy through development to include a mix of new shops, offices, hotel and residential development together with accompanying environmental improvements. Existing employment areas in the town will be renewed and a new site developed adjoining the M25. Open space provision will be improved to serve this more densely developed town.

As set out in section 1.2 we were tasked with further developing this vision and looking towards the creation of transformational change to deliver regeneration, new homes, jobs and infrastructure. Three propositions have been formulated which help to think about the future of the area and the form it might take. There is a strong opportunity to frame Swanley as a new 'Garden Town'. At the same time it can be a thriving commuter town and a dynamic business centre. The propositions should not be seen as mutually exclusive, and a preferred strategy may draw on elements of all three; they are rather intended to provoke thought and illustrate some of the opportunities and possible identities Swanley and Hextable may seek to portray. The propositions are:

1. A garden town in the garden of England'

For Swanley and Hextable this might mean:

- Creation of smaller self-sufficient settlements, supported by social and community infrastructure and which helps foster community pride and ownership in the quality of place.
- A landscape-led response to growth that reflects the horticultural heritage of the area, with planting strategies that echo the flower and fruit production of the past.
- Development of family-friendly lower-density development, with good play and park provision.
- Positive and useable green spaces and green links across and between Swanley and Hextable.
- A focus around a growing and diversified market in the town centre, including local produce.
- Enhanced community allotment provision.
- Educational specialisms developed around 'green industries'.
- Clearly identifiable settlement boundaries defined by a strong green edge.



Fig 1.7: Garden Village images

2. 'A thriving commuter town'

For Swanley and Hextable this might mean:

- Maximising the excellent rail links to London and beyond.
- Provision of high-density residential development around the station and in the town centre. This may appeal to young professionals seeking a first step on the property ladder who have been priced out of inner London.
- A strong and vibrant retail and cultural offer that appeals to new and existing residents alike, retaining more spend within the town and attracting inward investment from developers and corporate brands.
- Excellent family housing, schools and parks located further out of the centre, allowing new residents to stay and grow within the community.
- Improved walking and cycling links, particularly to the station.
- Improved health and community facilities.



Fig 1.8: Sustainable transport images

3. 'A dynamic hub for business and enterprise'

For Swanley and Hextable this might mean:

- Capitalising on the proximity to the M25 and M20/A20, and the opportunity presented by the town's strategic location between London, Kent and the Channel Ports to create a major employment location.
- Promote opportunities for start-up business and creative industries, in addition to larger scale logistic / manufacturing within employment areas and to secure employment provision within the town centre.
- Investment in provision of excellent ICT and fibre-optics.
- Education and training opportunities within schools, academies and as provided by businesses to up skill the local population.
- A vibrant town centre mix that attracts new business opportunities.

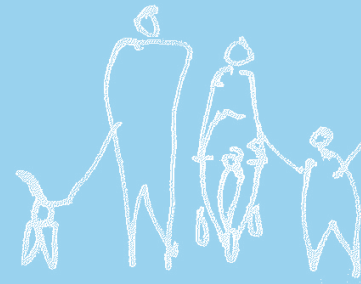
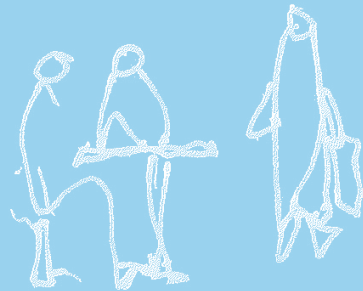
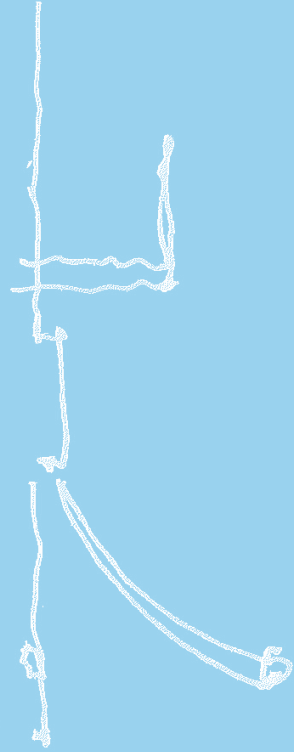


Fig 1.9: Business and education facilities

1.6 Structure of the report

This summary paper is presented 7 sections:

- Section 2: The Challenge;
- Section 3: Consultation review;
- Section 4: Strategic Objectives;
- Section 5: Strategic Growth Options: Wider Area;
- Section 6: Strategic Growth and Regeneration: Swanley Town Centre;
- Section 7: Key Projects and Initiatives;
- Section 8: Conclusions and Next Steps.



2: The challenge



2 The challenge

2.1 Introduction

This section summarises the key findings and challenges that will inform and help shape future decisions for Swanley and Hextable. It is broken down into a series of sub-sections, presenting key headlines from the local plan and emerging evidence base, socio-economics, our analysis of the 'place', the market, access and movement. Rather than react to these, the challenge for Swanley and Hextable will be to proactively embrace and grasp them as opportunities for transformational change that will improve the area and quality of life for current and future generations.

2.2 'Local Plan' evidence

2.2.1 Future growth pressures: housing and demographics

Key Messages:

- The population of the District will grow by approximately 20,000 over the next 20 years;
- Up to 620 new homes may need to be delivered each year to meet need;
- There remains a need for a balanced mix of dwellings, although it should be recognised that there is an aging population in the District.
- Swanley and Hextable relate more closely to the London Housing Market Areas than to much of Sevenoaks district
- Projected housing growth for the District is 0.9% per annum to 2026, just below projected employment growth of 0.7%
- Expansive Green Belt designation constrains housing growth within the District
- Swanley and Hextable have different socio economic profiles, with Hextable having a higher population with qualifications, although also a more ageing population

Due to considerable local development, the population of Swanley grew significantly during the post-war decades of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s before stagnating in the 1980s and 1990s (see plans opposite that illustrate the growth of Swanley from a railway line and crossroads to a built up town).

In 1991, the population of Swanley (including Swanley and Hextable) was 21,081. After that the population fell slightly to 20,986 in 2001. The current population of the Swanley area is 20,318 according to the 2011 Census – 16,226 of whom live in Swanley and 4,092 in Hextable.

Sevenoaks Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2015, prepared jointly with Tunbridge Wells District Council, projects populations on a district level for the twenty-year period between 2013-2033¹. The SHMA projects that during this period the population of Sevenoaks district will increase from 117,035 in 2013 to 136,504 in 2033. It does not disaggregate this down to town or parish level, and does not take into account the potential to attract more young, metropolitan, and higher skilled residents to Swanley through a shift in the proposition of the town.

The SHMA suggests that there will be an ageing population across Sevenoaks as a whole, with the biggest population increases being within the 60-74 and 75+ age groups. Conversely, there is expected to be only slight increases in the 15-29 and 30-44 age groups. Comparing DCLG projections against employment forecasts from the 2007 Employment Land Review over the period 2006-2026, population growth is set to outpace jobs growth.

The SHMA suggests that the unconstrained objectively assessed need for Sevenoaks for the 20-year period (2015-35) is for 12,400 new homes. This equates to an annualised need for 620 new homes. Most of this is to reflect demographic need. A much smaller proportion is in response to the need to improve affordability, support

¹ The latest DCLG population forecasts for the period 2012-2037 predict an annual population increase of 0.96% across Sevenoaks district as a whole. Over the same period it is estimated that the average household size will decrease from 2.41 to 2.30 people per household.

economic growth and provide for out-migration from London.

The SHMA suggests that the strongest demand for market housing will be for two and three bedroom properties. For affordable housing (based on the definition of affordable housing as of February 2016 – this may of course change subject to proposals contained within the Housing and Planning Bill) there is a greater proportion of need for one and two bedroom properties. However, there remains a need for a balanced mix of dwellings of different sizes to come forward.

Alongside the SHMA the Council is in the process of identifying where housing might be accommodated in the future. The Council commenced its call for sites in Autumn 2015. This was the first stage in production of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and Economic Land Availability Assessment (ELAA). (These are now combined within the NPPF and referred to as a Housing and Economic Land Assessment.)

The Council asked that sites be submitted that are available within the next 20 years and, in terms of housing, capable of delivering five or more dwellings. The period for responding to the Call for Sites remains open and new sites can be submitted to the council at the time of writing. The Call for Sites is a separate process to the Masterplan, and the consultant team was not provided with detailed information on the sites put forward by SDC, although details are now publicly available via the Council's website.

A series of recently commissioned evidence base updates including retail, economic needs and open space are currently in progress and will also inform the local plan review.

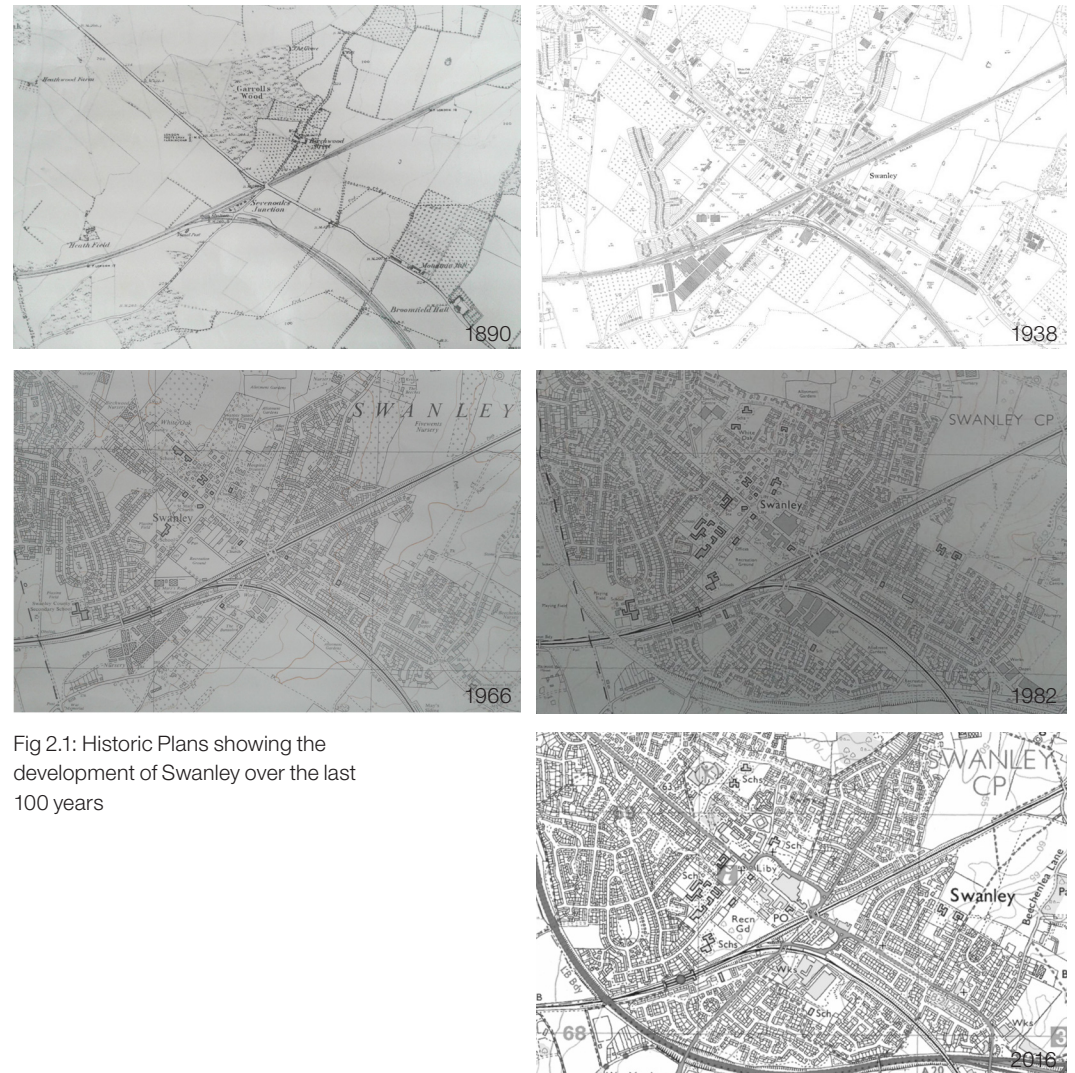


Fig 2.1: Historic Plans showing the development of Swanley over the last 100 years

2.2.2 Employment and retail studies

Key Messages:

- Sevenoaks district experiences high levels of both in-commuting and out-commuting.
- Swanley competes with south east London for commercial occupiers
- Residents of Swanley and Hextable rely heavily upon neighbouring centres for their retail and leisure needs
- There is potential demand for out of town retail and leisure facilities, capitalising upon Swanley's proximity to the M25
- Swanley and Hextable provide a good range of employment sites, generally well-located and in good condition, with traffic congestion being the key detractor from investment
- Despite relatively strong values, there is a lack of availability of high quality office floorspace in Swanley
- Swanley's industrial property market performs well compared to Kent due to its desirable location, but falls behind Dartford in terms of development activity

The wholesale and retail sector is a great source of employment in Swanley, accounting for one in five jobs, compared to one in ten in Sevenoaks District as a whole. Construction employment also accounts for a greater share of employment in Swanley than in Sevenoaks District as a whole.

There are around 800 places of work in the Swanley Catchment Area, with 85% employing fewer than 10 people, and the majority of the remaining employers having 10-49

employees². Large employers in Swanley include Asda and Swantex (Swan Mill Paper Company). However, warehouses account for 59% of the area's 1.36 million sq ft of commercial floorspace, with retail making up 21%, and offices only 14%³.

As a business location, properties in Swanley are likely to compete for occupiers looking for space in the following areas:

- south west M25 quadrant from Dartford to Sevenoaks;
- eastern parts of Bromley and Bexley Boroughs, and;
- M20 corridor as far as Snodland and potentially Maidstone⁴.

Despite excellent access to the strategic road network, and via rail to London and other Kent towns, Swanley faces competition from Dartford and Sidcup. Dartford achieves higher rental values, however, many occupiers are aware of the traffic issues around the Dartford Tunnel. Currently, Swanley and Sidcup achieve similar rental values and demand, particularly for industrial units.

The industrial market in Swanley is performing well, with low vacancies and highly sought after prime industrial space (new, modern, best quality in the area), particularly at the Park Road Industrial Estate located just off Junction 3 of the M25.

The main driver for locating a business in Swanley is considered to be the town's well-connected location. There is an occupier trend towards re-locating from South London

Boroughs due to increasing occupier costs in the capital and transport issues.

Rental values are lower than the main industrial competitor – Crossways in Dartford, however, the traffic issues around Dartford are recognised as a constraint by the local occupiers. On the other hand, Dartford sees a lot more speculative development and investment occurring, while the industrial availability in Swanley is very limited.

Typical industrial requirements are for 1,000-10,000 sq ft with a lack of larger units in the area. Rental values are c. £7.50-8.00pa / sq ft for units of 20-30,000 sq ft units; and £9-10pa / sq ft for 1,000-3,000 sq ft units. Although rental values are lower than some popular industrial locations, like Dartford, they are generally in line with the rest of Kent and some Greater London locations like Crayford. Agents comment that the main barrier to development is the lack of employment land in the area and more land needs to be released from the Green Belt for commercial development in order to allow for the town and area to grow its employment opportunities.

Swanley's limited stock of modern office floorspace (particularly the refurbished units in the Technology Centre at White Oak Square) is well occupied, whilst there is lesser demand for secondary space in poorer condition.

There is no Grade 'A' air-conditioned office space but such offices are likely to achieve c. £23-24pa / sq ft, aligned with the rest of Kent. Good quality refurbished space such as at Technology Centre currently achieves c. £17-18pa / sq ft. With several office buildings lost to permitted development recently, the newly constrained supply could result in higher rents towards levels seen at Bromley and Crossways.

² ONS UK Business Counts (2011-2014)

³ VOA data (2008)

⁴ Wessex Economics (2015) The Emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan

- Land with a residential allocation
- Land with an employment allocation
- Land with a mixed use allocation
- Town and Local centres
- Settlement Boundaries



Fig 2.2: Site Allocations from the existing Core Strategy and ADMP

Typical requirements are currently in the range of c. 2,000-3,000 sq ft or 5,000-10,000 sq ft. There is currently no availability to accommodate larger office requirements in Swanley.

The Sevenoaks District Long Term Employment Space Projections Report was published in 2011. The report suggests that, in the most likely scenario, there would be a demand for an additional 15,000 sqm of business floorspace across the Sevenoaks district by 2026 (representing an annual growth figure of 0.7%). However, the report does not disaggregate these figures to a more localised level.

The Sevenoaks District Retail Study Update was published in 2009 as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. Whilst Swanley retains 61% of the convenience spending from its own household survey zone, it retains only 3% of comparison spending due to a limited offer of lower order, lower value goods.

The majority of shoppers from Swanley's retail catchment area visit Bluewater for their clothing and personal/luxury goods shopping; other destinations used by shoppers include Bromley and Dartford. Dartford tends to be popular for electrical and furniture shopping as well as retail warehouses for DIY shopping. Consultation, undertaken as part of the District Retail Study, revealed that Swanley residents tend to drive to these other shopping locations, particularly where parking facilities are good / free. However, the elderly population comment on convenient bus links to Bluewater and Dartford.

With regard to Swanley, the report suggests:

- On the basis of existing market share, there would be capacity for an additional 903 sqm net of convenience goods floorspace by 2026. However, the retail study

is ambiguous about convenience retailer demand, stating that the dominance of the Asda store could negate against other operators seeking representation in Swanley, or conversely, it could encourage some operators as Swanley is already attracting significant numbers of food shoppers⁵.

- Comparison expenditure in Swanley is limited, with popular retail destinations such as Bluewater located conveniently within a short drive away. On the basis of existing market shares, there would be capacity for a further 412 sqm of comparison goods floorspace in Swanley by 2026. However, this figure would ultimately depend on the scale of regeneration measures taken within the town.

Swanley Square Shopping Centre is currently in the ownership of U+I. In parallel with this study for Swanley and Hextable, U+I are developing proposals for future change and growth in Swanley town centre, which will potentially include additional retail floorspace.

The local street market in the town square just off the pedestrianised section of London Road which is the main thoroughfare in the town centre, attracts a great number of people into the town each Wednesday - beyond the residents of Swanley and Hextable⁶. The market supports around 100 pitches for a variety of retailers – considerable compared to the quantum of retail floorspace within the town centre - supported by plenty of free public car parking.

⁵ GVA Grimley (2009) Sevenoaks District Council Retail Study Update

⁶ Sevenoaks District (2014) Economic Development Strategy

2.2.3 Green belt assessment

Key Messages:

- Green Belt boundaries are drawn tightly around the existing built up areas;
- 93% of the district is designated as Green Belt;
- Green Belt boundaries may need reviewing through the local plan to help deliver future growth.

In terms of thinking about where future development might take place the review of the Local Plan will consider the boundaries of the green belt. Currently, these are drawn tightly around and follow the existing settlement boundaries in Swanley and Hextable. Across the district as a whole, 93% of the land is designated as Green Belt.

The Inspector's Report for the Sevenoaks Core Strategy (adopted 2011) stated that (at that time) policy restricting development on Green Belt land was acceptable as the projected need (at the time) of 3,300 new dwellings between 2006 and 2026 could be met by development sites within settlement boundaries. However, as the SHMA demonstrates, the updated unconstrained housing need for the new local plan period is greater than this.

A Green Belt Topic Paper was published in November 2013 in line with the Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted 2015). The paper identified one site within the Swanley area that should be removed from the green belt: land currently used by Hextable Parish Council to the north of College Road, Hextable.

In addition, Broom Hill, located off Beechenlea Lane, Swanley is an area of open space adjacent to the Green Belt which has been the subject of planning applications in recent years. It has extant permissions from 2014 for up to 61 dwellings.

The NPPF says that green belt reviews should only take place as part of local plan reviews. Given the scale of growth and housing need across Sevenoaks district it is likely that the Council will need to review its green belt boundaries as part of the local plan process. This report for Swanley and Hextable does not constitute a green belt review but it does suggest potential opportunities for outward expansion into the green belt and where the tests of the Green Belt will need to be satisfied should that be the preferred approach for the Local Plan.

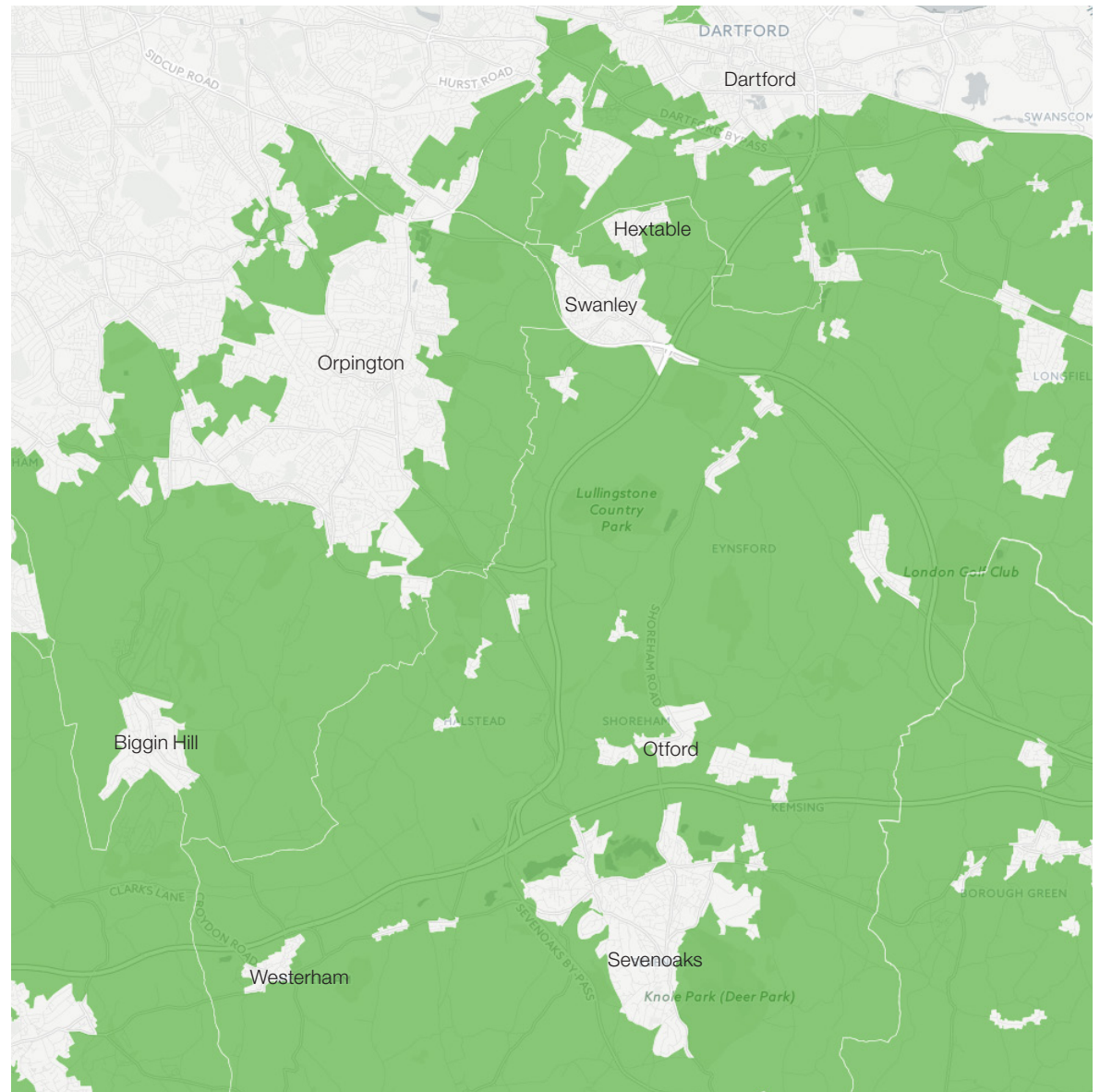


Fig 2.4: Map showing the extent of the green belt in the north of the District (from CPRE Green Belt map)

2.2.4 Open space, sport and recreation

Key Messages:

- Swanley and Hextable are deficient in terms of open space provision;
- The quality of and access to open space needs to be improved;
- There is an under supply of sports halls across the district.

An Open Space, Sports and Recreation Study was published in 2009 as part of the evidence underpinning the adopted Core Strategy. With regard to Swanley and Hextable, the report suggests that:

- The provision of parks in Swanley is below the recommended standards of 1.00ha per 1000 population as established by the study. To address this, the report recommends a new park should be provided to the south east of Swanley, in the area bound by the Swanley-Farningham railway line and the A20 London Road.
- The Council should focus on spatial and accessibility improvements of its natural and semi-natural open spaces.
- Poor quality or inaccessible green amenity spaces, such as adjacent to Dawson Drive, Hextable, should be considered for improvements or possible re-designation.
- There is a deficit of 1.24ha in the provision of play space for children and young people in Swanley, and the Council should prioritise new play areas in western Swanley.

- Swanley Park does not have enough facilities for young children.
- A full playing pitch strategy for Swanley should be implemented to test the assertion of Swanley Town Council that there is a lack of provision of playing pitches for youth and junior football following the closure of Birchwood School.
- Both Swanley and Hextable are under-provided with allotments and community gardens. The Council should explore opportunities to locate potential sites in the centre of Swanley where possible.

An Indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment was published in 2009 as part of the evidence underpinning the adopted Core Strategy. It suggests that while there is a small under supply of sports halls in the district, there exists no pressing need for new sports hall provision. However, and as noted below, it is understood that the leisure centre in Swanley is in need of refurbishment to bring it up to modern standards.



Fig 2.5: Swanley Park



Fig 2.6: Swanley Park



Fig 2.7: The Recreation Ground, Swanley



Fig 2.8: Hextable Village Green



Fig 2.9: The Avenue of Limes



Fig 2.10: Outside of the Woodlands



Fig 2.11: Hextable Park

- Land with open space allocations
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Other green spaces
- Settlement Boundaries



Fig 2.12: Open Space Allocations from the existing Core Strategy

2.2.5 Social and community infrastructure

Key Messages:

- Surveys have found that local facilities are insufficient and unable to serve population growth;
- Additional primary school places and improved secondary school facilities are required;
- Improvements to green infrastructure and the walking and cycling networks are required.

The Swanley Housing Needs Survey⁷ shows that the local population considers the existing infrastructure to be insufficient for housing growth. According to the survey the health, education and transport facilities are overstretched to serve a growing population.

Local residents also cite frequent congestion around the main roads, and limited capacity to provide for increased car journeys / ownership associated with a new demography.

There are a number of primary and secondary schools in Swanley and Hextable. It is understood that Oasis Academy in Hextable will close in Summer 2016 due to falling student numbers, although the future of the site remains unclear. It is also understood that Orchards Academy in Swanley currently has an intake of around 120 pupils per year, but they are looking to increase that intake to 180 pupils per year. The existing buildings were developed in the 1960s and have been relatively well maintained; however, more significant investment and improvement will be required in the long-term.

The Orchards Academy site is held on a 125-year lease from Kent County Council. The adjoining 'nursery' site is leased to the nursery and not operated by the Trust. Current facilities

include Sports hall, gym, tennis courts, AstroTurf pitch, auditorium with a stage and sound system. Some of these facilities are hired out to community users – fitness group, weightwatchers, football clubs, pensioner groups, which is demand-led, rather than formally promoted.

Underpinning the adopted Core Strategy is the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and associated schedule. With regard to educational facilities in Swanley and Hextable, the IDP states:

- Additional primary school places in the town are to be provided through school extensions from 2012/13 onwards to meet demand of population growth forecasts. It is expected that the costs of this provision should be borne by developer contributions.
- Secondary school facilities should be rebuilt and refurbished to ensure that they are fit for future use.

With regard to healthcare facilities in Swanley and Hextable, the IDP states that a single healthcare facility in Hextable is needed to provide sufficient capacity for the existing population.

Furthermore, the following critical infrastructure items are identified in the IDP for Swanley:

- A new walking and cycling route between Swanley Town Centre and Swanley Station in order to increase the attractiveness of walking, cycling and train use in Swanley. It is expected that this will be delivered through developer contributions and potential Local Transport Plan funding as part of Town Centre regeneration. The cost for these improvements have not yet been estimated.

- Improvements to Green Infrastructure Network and its accessibility (including open space, children's play areas, allotments) to ensure that sufficient green infrastructure (including open space) is provided / made accessible to support new development within the district. It is expected that this will be funded by a combination of Developer contributions and on-site provision (to mitigate the need arising as a result of new development) and other funding.

Developers are currently liable to pay the following CIL rates within Swanley and Hextable, in accordance with the Sevenoaks District Council Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule (Adopted 2014). However, the charging schedule may warrant review as the new Local Plan develops.

| Use | CIL rate (psm) |
|--|----------------|
| Residential (C3) – Zone B | £75 |
| Supermarkets and superstores primarily selling convenience goods | £125 |
| Retail warehousing | £125 |
| Other development | £0 |

Source: Sevenoaks District's Community Infrastructure Levy: Charging Schedule (2014)

Work by Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group has identified that a 'Primary Care and Wellbeing Centre' would be the preferred model of health delivery in Swanley. This could be co-located with another community facility and could include, for example, care for the elderly, maternity and paediatrics, diabetes clinics, lifestyle and wellbeing advice and activity. It is important that the existing community benefits from community infrastructure improvements so that health inequality is reduced rather than widened.

2.3 Socio-economic context

Swanley and Hextable, combined, comprise the largest centre of population with Sevenoaks District (accounting for 18% of the total population).

Swanley and Hextable have comparable age profiles to the South East LEP area, although Hextable has a slightly more ageing population (increasing proportion of older people)⁸. Despite their ageing population, the economically active population in Swanley and Hextable is comparable to Sevenoaks District (70% and 72% of working age residents, respectively, compared to 72%)⁹. Unemployment amongst the economically active population is comparable in Hextable and Sevenoaks District (3.8% and 4.0%, respectively). However, the unemployment rate is significantly higher in Swanley (6.4%).

Swanley and Hextable both have significantly lower proportions of qualified residents than Sevenoaks averages. The proportion of residents with no qualifications in Hextable is comparable with Sevenoaks District (20% and 19% respectively). However, the proportion is significantly higher in Swanley (29%). The proportion of residents with qualifications NVQ Level 4 or higher is significantly lower in both Swanley and Hextable compared to Sevenoaks District (17% and 23%, respectively, compared to 32%)¹⁰.

Swanley and Hextable both have significantly lower proportions of employed residents in managerial and professional occupations than Sevenoaks as a whole (Swanley 21%, and Hextable 26%, compared to Sevenoaks

District 34%)¹¹. Swanley has significantly higher proportions of residents in unskilled occupations than Hextable and Sevenoaks District as a whole (Swanley 39%, compared to Hextable 28%, and Sevenoaks District 27%).

Net weekly income ranges from £505 to £659 across the three relevant Middle Super Output Areas covering Swanley and Hextable (average £600), significantly lower than the average of £687 for the District¹².

The District experiences a high level of both in-commuting and out-commuting, with an overall job density of 0.80 (36,892 workplace population / 46,398 resident population¹³), compared to 0.85% across the South East. Sources and destinations for commuting journeys are both varied, although key sources include Tonbridge and Malling Borough, Tunbridge Wells Borough, and Medway. Key destinations include Central London, LB of Tower Hamlets, and Dartford Borough.

Almost a quarter of the working residents of the Swanley Catchment Area (comprising Hextable, Crockenhill and Well Hill and the rural areas between these settlements¹⁴) work within the area. Some 9% work mainly at or from home, with 15% working at a place of work within the Catchment Area. Another 10% of residents in work have no fixed place of work. These are likely to be contractors whose place of work changes frequently¹⁵.

Unsurprisingly, large numbers of residents work in adjacent Boroughs – Bromley, Bexley, and Dartford. Swanley has stronger labour market ties to these local authorities than the rest of Sevenoaks District. One-fifth (21%) of working residents within the Swanley Catchment Area work in Central London boroughs, with more working in parts of outer London other than Bromley and Bexley.

The majority of jobs in the Swanley Catchment Area (70%) are filled by people who live outside of the Swanley area. The most important sources of in-commuting to Swanley are from Dartford, Bexley, Bromley, and other parts of Sevenoaks District.

The majority of Swanley Catchment Area residents and those who work in the Swanley Catchment Area drive to work. Significant numbers of those who live in Swanley travel to work by train – the main commuting flows being into London in the morning. The District's Economic Development Strategy recognises that a key part of the regeneration of Swanley is ensuring that the transport links are of sufficient quality and dealing with traffic congestion. The train station lacks many of the facilities you would expect at a top quality commuter station and access is poor, particularly to the town centre.

The emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan study concludes that there is a link between the creation of jobs in Swanley and expanding the opportunities for employment for local residents; but if new jobs are created in Swanley, it is probable that many will be filled by people from outside Swanley; and it is important that Swanley

8 ONS (2011) Census Data

9 ONS (2011) Census Data

10 ONS (2011) Census Data

11 ONS (2011) Census Data

12 ONS (2011/12) Small area income estimates for middle layer super output areas, England & Wales, 2011/12

13 ONS (2011) Census Data

14 Wessex Economics (2015) The Emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan

15 ONS (2011) Census

residents are able to compete for jobs both in Swanley and elsewhere¹⁶.

It is important also to recognise that it is those with low skills, or those who want or need to work part time, who will be particularly dependent on local jobs; those with low skills will generally be only able to access low paid employment, and travel costs if incurred account for a higher proportion of earnings than for those in better paid employment. Many low income households also comprise part time workers due to family commitments and a need to work close to home.

A core indicator used to measure educational standards is the requirement that at least 60% of pupils achieve Level 4 or above in all of reading, writing and mathematics. Only two of the eight primary schools in the Swanley Catchment Area exceed the average results for Kent as a whole, the other six falling below the Kent LEA average. The average proportion of pupils achieving this national standard is lower than in Kent as a whole and lower than the average for the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley¹⁷.

The Orchards Academy is located close to the Town Centre and is the only secondary school in the town. Other nearby schools are located in the towns of Sidcup, Dartford and Orpington all within four miles of Swanley. The Academy is now oversubscribed – their annual intake is full at 120, with 180 applications. The Academy’s exam results are good, and the school is currently classified as ‘Good’ and heading towards ‘Outstanding’ status. The Sixth Form has relaunched recently with a small intake and re-branded as Orchards Advanced Centre of Education. They offer A-level

‘equivalent’ qualifications rather than A levels or vocational qualifications. The Academy does not have any direct links with Further or Higher Education institutions. The closest Further and Higher Education Colleges are North West Kent College and Bromley College.

Educational achievement is an issue within Swanley, with a large proportion of residents having no or limited qualifications, and a correspondingly low proportion of resident workers with higher-level qualifications, when compared with benchmark areas¹⁸. This must have an impact on the ability of school leavers to secure work, and, even more so, on the type of employment they move into¹⁹.

16 Data Wessex Economics (2015) The Emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan

17 Department of Education data (2013)

18 Wessex Economics (2015) The Emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan

19 Wessex Economics (2015) The Emerging Swanley Economic Development Action Plan

2.4 Housing market

The housing stock in the town is biased to houses rather than flats. However, several new developments, particularly the development of Horizon House, and the proposed development of the Goldsel Road, United House site and the Bevan Road schemes, are likely to comprise mainly flats.

The adopted Local Plan Policy SP7 requires that urban areas within Swanley achieve a density of 40dph. In suitable locations close to the town centre, a higher density of 75dph will be encouraged. Other settlements will be expected to achieve 30dph density²⁰.

Swanley is within the North West Kent Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA)²¹. The figure below gives the weekly Local Housing Allowance rates that apply for this year for the period 2016/2017:

| Type | Shared | 1 Bed | 2 Bed | 3 Bed | 4 Bed |
|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Rent | £70.84 | £124.69 | £153.02 | £174.43 | £242.40 |

Source: VOA (2016)

Swanley has a weak relationship with Sevenoaks and separate property market dynamics. Sevenoaks and the areas in the south of the District have higher value housing with higher demand for high end / executive homes. Swanley remains one of the most affordable residential locations in the area, with the exception of Dartford, which sees demand from out-priced local residents from Swanley.

²⁰ Local Plan Policy SP7

²¹ The BRMA is an area where a person could reasonably be expected to live taking into account access to facilities and services for the purposes of health, education, recreation, personal banking and shopping (as defined by the Rent Office).

Sevenoaks District has a high proportion of home ownership relative to the country average or the rest of Kent, at 72.7%. Social rented households account for 13.2% and the privately rented 10.8%, both of which are lower compared to national averages and amongst the lowest in Kent²².

Over 85% of the local population lives in houses, of which 39% are in detached houses, 33% in semi-detached and 27% in terraced properties. The proportion of people living in houses and detached houses is higher than the national averages, while only 13% live in apartment buildings or conversions.

The Swanley Housing Needs Survey (2014) indicates that the majority of people in Swanley live in 3-bedroom properties. A high percentage of the local population (74%) has been living in Swanley for over 10 years and intends to remain in the area. The preferred dwelling type is house (41%), followed by flat (30%) and 22% bungalow / accommodation for the elderly.

The quality of the housing stock in Swanley and Hextable is generally good with predominantly semi-detached properties and a number of desirable suburban houses with decent-sized plots. There is a limited number of high end/ executive homes, which are generally concentrated in the south of the District.

Swanley's residential sales market is strong, particularly for 3-bed semi-detached houses (c. £280- £300k in Swanley and Hextable). Discussions with local agents reveal that the main sources of demand are for predominantly family-orientated homes from both local and London-based commuters from areas such as Peckham, Lewisham, New Cross, Brixton, who are looking for affordable prices and larger properties. The surrounding areas tend to command higher values – Swanley residential values remain lower

than locations within a 10 mile radius (i.e. Bexley), with the exception of Dartford, where out-priced local buyers tend to relocate. Hextable and Swanley Village also tend to command higher residential values than Swanley. The local demand for luxury / executive homes is low, with Sevenoaks and the areas in the south of the District being the preferred location by high-end buyers.

London residents are drawn to Swanley because of the relatively low house prices and as a result they tend to pay a 5-20% premium on asking prices (thereby out-bidding local residents) to purchase a larger property in a green setting, which they would not be able to afford within the London Boroughs. This demand for housing also reflects the excellent commuting links with London via rail and the M25. However, employment opportunities are limited in the immediate area with many local residents having to commute for both part-time and full-time employment.

Flats are not very popular with first time buyers and tend to be bought by investors. Expectations are, however, that with growing demand from London commuters, the market for apartments will expand and improve, particularly around Swanley rail station, where a few flat developments have already been completed. Horizon House, a recent office-to-residential conversion, is seeing a high level of enquiries from local residents, London commuters as well as buy-to-let investors prior to building completion. The building offers 56 apartments (studio, one- and two-bed units) with prices starting from £180,000 to £275,000 per unit.

There is a general lack of Private Rented Sector properties in the town. Demand for this tenure is high, particularly from young people looking to move into their first home, but it produces low rental pricing – around £100 pcm lower than surrounding areas. However, local agents and developers comment that values are increasing.

2.5 The Place

The NPPF notes that good design is indivisible from good planning. It notes that Local plans should include policies that set the quality of development that will be expected in an area and that these should be based on stated objectives for the future of the place and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Planning Practice Guidance (Design) notes that well designed places are successful and valued, exhibiting qualities that benefit users and the wider area. It notes that well designed new or changing places should:

- Be functional.
- Support mixed uses and tenures.
- Include successful public spaces.
- Be adaptable and resilient.
- Have a distinctive character.
- Be attractive.
- Encourage ease of movement.

We have, over the following pages, presented an assessment of the study area against these criteria. Assessment of Swanley town centre is also included given the potential for change here.



2.5.1 “A well designed place is functional”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|--|---|--|
| <p>A building or place should be fit for purpose, designed and delivered in a way that delivers the intended function and achieves value for money in terms of lifetime costs. It should be intuitive, comfortable, safe and equally easy for all to use. It should relate well to its environmental circumstances so that occurrences such as flooding, temperature extremes and air pollution do not prevent it from being used.</p> | <p>Swanley, more so than Hextable, includes large areas of unusable green open space, often in the form of roadside verges and space between buildings and streets left over ‘after planning’. Although these have some amenity value they provide little function. Swanley and Hextable are relatively well contained by a combination of the M25, A20 and surrounding districts. The metropolitan green belt extends to the settlement boundaries and the Kent Downs AONB is to the south east. Much of the housing stock was built during the 1950’s, 60’s and 70’s. As demographics and household structures continue to change there will be pressure on the land to respond to this.</p> <div data-bbox="770 1010 1093 1337" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1111 1010 1435 1337" data-label="Image"> </div> | <p>Swanley’s town centre underwent significant change in the 1960s and relocated to a purpose built 2 storey ‘modern’ shopping precinct in the 1960s. A large Asda store was added in the 1980s and the high street was pedestrianised. It functions as a local shopping base but it is now outdated and shows significant signs of wear and tear. Competition from neighbouring centres and Bluewater, alongside outdated shop units and footprints mean that Swanley town centre is not performing to its full capacity.</p> <div data-bbox="1458 1010 1783 1337" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1800 1010 2125 1337" data-label="Image"> </div> |





2.5.2 “A well designed place supports mixed uses and tenures”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|---|--|---------------------|
| <p>A good mix of uses and tenures is often important to making a place economically and socially successful, ensuring the community has easy access to facilities such as shops, schools, clinics, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafés. This helps achieve multiple benefits from the use of land, and encourage a healthier environment, reducing the need for travel and helping greater social integration. A mix of uses also allows communities and places to respond to change more readily by allowing a turnover of activities, for example with the same building or space performing different functions across a day, week or season.</p> | <p>Swanley and Hextable benefit from provision of schools and leisure facilities. Swanley town centre accommodates a relatively high amount of retail floorspace, though the type of uses and activities in the centre is not particularly diverse and the evening economy is severely limited. There is high provision of car parking in the centre and the movement network is not conducive to walking or cycling. There are large areas of open space in Swanley and Hextable, including the recreation ground and Swanley Park. However, the recreation ground does not appear to be well used and access to Swanley Park is indirect.</p> <div data-bbox="770 927 1093 1252" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1111 927 1435 1252" data-label="Image"> </div> | |



2.5.3 “A well designed public space is lively”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Public spaces are available for everyone to see, use, enjoy, (e.g. streets, squares and parks). They help bring neighbourhoods together, and provide space for social activities and civic life. They also provide access, light, air and the setting for buildings. The position, design and detailing of public space is central to how it provides benefits for the wider community. The most successful spaces exhibit functional and attractive hard and soft landscape elements, with well orientated and detailed routes and include facilities such as seats and play equipment. Public art and sculpture can play an important role in making interesting and exciting places that people enjoy using.</p> | <p>The main spaces in Swanley and Hextable include Swanley Recreation Ground, Swanley Park and Hextable Park. Swanley Recreation Ground, located to the rear of Swanley Square shopping centre, is a large flat area of mown grass including two football pitches and, at its far end, a children’s play area and skatepark. There are no routes across the park to these facilities, there is very limited overlooking of the space and few places to sit and enjoy the open space. Lack of enclosure from surrounding buildings can make this a large and windy space.</p> <p>Swanley Park provides an attractive landscaped space with local facilities that attract people from beyond Swanley and Hextable. However, access to this is convoluted. Hextable Park is located on the edge of the village and provides a flat mown area for outdoor sports. At the centre of Hextable is the village green. This is an attractive space but is fenced and access to this undermined by traffic movements along Top Dartford Road. It is also cut off from the fenced off, overgrown and unusable green space at the apex of Rowhill Road and Top Dartford Road. To the west of the village Hextable Gardens provides an attractive open space linked to the parish office, former Horticulture College and village hall. This forms part of the wider area of green space between Swanley and Hextable (including Swanley Park), but is somewhat disconnected from this and the rest of the village.</p> | <p>The pedestrianised section of London Road is tired and although benefiting from a busy weekly market the space lacks character, furniture and landscaping. After retail hours it is a quiet and relatively unused space. The pedestrianized street also lacks enclosure and interest. The Asda store does not actively front the street; instead, it’s main entrances are onto the two car parks located at either end of the store. This discourages movement through and along London Road. The Swanley Square shopping centre includes a formal square, but routes through this to the south are narrow and lead to large areas of surface car parking and exposed service yards flanked by blank walls. Pedestrian links across this to the recreation ground are poor.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;">   </div> |





2.5.4 “A well designed place is adaptable and resilient”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Successful places can adapt to changing circumstances and demands. They are flexible and are able to respond to a range of future needs, for example, in terms of working and shopping practices and the requirements of demographic and household change. Buildings often need to change their use over time, for example from offices to housing. Designing buildings that can be adapted to different needs offers real benefits in terms of the use of resources and the physical stability of an area. Design features such as the position and scale of entrances and circulation spaces, and the ability of the construction to be modified, can affect how easily buildings can adapt to new demands. Places that are easy and practical to manage well tend to be more resilient. For example, where maintenance and policing are supported by good access, natural surveillance and hard wearing, easy to repair, materials.</p> | <p>Swanley and Hextable experienced rapid growth in development through the 1950s, 60's and 70's. Large areas of housing were constructed and include examples of different layouts, few of which lend themselves to change over time. Equally, many of the schools in Swanley and Hextable were constructed at the same time. Due to an ageing population some of these have closed. Others, that remain open, require investment in the quality of buildings and facilities. The White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley is an excellent facility, providing for a range of sports and leisure activities. Again however, major investment is required to provide a facility of modern standards.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;">   </div> | <p>The Asda store and Swanley Square shopping centre are large, purpose built structures which are relatively inflexible and unable to adapt to accommodate other uses. Although residential and office space is provided above the shop units in the Swanley Square development, access to these brings with it issues of safety and security. The historic town centre to the east of the railway line contains older and more adaptable buildings, though it has a very secondary retail offer.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;">   </div> |

2.5.5 “A well designed space has a distinctive character”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Distinctiveness is what often makes a place special and valued. It relies on physical aspects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the local pattern of street blocks and plots; ■ building forms; ■ details and materials; ■ style and vernacular; ■ landform and gardens, parks, trees and plants; and ■ wildlife habitats and micro-climates. <p>Distinctiveness is not solely about the built environment – it also reflects an area’s function, history, culture and its potential need for change.</p> | <p>Swanley and Hextable have a strong history related to horticulture and convalescing hospitals. These have declined and although some nurseries remain there are few links to the past, with Victorian hospitals having made way for housing, business and retail development. In Hextable, the former Horticultural college and remnants of the ‘Avenue of Limes’ leading to what was once Hextable House are strong links to the history of the area. The area has an interesting and changing topography, which allows for long distance views, particularly west along London Road to the skyline of Canary Wharf, and east out towards and beyond the M25. Swanley Park, with its lake and mini-railway is an attractor and important buffer between Swanley and Hextable.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 20px;">   </div> | <p>Over time the historic heart of the town centre has moved west across the railway line to its present position and although it still contains some historic buildings, the original centre is traffic dominated.</p> <p>There are few clues in the town centre to local history and character, though the retained hospital walls at the front of the business park on London Road and Pioneer Way provide a reminder of local history, as does the cluster of mature trees leading to the leisure centre. The shopping centre and Asda store, constructed in the 1970s and 80’s are unresponsive to the historic pattern of development and have resulted in a convoluted highway arrangement and are surrounded by large areas of surface car parking with inactive frontages and unattractive pedestrian spaces. There are a cluster of civic and community uses in the town centre, clustered around and along St. Mary’s Road. However, buildings are low rise, sit back from the street and surrounded by large open spaces. There is little here to signal the civic importance of this part of the town centre. The Church of St Mary and associated Burial Ground is an attractive local feature</p> |

2.5.6 “A well designed space is attractive”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|--|---|--|
| <p>The way a place looks, sounds, feels, and even smells, affects its attractiveness and long term success. Streetscapes, landscapes, buildings and elements within them all have an influence. So too can more transient elements – such as the way sunshine and shadows move across an area or the way it is maintained and cleaned. Composition of elements and the relationship between colours, textures, shapes and patterns are all important, as is the depth of views, particularly across roofscapes or between buildings.</p> | <p>There are elements of the history of Swanley and Hextable throughout the study area, however in Swanley they are largely lost as the town has continued to grow and develop. You have to search for the more positive elements of Swanley - Swanley Park is perhaps the jewel in Swanley’s crown but it is difficult to access and not visible from the town centre. Hextable has a pleasant, village feel with its central green and more historic buildings - it feels more traditionally ‘attractive’ with places to visit, stop, linger.</p> <div data-bbox="788 1114 1108 1436">  </div> <div data-bbox="1131 1114 1451 1436">  </div> | <p>Swanley town centre in particular is not a very pleasant place to stop and spend time. It is dominated by surface car parking, outdated public realm and low quality, outdated 1960’s retail development.</p> <p>Once outside of the main shopping precinct things are more positive. St Mary’s Church is an imposing landmark, and from the high point of the town adjacent to the church there are long views out - both eastwards to the green belt beyond the M25 and westwards with views to Canary Wharf.</p> <div data-bbox="1473 1114 1794 1436">  </div> <div data-bbox="1803 1114 2123 1436">  </div> |

2.5.7 “A well designed space promotes ease of movement”

| NPPG criteria | Study area as a whole | Swanley town centre |
|---|--|--|
| <p>The ability to move safely, conveniently and efficiently to and within a place will have a great influence on how successful it is. The experience for all users, whatever their mobility or mode of transport are important. A place should have an appropriate number of routes to and through it, not too many to make it anonymous but enough to allow easy legitimate movement. How direct and understandable these are, how closely they fit with desired lines of travel, and how well they connect with each other and destinations will all influence the success of the place.</p> | <p>Swanley originally developed around the railway line and the crossing of what is now London Road and Station Road. London Road formed a strong east west axis through the centre of the town and although this still exists the diversion of traffic around Bartholomew Way and Goldsel Road has led to a traffic dominated arrangement in the town centre that does not encourage walking or cycling. Away from London Road routes through Swanley are indirect, particularly to Swanley Park and within residential areas, and pedestrian links to Hextable are lacking. Although Swanley and Hextable are in close proximity the lack of connections between the two other than by car increases the distance between them. Swanley railway station is an important destination and provides excellent connections to London, but vehicular and pedestrian routes to this are compromised and do not link well or obviously with the town centre. Swanley and Hextable also benefit from excellent access to the M25, though this does result in some traffic moving through Swanley.</p> <div data-bbox="790 1114 1108 1433" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1131 1114 1449 1433" data-label="Image"> </div> | <p>Although the centre of town is pedestrianized, space around this is dominated by motor traffic. Crossing points are limited, particularly at the main junctions which form barriers to movement, and pedestrian routes from and within the large areas of car parking are poorly catered for. Cycling is not particularly well catered for: although there is a segregated stretch of cycle infrastructure west of the town centre along London Road it does not continue to and connect with the town centre. The location of and access to bus stops is also particularly poor: most noticeably at the stop located on Bartholomew Road, which is directly behind the blank wall to the rear of Asda and in the middle of this, so that walking routes around and to the town centre are as far as they can be. The railway line through Swanley is sunken below ground level but there are few connections across this. It forms a barrier to movement and disconnects the historic town centre with the Swanley Square shopping centre.</p> <div data-bbox="1469 1114 1787 1433" data-label="Image"> </div> <div data-bbox="1798 1114 2116 1433" data-label="Image"> </div> |

2.6 Access and movement - A summary of the key issues

Access and movement issues within Swanley and Hextable are summarized below, with more supporting information set out in Appendix 1.

2.6.1 Road Network and Traffic Management

- Swanley and Hextable are well situated, close to the M25 Junction 3, M20 and A20 providing excellent road connections with London and the rest of Kent.
- Future development will require careful road network planning given its proximity to the M25 and the need to mitigate congestion on existing routes.
- Action for consideration should include:
 - Road network improvement for all road users and to alleviate congestion. This may include:
 - improving junction arrangements and road layout
 - addressing road pinch-points particularly on country roads
 - reducing rat-running
 - reducing speeding
 - Introducing bus priority measures and managing parking to improve bus reliability and access
 - Improving wayfinding for all modes of transport, including signing to car parks, Swanley Park and other key attractors.
 - Improving access for all modes to existing residential areas particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and where

possible, extend bus services to serve these extensive areas.

- Ensuring future development site accesses are appropriate to the scale and type of development and managing road traffic effectively to mitigate rat-running, congestion and impacts on surrounding areas and mitigate any additional pressure on the main roads, notably the B258 and B2173.
- Managing the parking supply through effective controls for all users – residential, visitor, commuter and deliveries / servicing - mitigating the adverse effect of parking on local neighbourhoods, footways, cycle and bus routes.
- Providing for convenient, fully accessible and frequent bus provision to serve large scale developments.
- Provision of high quality, convenient, well lit, safe and signposted walking and cycling routes.

2.6.2 Parking

- Swanley town centre would benefit from a town centre parking review considering existing and future development to:
 - Address congestion, access and impact on the road network
 - Provide consistent parking tariffs and restrictions within the car parks
 - Rationalise and relocate parking to provide a better level of service for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and taxis
 - Reduce commuter and visitor parking on residential roads

- Mitigate future parking pressure and provide a strategy for future developments with regard to Kent County Council parking standards and local needs and constraints.

2.6.3 Swanley Station

- Swanley station provides connections with London, Sevenoaks and Ashford International. With the arrival of OysterCard in December 2016 and station improvement measures as part of the Network Rail Improvement Programme will strengthen Swanley stations credentials within the local area. There is an opportunity to build on these existing schemes including:
 - Dedicated marketing and promotional campaign to encourage more trips from Swanley station, particularly commuters and the excellent connections with Victoria, City Thameslink, Farringdon and Kings Cross
 - Work with Transport for London and the Department for Transport to ensure Swanley station is included on maps and where possible incorporate the station within London Zone 6 (currently just outside) to encourage more passengers to use the stations rather than alternative stations nearby
 - Address impact of parking on the station providing greater space for pedestrians, cyclists and better bus / station interchange
 - Better integration of the station within the town centre including new dedicated bus / station interchange facilities and new pedestrian / cyclist links or where possible relocation of the station towards the town centre, subject to a rail operation review and funding.

2.6.4 Buses

■ Bus services, routes, bus stops and interchange with Swanley town centre have great potential within Swanley and Hextable. However, investment is much needed to improve:

- Bus routes particularly within the residential areas and interchange with Swanley station
- Bus reliability and priority particularly in the town centre
- Bus stop facilities, ensuring that bus stops are located close to amenities, fully accessible, close to pedestrian crossings, provide adequate shelter, seating and easy to read (TfL style) bus maps, timetables and information.

2.6.5 Pedestrians

■ Swanley and Hextable are very walkable, with excellent routes connecting Swanley town centre to Hextable via Swanley Park. Measures should be introduced to strengthen and improve these routes, including:

- Footway widening and surfacing improvements
- Signing
- Lighting
- Removal of street clutter and overgrown vegetation
- Local marketing / promotional campaign to encourage people to walk to their local shops, schools, leisure facilities and Swanley town centre.

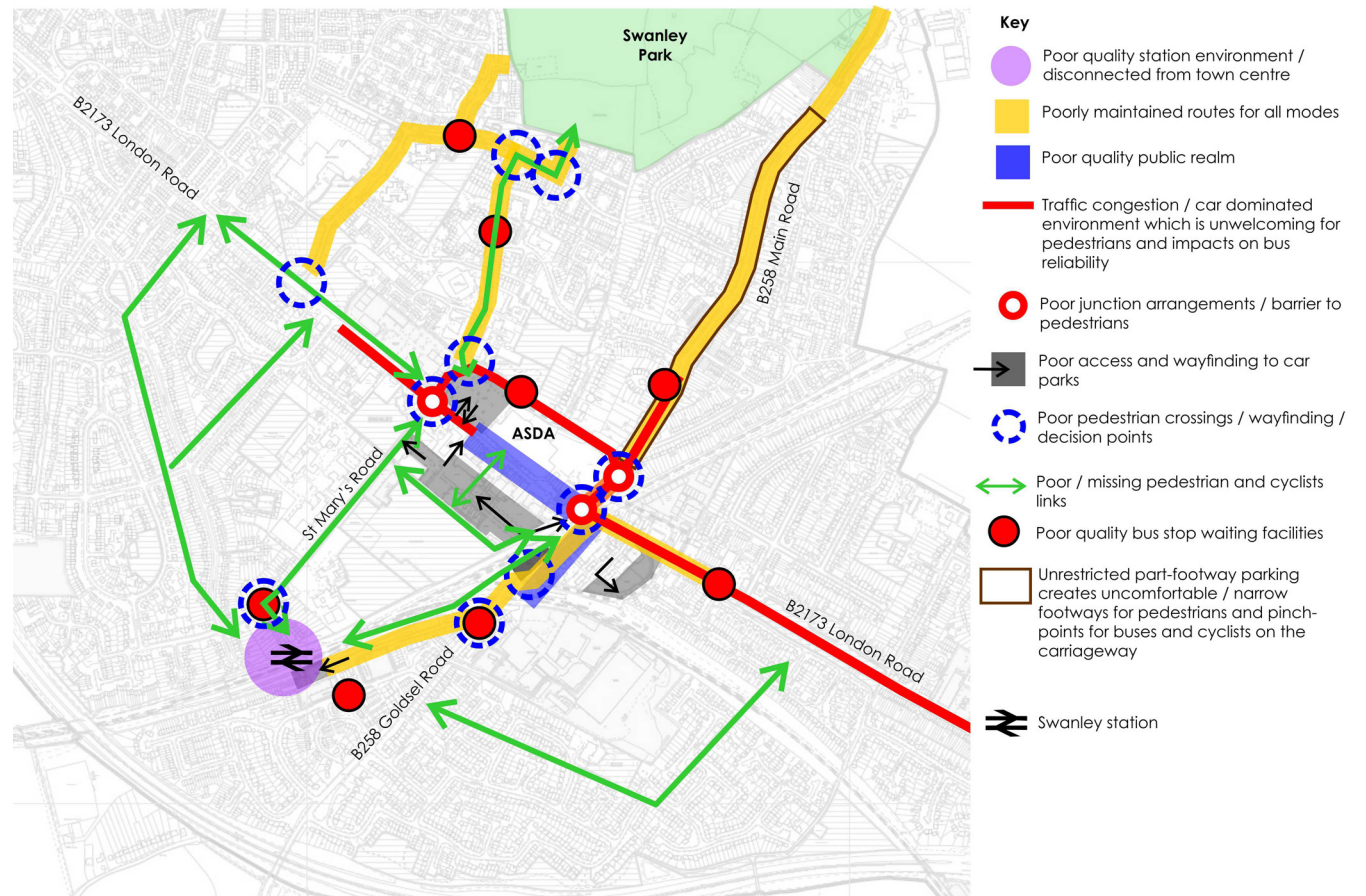


Fig 2.13: Swanley Town Centre - Swanley Town Centre - Overall Identified Issues

2.6.6 Cyclists

- There is significant potential for improving cycling routes within Swanley town centre and Hextable. As part of their cycling strategy Sevenoaks District Council has identified routes for improvement within the area. Schemes should be brought forward to link up the existing cycling infrastructure and measures introduced to improve:
 - Quiet-ways between Swanley town centre and Hextable via Swanley Park
 - Routes connecting to Swanley station
 - Cycle parking at Swanley station, within the town centre, Swanley Park and Hextable village
 - Local marketing / promotional campaign on the merits of cycling in the area, encouraging people to commute to Swanley station, visit Swanley and other local amenities including schools by cycle.
- Improved walking and cycling facilities will create a greater emphasis on Active Travel; routes specifically designed for walking and cycling for short journeys to places of interest (ie the station, schools, place of work, shops and community facilities etc). Improved routes for Active Travel across the area will improve accessibility and permeability, especially within the town centre.

2.6.7 Public Realm

- Develop an area / street based palette of materials and street features e.g. lighting, street furniture and planting that reflect and enhance Swanley town centre and Hextable village.
- Public realm and traffic management schemes should balance the need for movement, place and encourage more sustainable modes of travel.



Figure2.14: Hextable Overall Issues Plan

2.7 Current projects and initiatives

In parallel to this study a series of other projects and initiatives are being developed. The Council hopes to influence these through the study. The projects are outlined below.

2.7.1 The town centre

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the importance of promoting positive, competitive town centre environments. It states that town centres should provide customer choice and a diverse retail and leisure offer that reflects local scale and individuality whilst promoting both viability and vitality. Residential development on appropriate town centre sites may be one measure of ensuring this vitality.

The town centre is a major area of opportunity for change and development in Swanley. U+I, owners of the Swanley Square shopping centre, is in the process of developing proposals for the redevelopment and expansion of this, to include new retail and residential accommodation. This investment opportunity needs to be grasped and directed to help reshape the town centre for the benefit of all.

2.7.2 Swanley (White Oak) leisure centre

The White Oak Leisure Centre was built in the 1960's and although it accommodates a wide range of sports and leisure opportunities considerable investment is required to bring it up to modern standards. Various options exist, including the refurbishment of the current facility, provision of a new stand-alone facility, or provision of a new facility

co-located with other community uses including new health facilities.

The current White Oak Leisure Centre is operated by Sencio Community Leisure, under lease from Sevenoaks DC ending 2029. The facility provides a 33-metre swimming pool with diving pit, teaching pool, gym & exercise studio, six court sports hall, martial arts rooms, practice hall, three squash courts, soft play area, crèche, cafeteria and a three-ride flume. The leisure centre is co-located with White Oak Indoor Bowls Club, on a site totalling around 3.0ha.

Consultation with stakeholders suggests that the facility: is popular amongst children and young people during school holidays (particularly for birthday parties); provides a source of physical activity and social interactions for health and social care patients, and; is regularly used by community groups over a dozen.

In 2015, the Council commissioned a planning appraisal for re-provision of the leisure centre, considering 12 sites over 1.5ha in size, located in and around Swanley, including on the existing site. Five of the sites were considered deliverable in planning terms; however, the result of a planning sequential test was that Swanley Recreation Ground was considered the best-suited location, subject to other town centre needs and arrangements to manage the loss of open space and playing fields. The other sites considered include the existing leisure centre site, subject to enabling development being of sufficient value to cross-subsidise the replacement of the leisure facility, the Olympic and land at Broomhill East.t's location is still under debate however it is essential that any new facility:

- Is viable and deliverable;

- Maximises the social and economic benefits of the significant capital investment;
- Provides an appropriate specification for the needs of local residents, with particular attention to those with more complex needs, and seeks to provide facilities that match the attractiveness of the current ones;
- Is accessible by public transport, as well as providing access to adequate car / coach parking;
- Potentially co-locates with other community facilities.
- Ensures that there is no gap in continuous service.

2.7.3 Swanley Working Mens Club and Bevan Place Car Park

Sevenoaks District Council recently bought the site that contains the former Citizens Advice Bureau, Swanley Working Mens Club having owned the Bevan Place Car Park for many years. The "meeting Point" opposite is also owned by the council. There are aspirations for a 'gateway' development on the site with residential units above retail/active ground floor uses. A joint venture with West Kent Housing could enable a larger, less constrained development site to come forward.

2.7.4 Swanley Station

There are emerging plans for improvements to Swanley station to be completed by 2021. The designs will try to address issues such as access, safety and security. Sevenoaks District Council is working in partnership with Kent County Council, Network Rail and Southeastern to deliver this project, with the aim of facilitating greater use of the station as a transport hub for the town.

3: Consultation



3 Consultation

3.1 Consultation process

The options presented in this report have been informed by a programme of consultation events organised by Sevenoaks District Council and a stakeholder event run by Tibbalds consultant team during February 2016 which comprised:

- A week long ‘drop-in’ held in a vacant shop unit in Swanley town centre.
- A breakfast briefing event for businesses held in the Link in Swanley town centre.
- A stakeholder event held in the evening in the Link in Swanley town centre.
- A stakeholder event held in the afternoon in the Heritage Centre in Hextable.
- Drop-in events held in a morning and an evening at the Hextable Village Hall.
- Consultation with young people at High Firs Primary School and Orchards Academy
- An online survey promoted through local publications, posters, flyers and on the Council’s website and social media outlets

At each of the events attendees were invited to comment on their concerns, issues and opportunities for the future planning of Swanley and Hextable. A series of statements were used to elicit responses and example images of places elsewhere used to draw out what people thought represented good design and planning, or not.

In addition to these a separate series of meetings and discussions were held with a selection of key consultees including, amongst others, the owners of Swanley Square shopping centre (U+I), key landowners within the study area such as Swantex (the Swan Mill), Kent County Council as highways and education authority and Kent Public Health.

Furthermore, representatives from U+I were in attendance during the week long drop-in in Swanley town centre, answering questions on their intentions for the shopping centre and seeking inputs to help inform this. Material prepared by Network Rail was also on display, asking how available funds could be used to improve the quality of the railway station and links to this.

The purpose of the consultation was to seek the community’s views on options for improving Swanley town centre and for open spaces, leisure facilities, shops, business space, transport and new homes in both Swanley and Hextable.

The work has helped inform the drafting the ‘Vision’ for regeneration and growth over the next 20 years focusing on the changes identified as being sought in key infrastructure and the services and development needed to support them.



Fig 3.1: Swanley consultation promotion



Fig 3.2: Swanley drop in consultation



3.3 Swanley Stakeholder consultation

3.2 Consultation findings

1500 people attended the drop in consultation events held in Swanley and Hextable during the week beginning 8th February 2016. The headline findings are presented below:

- Housing is a key topic however opinion is divided on whether new homes are needed and who they should be for;
- More and better health and community facilities are required in the area;
- Traffic and congestion are both hot topics. There is also support for an improved railway station with better connections to the town centre;
- A need for better quality and a wider range of retail uses was identified;
- Residents were keen to retain leisure facilities and open spaces;
- A specific question was asked at the consultation around the future of the SDC owned Swanley Working Mens Club and Bevan Place car park and residents wanted to see improvements to that end of the High Street.

What were people asked to comment on?

Swanley

- Board 1: “You are in charge of Swanley for the day! Tell us one key change you would make”
- Boards 2 & 3: Image boards: “Please look the categories below and the images that relate to them. Mark ones that you like with a green ‘dot’ and ones that you do not with a red ‘dot’ for the following categories”: (people

were encouraged to review the styles represented in the images rather than the individual images themselves)

- Shopping and Restaurants
- New Homes
- Streets and Movement
- Health and Leisure
- Open Space
- Business and Employment Space

- Board 4: “This is an aerial photograph of Swanley. Please use the sticky labels supplied to highlight key areas that interest or concern you”

- Boards 5- 7: Opportunity Boards: “Opportunities for Swanley. Please comment on the statements below – do you agree or disagree? Why?”

- a) Swanley should have better links to London, and the station, trains and buses should be improved
- b) We need to provide new homes for families and for both young and older people in the area
- c) The town centre needs to be more exciting and vibrant with a better mix of facilities in one place. One opportunity for this could be using part of the recreation ground for improved leisure facilities and re-providing green/sports spaces elsewhere.
- d) Education, community spaces and health facilities need to be improved
- e) The local roads need to work better both for cars and for pedestrians and cyclists
- f) Swanley should make the most of its green and open spaces. There should be better access and more use of them

- g) Swanley should be a great base for businesses – there should be opportunities for small businesses spaces and hubs where local businesses can be supported and grow
 - h) Swanley should have a new and improved entrance to the town at the old Swanley Working Men’s Club/Bevan Place Car Park, to welcome people and showcase the town centre
- Board 8: Setting out potential improvements to Swanley Railway Station

The Swanley consultation also included boards for Hextable, as set out below.

General comments sheets were provided at each consultation for people to use.

Hextable

The Hextable consultation was set up in the same format. The exception being that it used different image and options boards that reflected Hextable’s connection to rurality as follows:

- Image Boards: Covering the categories of Open Space, Community and Other Buildings, New Homes and Streets and Movement.
- Opportunities for Hextable:
 - a) Hextable village centre needs to be improved and have a wider range of shops, health services and community facilities
 - b) We need to provide new homes for families and both young and older people in the area
 - c) How could Hextable have better transport links?

- d) Are there opportunities for improvements at sites such as the South London Dance Studio and Furness School?
- e) The local roads need to work better both for cars and pedestrians and cyclists

The Community's Response

In total approximately 1,500 people took part in the consultation with most of those people attending the week-long drop in sessions in Swanley and Hextable

| Consultation | Number of people taking part (approximate figures) |
|---|--|
| Swanley shop consultation | 1,200 |
| Hextable drop in consultations | 150 |
| Business breakfast and stakeholder consultations (Swanley & Hextable) | 60 |
| Inovem online consultation | 50 |
| School consultation | 40 |
| Total | 1,500 |

How the comments were collated

- Individual votes using the red and green dot system were counted each day of the consultation and collated.
- All comments relating to options were collected, transcribed and analysed according to the question headings.
- Online responses submitted through the Council's website (Inovem) were collated and analysed

- All general comments were scanned, transcribed and analysed.

Feedback

The consultation events were well attended and residents have made a significant number of relevant comments which will support and steer the masterplan process. There are some key issues which dominated the consultations, both in written comments and also in discussions which took place at the events and these are outlined below.

This report aims to pull together the main concerns and themes arising from consultation based on the individual comments received.

Some of these issues will be further informed by the ongoing studies commissioned by the owners of Swanley Town Centre, U&I. As one of the major landowners in the town centre, U&I shares the Council's overall aim of achieving better facilities and better services for residents of Swanley and Hextable.

Alongside the Vision process, U&I is preparing its own planning application, which will aim to improve the Swanley Centre for both local residents and businesses.

Housing

There was a range of opinion from the people who took part in the consultation, with some people accepting that for the area to develop, a number of homes will have to be built to accommodate local requirements. Others believed that there is no requirement to build new homes, either as there is no current need to build or that empty homes should be brought back into use, before further development takes place

However, there is general consensus that any development of new homes should be affordable private market homes, as opposed to affordable rented/social rented housing. These homes should be available for local residents, rather than those people moving into the area. Comments were also made on the lack of provision of appropriate accommodation for older people, including more self contained flats and care homes provision.

The Vision report has responded to the comments by assessing the housing market needs for the Swanley and Hextable area. This report recognises that the number of homes that can be delivered is related to the ambition and aspirations of how Swanley and Hextable can develop as regenerated communities, and sets out three potential growth scenarios.

Traffic and Road Congestion

The majority of people taking part in the consultation voiced their concerns about traffic congestion and the road network in Swanley and Hextable. Particular concerns were expressed with the lack of traffic calming measures at certain locations and inability of the existing junction to the M25 to cope with the current levels of traffic. People recognised that improvements to traffic management systems and road infrastructure should be central to any future proposals.

There was also support for alleviating congestion through improvements to the public transport network, which is adequate, affordable and meets the demands of the population. This includes buses, cycling and suitable walking routes. Some people felt that the current cycling infrastructure also required improvement.

The Vision recognises that there are issues with the existing road network. Sevenoaks District Council has worked with transport consultants to understand the current capacity and flow of traffic in and around the Swanley and Hextable area. These results have been fed into the draft scenarios and help prioritise road improvements to accommodate future growth and development within the area, for both housing and employment opportunities. This can also include public transport improvements.

Development of the Town Centre

There was a clear sense from people who took part in the consultation about how important the town centre was to them. The majority of people wished to see a range of independent shops and services available in the town centre, to mitigate the dominance of the ASDA superstore and to add vibrancy and choice within the town. Most people would also like to see free parking reinstated in the town to encourage more people to visit and use the facilities and services available in the town centre.

The report considers potential actions and agreements that need to take place with the town centre landowners U&I, who are preparing their own planning application to improving Swanley Town Centre both for businesses and residents.

Services and Facilities

The majority of people who took part in the consultation were concerned about the potential impact any development may have on existing services and facilities which are highly valued. Education, health and medical, and community facilities were felt to be inadequate for current and future needs, particularly to support those people moving to the area.

Early engagement with relevant providers and stakeholders is vitally important to ensure that infrastructure considerations are taken into account. A number of key stakeholders including the Local Education Authority, the local Clinical Commissioning Group, emergency services and charities (which provide services) have already taken part in stakeholder workshops and will be approached to comment on the proposals within the draft report.

Preserving the Green Belt and Open Space

There was an overwhelming consensus that people valued open spaces and the green belt. People who took part wanted to see open spaces improved and were concerned about the impact of future development in Swanley and Hextable.

People particularly valued existing green spaces within Swanley town centre and Hextable. The majority of people opposed any development on any of the existing open space, particularly the recreation Ground (Swanley Town Centre) and the Village Green in Hextable.

People were also predominantly against any development which may impact the Green Belt, particularly in relation to the buffer/wedge which separates Swanley, Hextable and Swanley Village, creating three settlements with individual and unique identities.

Sevenoaks District Council recognises the importance of the Green Belt, and how it helps to preserve the current sense of identity felt by Swanley, Hextable and Swanley Village. There is an acknowledgment that no Green Belt land should be released for development until a comprehensive district-wide assessment has taken place. Sevenoaks District Council is currently reviewing its evidence base, including its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which

includes a number of potential sites within the Swanley and Hextable area. The Council will also be preparing additional evidence bases including a District-wide Green Belt Assessment, Countryside Character Area Assessment and Open Space and Leisure review. These evidence bases will help to inform the Local Plan as well as feed into the recommendations for the final Vision.

White Oak Leisure Centre

Comments submitted regarding the White Oak Leisure Centre reaffirmed the need for a leisure and swimming facility, asking for a range of rebuilding, improvement, development and modernisation. Retaining a central location was important to enable good access. Some people felt that the leisure centre could become part of the town centre whilst others had concerns regarding adverse impacts on roads, existing green space and parking if the leisure centre were to be relocated.

As part of the consultation, people were informed that the existing leisure centre was built from the 1960s onwards and is in poor condition and that refurbishment of the existing centre was not viable as it would cost more than building a new one. In addition, local people were informed that the District Council was considering a number of sites for a new leisure centre, including the existing site as well as more central town centre locations to create a community, leisure and health centre closer to the town centre for the convenience of local people.

Local people will be involved with the future of the White Oak Leisure in conjunction with stakeholders and partners to determine the most appropriate way forward.

The Economy of Swanley and Hextable

A number of representations were submitted with regards to businesses and the economic needs for the Swanley/Hextable area. There is clear support for greater economic growth and small businesses, with some respondents stating there should be a greater supply of smaller affordable units within the town confines being made available, and moving larger companies/units out to the edges of town. A number of respondents also stated that the success of smaller businesses would be improved through the creation of business hubs, as well as a reduction in business rates. This would make it more appealing for businesses and would enable greater employment opportunities and economic growth that will benefit the area.

The potential growth scenarios presented within the report show that consideration has been for economic growth within the Vision area. We recognise that the scale of economic development can only be realised on the basis of market need and demand. The Economic Needs Study will underpin the economic requirements of the whole District, and will provide evidence for the types of provision that will need to be made available as part of the Vision and the District's overall Local Plan. Further studies, including a new district-wide Retail Study, will determine the growth potential of the retail sector within the District which can also feed into the Vision.

3.3 Stakeholder discussions

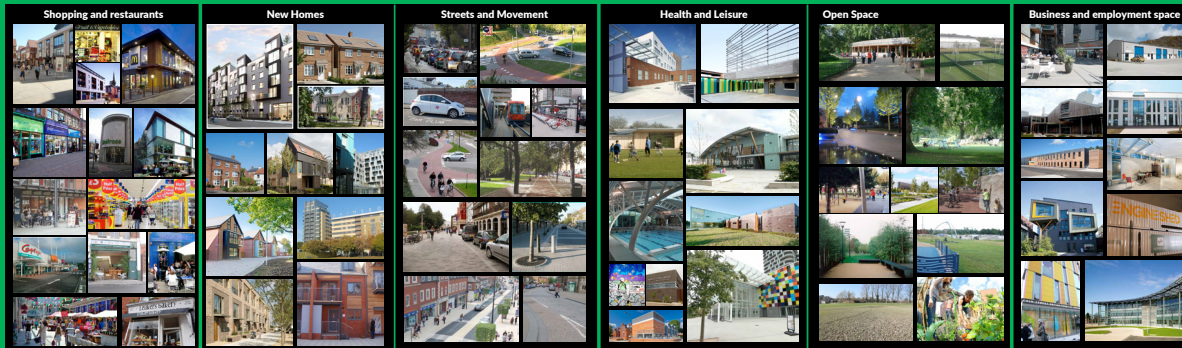
Two Stakeholder Consultation sessions were held in Swanley and in Hextable, and a breakfast session for local businesses and owners was also held. The key findings from these sessions are summarised below. We also had a number of 1-1 sessions with some stakeholders on their request.

Stakeholder sessions:

- Concerns were expressed around Gentrification vs Regeneration (need to get balance/ timing of change correct);
- Improvements to access and within Swanley Park;
- Leisure centre should be located closer to the centre of town, maintain a range of facilities, youth engagement, but maintain the parking provision;
- More pocket parks, allotments and gardens
- Keep the trees leading up to Woodlands
- Reduced rates/ leases to attract new business to town
- Recreate a new heart/ centre;
- Recreate green links in heart of the town as open green space;
- Reconnect a fragmented disjointed town;
- Schools and health facilities to match new housing;
- Congestion already a problem, increase in housing/ shopping/ leisure may add pressure;
- Upgrade area between Asda and retail outlets
- Improve traffic levels at peak times;
- Fast track pedestrian walkways from station to town centre with cafés en route;
- Mark entrances into town;
- Open station road, make a one way system around that loop;
- New facilities such as a City farm would be well received;
- Farmers market once a month;
- Free parking in the town centre;
- Improve the station;
- Replace YMCA;
- Create a new town centre with key uses and anchors (leisure centre, housing business);
- Use the location, huge potential with London link
- Change the perception of the town.

A Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable

The future of Swanley and Hextable. Please look at the 6 categories below, and the images that relate to them. Mark ones that you like with a green 'dot' and ones that you do not with a red 'dot'



Tibbalds



A Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable

You are in charge of Swanley for the day! Tell us one key change you would make - use the post-it notes supplied.

Tibbalds



A Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable

This is an aerial photograph of Swanley. Please use the sticky labels supplied to highlight key areas that interest or concern you.



Tibbalds



A Masterplan for Swanley and Hextable

Opportunities for Swanley. Please comment on some of the statements below - do you agree or disagree? Why? Please use the sticky notes provided.

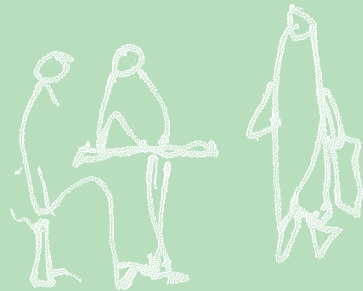
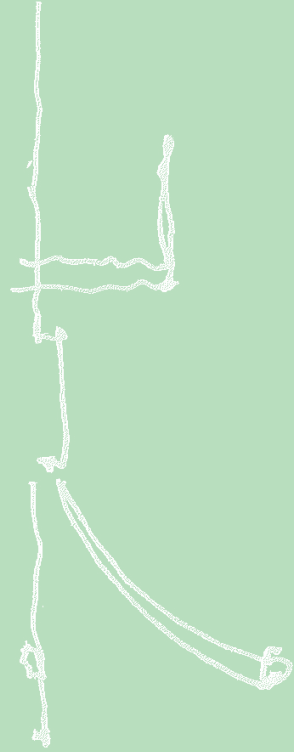
- a) Swanley should have better links to London and the station, trains and buses should be improved.
- b) We need to provide new homes for families and both young and older people in the area.
- c) The town centre needs to be more exciting and vibrant and have a better mix of uses all clustered together in one place. One opportunity for this could be using the recreation ground for improved leisure facilities and re-providing green/sports space elsewhere.
- d) Education, Community spaces and Health services need to be improved.
- e) The local roads need to work better both for cars and for pedestrians and cyclists.
- f) Swanley should make the most of its green and open spaces. There should be better access and more use of them.
- g) Swanley should be a great base for businesses - there should be opportunities for small business spaces and hubs where local businesses can be supported and grow.
- h) Swanley should have a new 'gateway' at the old Swanley Working Men's Club, showing you have arrived in the town centre.

Tibbalds



Tibbalds





4: Strategic Objectives



4 The Strategic Objectives

4.1 Key messages

Following the baseline work and consultation exercises undertaken and reported above a series of messages have been identified which inform the options. The messages include:

1. Current retail spend leaks out of Swanley to places such as Bluewater, Bromley and Dartford. There is an opportunity to influence the U+I proposals to help capture some of this spending. Investment in Swanley town centre provides scope to **improve the quality of the retail offer and supporting uses** provided here, including possible updating of civic and community facilities, and improvements to the quality of pedestrian and cycle links, traffic congestion and parking arrangements.
2. There is a **need to deliver a step-change in infrastructure supported by housing growth**. This has consequent pressures on land, and there is an opportunity to generate critical mass and support the economic growth of Swanley Town centre by accommodating some of this population growth in and around the town. But, how much new housing could, and should, Swanley and Hextable accommodate?
3. There is potential to accommodate some additional growth and development on brownfield sites and within Swanley town centre, particularly given current **investment in the town centre** by U+I and the opportunity this affords to rethink the mix, role and function of the centre.

4. Growth pressures may require settlement expansion to be considered. But **both Swanley and Hextable are surrounded by green belt**. The current Local Plan restricts expansion beyond the settlement boundary. As part of the local plan review, is now an opportune time to reconsider the boundaries and the directions of growth around Swanley and Hextable?
5. **Potential exists to grow Swanley as a series of new 'Garden Villages', supported by the Governments 'locally-led garden villages, towns and cities' prospectus.**
6. The current stock of homes is dominated by housing, much of which is former local authority housing, and Swanley in particular remains a relatively affordable location. Could the potential for growth provide scope to **create a more diverse housing offer**?
7. Swanley and Hextable **benefit from excellent strategic transport links**, by road and rail, and occupy a key strategic location between Kent and London. This is attractive to new businesses but, at the same time, the lack of available land for growth and expansion is a barrier to further commercial development. Again, does this mean that opportunities for change in Swanley town centre along with the release of land in the green belt need to be considered?
8. Although the strategic transport links are excellent, more **localised movement is compromised**. Pedestrian and cycle links between and within Swanley and Hextable are poor. The railway line is a barrier to movement. The railway station is poorly located in relation to Swanley

town centre. Traffic, highways and parking dominates Swanley town centre. How can traffic and movement be managed in the future such that it does not undermine the potential for improvements to the quality of the place?

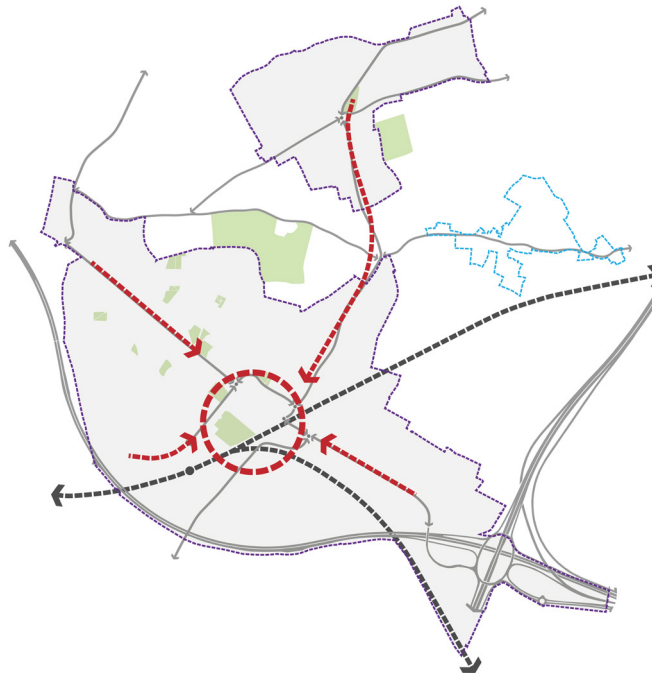
9. Swanley and Hextable benefit from green spaces, with **Swanley Park being a fantastic local asset**. This also acts as a 'buffer' between Swanley and Hextable and reinforces the separate identities of both places. But access to this is convoluted. There are also large areas of underutilized and unused green spaces in the study area, forming road-side verges and, within housing areas, comprising 'space left over after planning'. Can access to and the quality of the green infrastructure network across the Swanley and Hextable be improved?
10. The history of Swanley and Hextable, as areas of horticulture and the location of grand convalescing hospitals has, in the main, been lost. **Can local history be reinterpreted to influence locally-responsive ideas for change?** Can currently underutilized green spaces for example be brought back into use as community gardens? Can the historic legacy of the hospitals be reinterpreted through the provision of a network of care homes catering for the needs of an aging population and the redevelopment of schools, libraries and other community facilities to create a strong civic hub for the town?

4.2 Strategic Objectives

Five strategic objectives have been identified, under which a series of projects and initiatives are developed. These strategic objectives are later used to assess the relative merits and performance of various growth options. The strategic objectives are:

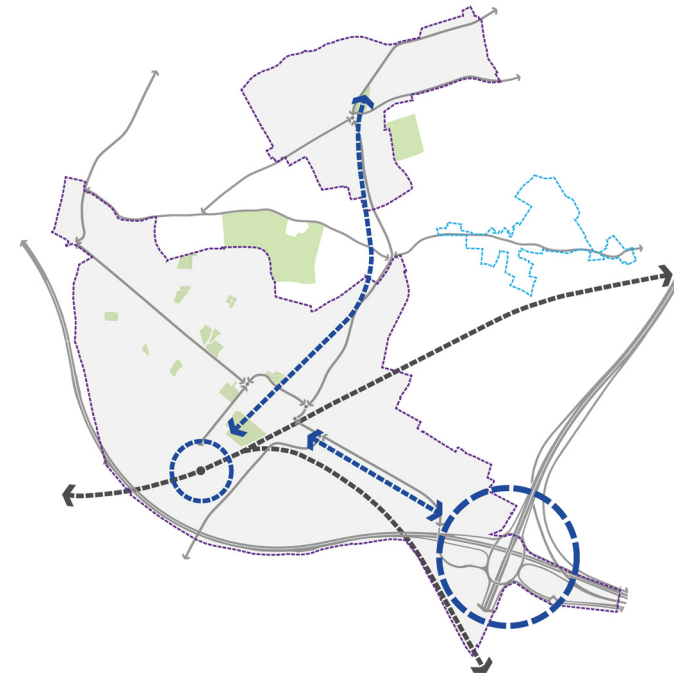
1. To embrace the investment opportunity to shape future town centre improvements.

Strong, successful and dynamic towns benefit from a strong heart. Potential investment in the town centre by U+I provides an opportunity, providing it is well conceived, planned and delivered, to catalyse a wider remodelling of Swanley town centre. This could provide a greater diversity of retail, services and facilities, potential for town centre living, new and improved public spaces and streets. Access to the town centre, and across Swanley and Hextable, should be improved for all.



2. To capitalise on excellent transport links by road and rail, and proximity to London, to help to create a new urban living, retail and service offer.

The excellent transport connections to and from Swanley can be grasped to help deliver new sustainable patterns of development and attract inward investment. But issues need to be overcome: access to the railway station is poor and it is disconnected from the town centre. The junction of the M25 and A20 is congested and can impact on traffic movements within Swanley and Hextable. Resolving these will improve the day-to-day conditions for residents and business, and enhance the attractiveness of Swanley and its potential to accommodate future change and employment growth.



3. To maximize the opportunities for growth by responding to housing need and demand, and changing demographic patterns:

There is significant demographic pressure within the district for new homes. New development needs to be planned in a way that generates benefits for the place and which captures the social and economic benefits of new investment to help deliver and support new services and facilities, an enhanced retail and leisure offer, employment opportunities and essential infrastructure including health and education. New development should improve the diversity of housing choice.



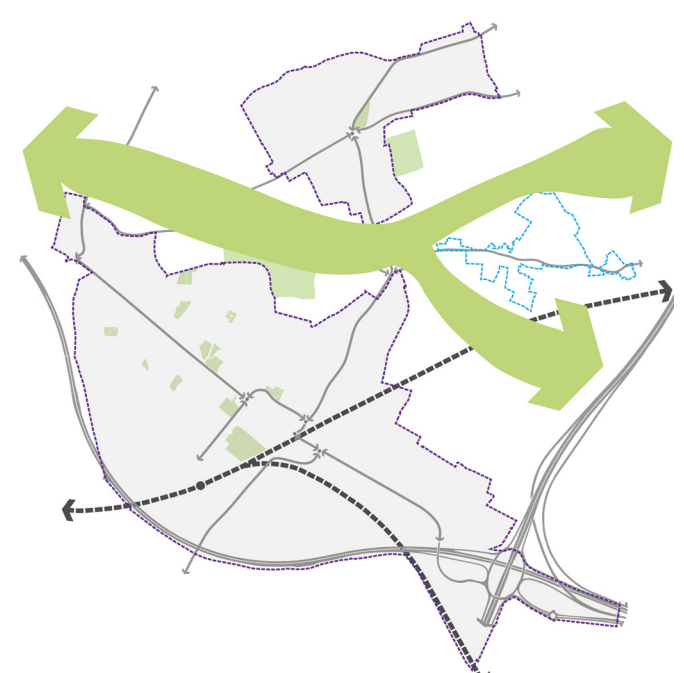
4. To strengthen the quality of the town wide green infrastructure network:

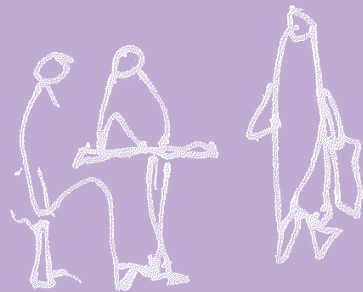
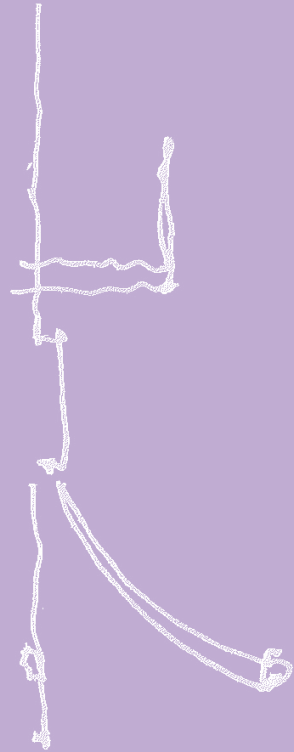
The history and growth of Swanley and Hextable has bequeathed it a network of green parks and spaces, including Swanley Park, the recreation ground, Avenue of Limes and neighbourhood play spaces. The potential exists to enhance the quality and usability of these spaces, the links to them and relationship to surrounding development opportunities.



5. To retain the separate identity of Swanley and Hextable:

Swanley and Hextable are two identifiable places, with their own communities and social networks. Although located in close proximity and intrinsically linked to each other, people identify with their place of residence. The green belt and Swanley Park form a buffer between the two, which should be retained, with access across and between Swanley and Hextable improved for all.





5: Strategic growth: Wider Area



5 Strategic growth: Wider Area

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the strategic scenarios for the wider study area, comprising Swanley and Hextable as a whole but excluding town centre growth scenarios which are described separately in a later section. Three scenarios are presented, along with an assessment of each of these against the five strategic objectives developed for the area. The three scenarios build up in scale in order to lead to a vision that will deliver the step change in infrastructure needed.

5.2 Scenario 1: Minimum Growth

This scenario explores opportunities for growth and new development within and respecting the existing settlement boundaries around Swanley and Hextable. It involves infill development, intensification and regeneration of existing sites and uses. It does not envisage any encroachment into the green belt and as such does not achieve the critical mass required to infrastructure improvements without significant public investment.

Key deliverables:

- Allocated and non allocated sites (as identified in Fig 5.1) to come forward for housing and employment uses;
- An improved Swanley Park, including the potential for a new outdoor sports hub on the Birchwood School site and better access to the park from Swanley and Hextable;
- New Hextable Parish Hub - potentially in Hextable Park

We estimate that approximately 22Ha of infill development could occur delivering 600 – 700 new homes and approximately 20,000 sqm of employment space.

In addition to the new homes and jobs delivered, the greatest opportunity realised by this option relates to Swanley Park. It seeks relocation of West Kent Housing's offices to improve access to the park, potentially including the delivery of a new southern car park facility. A gravel path or similar for cyclists and pedestrians through the Avenue of Limes would serve to enhance access between Swanley and Hextable.

Relationship to Swanley town centre: The relatively small increase in population (spread over the plan period) will limit opportunities to attract inward investment into the town centre driven by the enhanced economic activity / spending power of new residents. We estimate that the Gross Development Value would be in the region of £250 – £300m, with approximately £6m of performance-related funding from Central Government and £6m of CIL. Developer contributions from the wider area are, in this scenario, unlikely to be sufficient to cross-subsidise extensive land assembly and infrastructure provision necessary to deliver more comprehensive redevelopment within the town centre. They would need to be directed towards localised infrastructure improvements to support the growth and possibly Swanley Park. The small increase population and restricted opportunity for demographic change would be an insufficient catalyst to create a step change in the retail, leisure and service sectors.

Deliverability: This scenario can be delivered without significant change to existing strategic planning policy. With housing growth focused in pockets spread across the area,

negative impacts upon existing transport infrastructure would be minimised. The option requires limited corporate ambition and political capital from the Council, and limited investment from the public the sector. We expect the market will readily deliver the residential development opportunities without public sector stimulus. The Council will need to bring forward enhancements to parks and open spaces utilising Community Infrastructure Levy, performance-related funding from Central Government and public funding.

However, limiting housing delivery in Swanley and Hextable will increase pressure to achieve housing numbers elsewhere in the District. There would also be lower justification for significant employment land allocations.

Viability: There is strong market evidence to show that infill residential development opportunities at suburban densities are currently viable, with a number of proposed schemes being bought forward by the market and planning applications being taken to appeal. This conclusion is supported by our own viability assessment with anticipated values for high quality new build in excess of £400 per square foot.

The viability of industrial and warehousing provision is more marginal, delivering lower residual land values, but should come forward on readily developable sites providing sufficiently strong occupier interest can be secured to maintain yields of 6% or less. The public sector may need to play a proactive role in promoting the location to build investor confidence, and help overcome delivery barriers such as access arrangements. A strong policy position to deter land banking in the hope of achieving residential development will also be important.

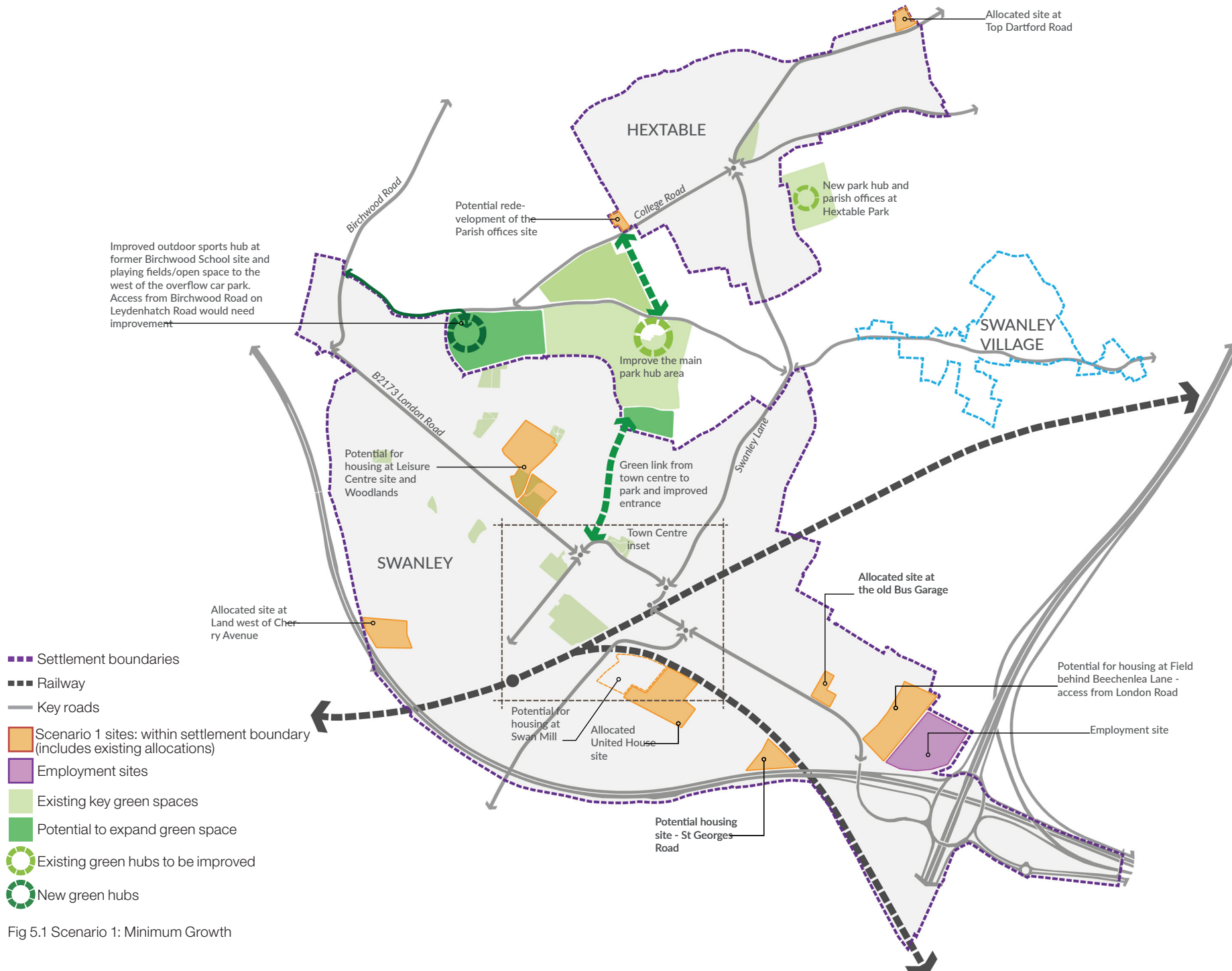


Fig 5.1 Scenario 1: Minimum Growth

5.3 Scenario 2: Medium Growth

This scenario expands upon the previous and also begins to explore potential for development in the green belt, associated with the reuse of previously developed land on the edges of Swanley and Hextable. We have shown approximately 46Ha of development in total, including substantially more employment land being bought forward near the M25 junction around Beechenlea Lane.

Key deliverables:

- Allocated and non allocated sites (as identified in Fig 5.2) to come forward for housing and employment uses;
- Potential for limited development of previously developed sites currently within the Green Belt but immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundaries.
- An improved Swanley Park, including the potential for a new outdoor sports hub on the Birchwood School site and better access to the park from Swanley and Hextable;
- New Hextable Parish Hub - potentially in Hextable Park
- Employment and leisure expansion around the Olympic.

We anticipate that this could deliver in the region of 1,200 – 1,300 dwellings and approximately 60,000 sqm of employment use with a GDV of £600 - £700m.

In addition to the opportunities relating to Swanley Park from the ‘Settlement Boundary’ option, this option provides the opportunity to improve access to the Oasis Academy site, creating a new mixed use development opportunity and freeing up existing land used by the Parish council for development.

New developments should be supported by expanding the existing network of cycle routes, to improve connectivity between housing, employment and amenities.

New development in the north of Swanley and south of Hextable may increase land and property values sufficiently to induce the redevelopment of the Vauxhall garage and petrol station next to the Premier Inn Hotel to deliver a new mixed use gateway site. However, any loss of petrol stations should only be encouraged following a review of local consumer need and competition.

Relationship to Swanley town centre: The increase in population over the plan period will help to attract inward investment into the town centre but we suspect will fall short of creating a step change in economic activity to drive substantive change. We calculate that CIL contributions and New Homes Bonus in the order of £14m and £13m respectively will make a substantial contribution to localised infrastructure provision but would be insufficient to cross-subsidise the extensive land assembly and infrastructure provision necessary to deliver comprehensive redevelopment within the town centre. The relatively restricted increase in population and opportunity for demographic change would be an insufficient catalyst to drive substantive change in the retail, leisure and service sectors, but the additional employment generated could make an important contribution to the local economy delivering jobs and additional business rates of approximately £2.5m per annum.

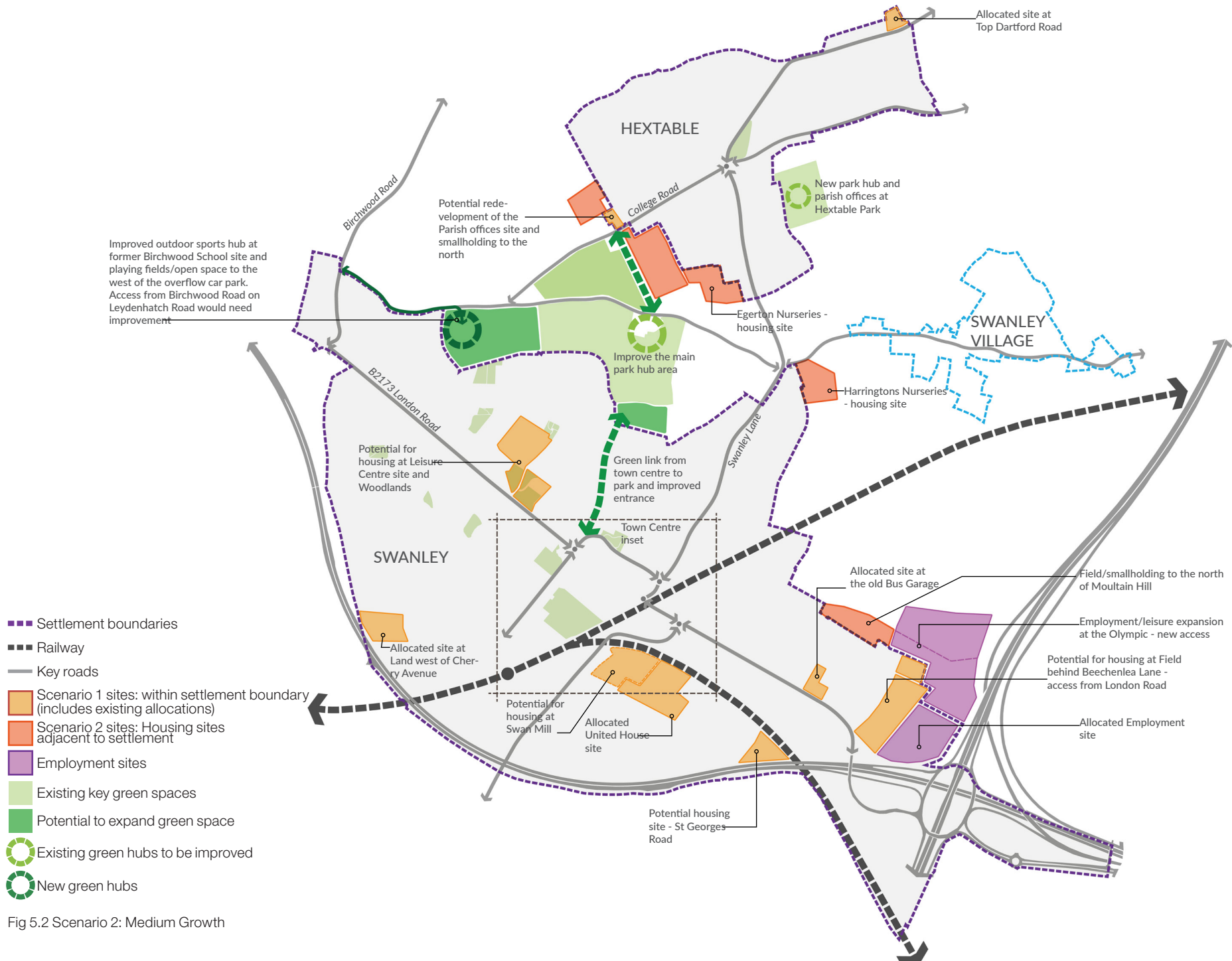
Deliverability: This scenario would require limited greenbelt release that would need to be tested and bought forward through the local plan process. The greater quantum of development would make a more substantive contribution to the District’s housing need but place a greater strain on existing social and physical infrastructure, requiring greater

public sector resource and political capital to ensure that the growth is sustainable and makes a positive contribution to the physical and economic environment. We expect the market will be capable of delivering the combined residential and employment development opportunities, providing suitable planning policy and reinvestment frameworks are put in place to ensure that the employment growth occurs in parallel, and where necessary cross-subsidised by greenbelt release of residential development land.

The Council will need to bring forward enhancements to parks and open spaces utilising Community Infrastructure Levy, performance-related funding from Central Government and public funding. The proximity of residential development in the south west of Hextable to Swanley Park would strengthen the case for planning gain contributions to be made to enhance the leisure and transport / connectivity improvements in this area.

Viability: There is strong market evidence to show that infill and edge of settlement residential development opportunities at suburban densities are viable, with a number of proposed schemes being bought forward by the market and planning applications being taken to appeal. This conclusion is supported by our own viability assessment and the fact that Hextable (where much of the residential growth in this scenario is located) is known to derive a value premium over Swanley.

The increased number of greenfield sites will provide enhanced opportunity to capture more developer contributions to pay for localised supporting cultural and service infrastructure; however, this is still unlikely to provide sufficient cross-subsidy to pay for major land assembly / infrastructure projects to transform Swanley town centre via comprehensive regeneration.



- Settlement boundaries
- Railway
- Key roads
- Scenario 1 sites: within settlement boundary (includes existing allocations)
- Scenario 2 sites: Housing sites adjacent to settlement
- Employment sites
- Existing key green spaces
- Potential to expand green space
- Existing green hubs to be improved
- New green hubs

Fig 5.2 Scenario 2: Medium Growth

5.4 Scenario 3: Transformational Growth

This scenario explores the potential to stimulate economic activity in the town centre with targeted green belt release and settlement expansion around Swanley and Hextable to accommodate housing need. It looks to the east of Swanley and Hextable as the primary area of opportunity given constraints to growth represented by factors such as the highway network, area of outstanding natural beauty and district boundaries.

This scenario can be broken down to comprise a series of urban extensions or garden villages and looks at the creation of new neighbourhoods, or one larger growth option. The new housing areas could be served by a new 'halt' station and/or a priority bus route connecting to Swanley and other key destinations. The suitability of Green Belt release in these areas has not been fully considered, and nor have other factors such as landscape, views and infrastructure delivery. These would need to be considered and weighed up against the suite of evidence the Council is collecting as part of its Local Plan review process to determine the best and most appropriate development options for the district.

Key deliverables:

- Allocated and non allocated sites (as identified in Fig 5.3) to come forward for housing and employment uses;
- Potential for limited development of previously developed sites currently within the Green Belt but immediately adjacent to the existing settlement boundaries.
- Potential for wider settlement expansion to the east of the two settlements. The scale of this is yet to be developed, but could allow for the provision of a new station 'halt' and priority bus links.
- An improved Swanley Park, including the potential for a new outdoor sports hub on the Birchwood School site and better access to the park from Swanley and Hextable;
- New Hextable Parish Hub - potentially in Hextable Park

This scenario would contribute significantly towards housing need within the District, as well as responding to demand from London. We estimate that in the region of 3,000 new homes could be accommodated (excluding the town centre).

The significantly increased population would justify more employment land allocations, seizing the opportunity of Swanley's strategic road transport links and its geographic positioning between Kent and London. We anticipate that up to 140,000 sqm of B2 and B8 space could be provided by this option.

We calculate that the combined GDV of residential and employment uses in this scenario could be in the region of £1.7bn, and potentially generate an uplift in land values in the order of £140-£250m for the c. 136Ha shown to be developed, depending on the level of affordable housing,

planning gain, abnormal costs / strategic utility and transport improvements required.

The considerable development around Hextable would encourage public and private sector investment in Hextable's village green as the heart of the settlement, potentially including an improved retail and leisure offer.

Relationship to Swanley town centre: It is anticipated that the significant increase in population – and likely change in the overall demographic makeup of the town - would be sufficient to attract inward investment into the town centre, greatly improving its retail and leisure offer. In addition, it is anticipated that the considerable CIL and New Homes Bonus contributions (calculated to be approximately £33m and £31m respectively based on current rates) would make a significant contribution towards town centre infrastructure and could be used to help cross-subsidise land assembly requirements and aid in delivering transformative change within the town centre.

However, it should be noted that even at this level it is highly unlikely that there will be sufficient developer contribution cross subsidy to overcome the very high land assembly costs required to deliver comprehensive town centre redevelopment (viability issues explained further in Section 6) and therefore further consideration should be given to mechanisms for enhanced greenfield land value capture beyond those already in place.

Deliverability: Development in this scenario will need to be of sufficient scale to attract public sector funds predicated on demand (such as transport funding) and delivery of homes and jobs (such as Local Growth Deal funding). Furthermore, the delivery of major transport improvements

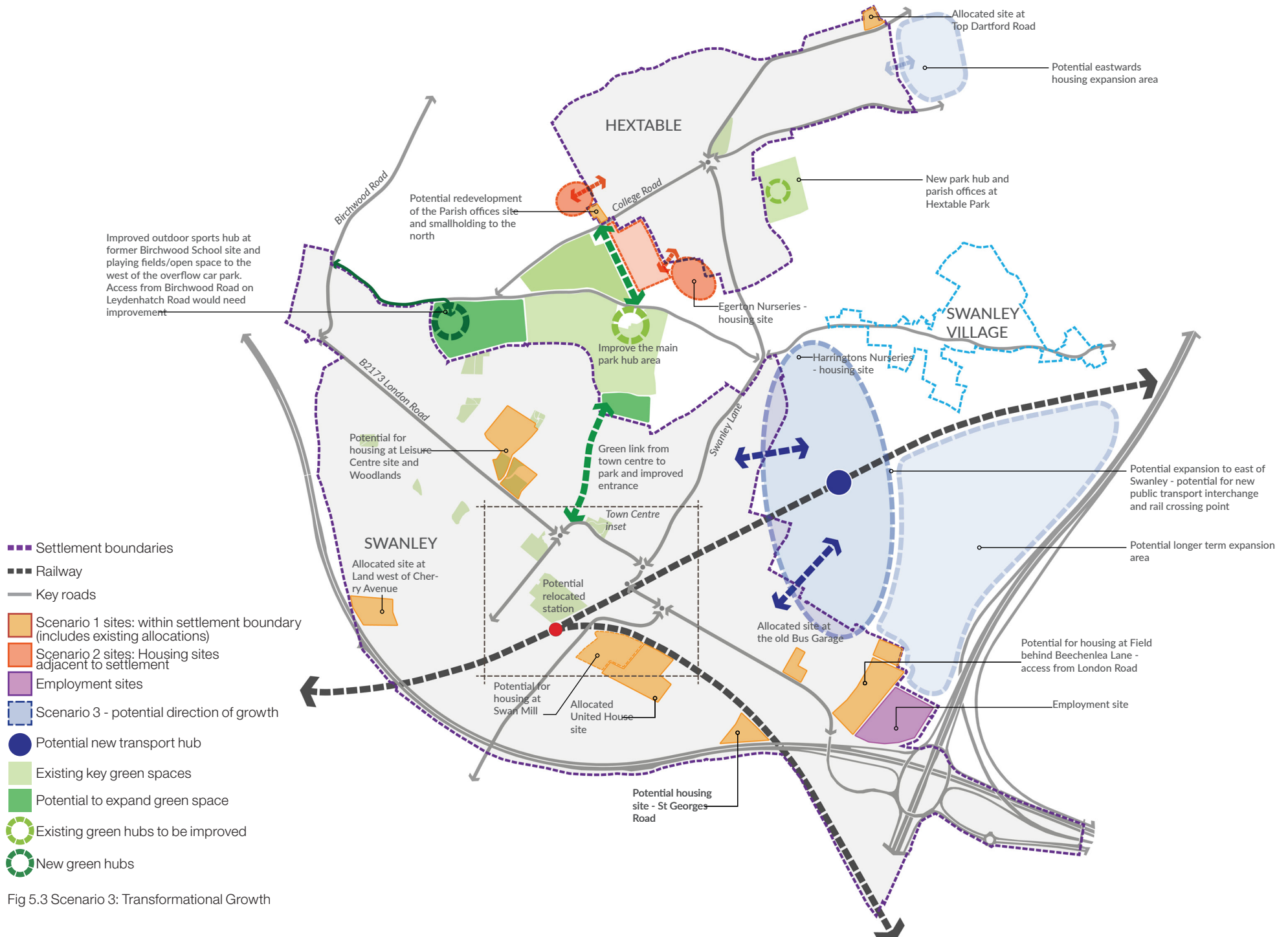


Fig 5.3 Scenario 3: Transformational Growth

(and possibly service / utility infrastructure) will require sufficient critical mass to fund and justify these types of major infrastructure project. This will establish minimum unit number and phasing “thresholds” that must be recognized and planned for if this scenario is to be taken forward.

Improvement of town centre amenities, transport and connectivity will be critical to ensuring that Swanley benefits from increased consumer expenditure. Because the viability of much of the town centre is hampered by high Existing Use Values, we advise that the Council considers all options to link greenfield expansion in the wider area with town centre redevelopment. This will allow for land value capture mechanisms to assist with land assembly, infrastructure provision. It may be necessary for these land value capture mechanisms to extend beyond Section 106 / CIL contributions, to include land acquisition or risk sharing arrangements where appropriate.

The existing local and strategic road network, particularly in the northern and eastern areas of Swanley will require substantial investment, with considerable disruption to existing residents during the works. Infrastructure improvements may also include the delivery of a major new public transport interchange such as a rail ‘halt stop’, or Bus Rapid Transit scheme between neighbouring settlements. Considerably improved parking facilities would be required at Swanley rail station. Again, new developments should be supported by expanding the existing network of cycle routes, to improve connectivity between housing, employment and amenities. In addition, adequate resources and policy will be necessary to encouraging modal shift.

Several significant changes to strategic planning policy would be required in order to seize these opportunities and create the policy environment for such substantial housing

and economic growth. In tandem, a long term programme of community engagement would be required to explore the rationale for change, options available and trade-offs of each, and maintain a sense of ownership and belonging for the existing community.

However, without adequate infrastructure investment, the development risks becoming socially, economically and environmentally unsustainable. Without adequate and appropriate community engagement, the development risks socio-economic exclusion of the existing community.

Delivering such major infrastructure and change to the proposition of the town will require considerable political leadership, corporate ambition and significant human and financial resources. It will require cooperative working with other public and private sector bodies. Above all delivering successful, sustainable growth on this scale will require determined, focused and enduring political and public support. A project champion will need to emerge and keep this at the forefront of the Council’s agenda for years to come.

Viability: There is strong market evidence to show that both infill and greenfield residential development opportunities at suburban densities are viable, with a number of proposed schemes being bought forward by the market and planning applications being taken to appeal. This conclusion is supported by our own viability assessment. The scale of the proposed development would allow high quality character areas and premium values to be achieved beyond those in the lower growth scenarios.



Fig 5.4 Precedent images for the garden village character



Fig 5.5 Illustrative view of the station halt in the garden village

5.5 Transport Commentary

The masterplan recognises the clear tension between the excellent road links available for those in the area and the associated road-based travel demand related to them. Whilst such a significant asset is highly attractive for development, the options for accommodating it successfully in this area are limited without comprehensive planning and management. The arrangement and nature of local roads provides few corridors to accommodate additional flows and also limits opportunities for new accesses. However, as with town centre options, sensitive planning of land use types to minimise car-based movement generation and a comprehensive approach to providing sustainable travel mode alternatives will contribute to managing these movements to a level complementary to wider planning objectives for local people and those new to the area.

Substantial development, such as that envisaged by scenario 3 would require a forward-looking approach to movement provision, including the promotion of a 'sustainable communities' approach to development at the eastern settlement, predicated on non-car movement and an emphasis on meeting people's needs locally rather than through longer distance travel. A station halt could provide a convenient and dedicated rail connection accessed on foot or cycle though would require careful planning in terms of operational considerations and funding provision. In short, local road network constraints mean that substantial development provision would require comprehensive and forward-looking sustainability-based responses that if actively pursued offer the prospect of wider growth.

The excellent transport connections to and from Swanley can be grasped to help deliver new sustainable patterns



Fig 5.6 Sustainable transport precedent images

of development and attract inward investment. But issues need overcoming: access to the railway station is poor and it is disconnected from the town centre. The junction of the M25 and A20 is congested and can impact on traffic movements within Swanley and Hextable. Resolving these will improve the day-to-day conditions for residents and business, and enhance the attractiveness of Swanley and its potential to accommodate future change and employment growth.

Improving the usability of the B258 Swanley Lane would contribute towards connectivity between Swanley and Hextable. Addressing existing ad-hoc on-street parking would assist in easing the way for buses along the constrained road section and also help those prepared to walk or cycle along it.

Suitably improved and signposted, both Swanley Park and The Avenue of Limes offer the prospect of greater pedestrian and cyclist use between both centres.

5.6 Scenario assessment

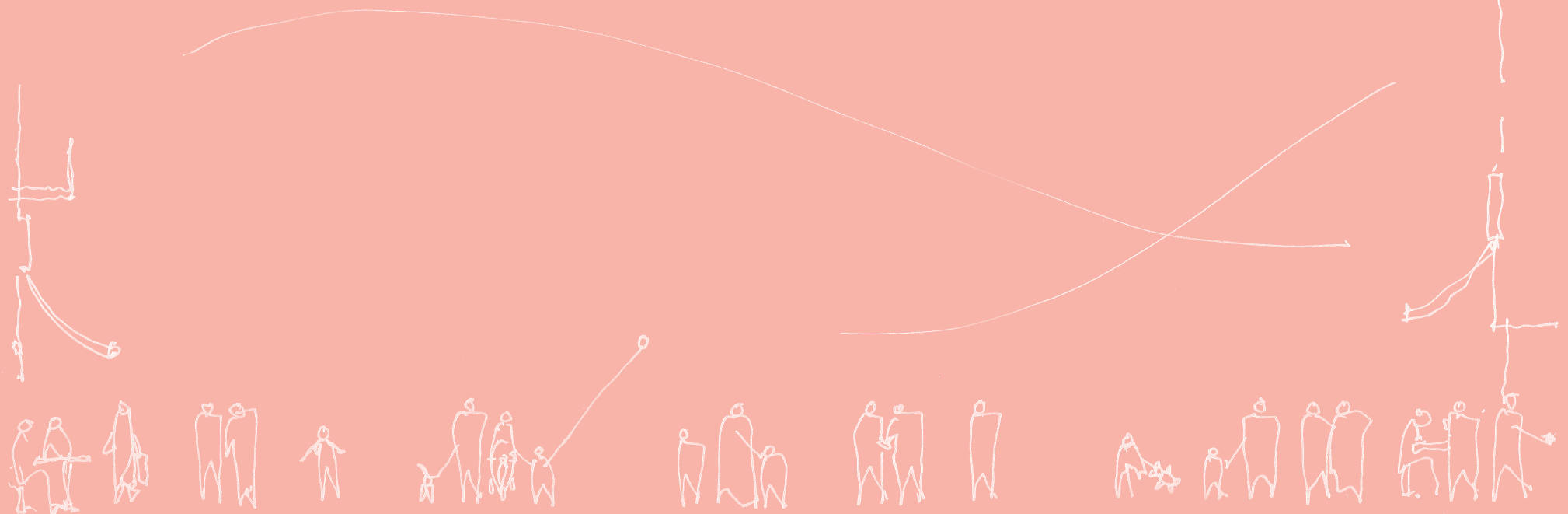
The three scenarios have been assessed against the strategic objectives as below:

The critical mass of housing and employment delivery will also enhance the business case for public sector funding, for example from the Local Economic Partnership. High level viability assessment has also been undertaken for each growth scenario, but due to commercial sensitivities the findings are not set out in this paper.

| | 1: Minimum Growth | 2: Medium Growth | 3: Transformational Growth |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. To embrace the investment opportunity to shape future town centre improvements. | X | X | ✓ |
| 2. To capitalise on excellent transport links by road and rail, and proximity to London, to help to create a new urban living, retail and service offer. | X | X | ✓ |
| 3. To maximize the opportunities for growth by responding to housing need and demand, and changing demographic patterns. | X | X | ✓ |
| 4. To strengthen the quality of the town wide green infrastructure network. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. To retain the separate identity of Swanley and Hextable. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Assessment of the wider growth scenario against the Strategic Objectives

6: Strategic Growth and Regeneration: Swanley Town Centre



6: Strategic Growth and Regeneration: Swanley Town Centre

6.1 Introduction

The town centre is a major area of opportunity for change and development. U+I, owners of the Swanley Square shopping centre, are in the process of developing proposals for the redevelopment of car parks and a small part of the existing retail parade (in order to connect with the town square) to deliver new retail and residential accommodation of up to twelve storeys. This investment opportunity needs to be grasped and directed to help reshape the town centre for the benefit of all.

6.1.1 Viability and Land Assembly

The redevelopment of the town centre presents a considerable viability challenge. This is principally due to the high existing use values (EUV) of pre-existing commercial and residential property that needs to be acquired and demolished for comprehensive regeneration to occur. This challenge is reflected in the emerging proposals from U+I where they are proposing to focus on the redevelopment of car parks minimising the amount of demolition of existing shops / residential property required. This infill approach is understandable from a commercial perspective, but could seriously compromise the viability of holistic regeneration ambitions going forward.

Methodology and key assumptions

It is beyond the scope of this commission to assess the EUV of property within the town centre, but we strongly recommend that once a preferred option has been agreed surveyors are commissioned to ascertain the market value of each development parcel and to provide advice on land

assembly strategies including the possibility of CPO powers being used.

A detailed assessment of the development capacity and mix of each development parcel has not been undertaken. Instead, for the purposes of viability testing we have assumed that on average across the town centre residential development will be delivered at 150 dwellings per net developable hectare, based on 90% medium rise apartments being constructed above mixed use commercial space on the ground floor (comprising convenience and comparison retail, leisure and community uses) with 10% houses, plus some hotel accommodation being included in the overall mix. Our appraisal assumes no affordable housing provision within the town centre and residential values up to £450 per sq ft (equating to c. £315,000 for a 2 bed apartment).

Key Findings

On this basis we have derived residual development land values of up to £4.9m per Ha (£1.8m per acre). Whilst this may be sufficient to bring forward “softer” development parcels, such as car parks, underutilised / vacant land and land in public ownership, it is unlikely to incentivise the redevelopment of existing shops and homes.

Bringing forward comprehensive regeneration, including the redevelopment of the existing retail parade, ASDA and other residential and commercial premises therefore presents a considerable challenge - and the Council should not let developers ‘cherry pick’ the most deliverable and/or viable sites without commitments to deliver the remainder of their landholding. However, we recognise that The Council may need to work closely with developers to enhance the viability

of more challenging sites through public sector support where necessary.

It is for this reason that we also advise that the Council considers all options to link town centre redevelopment with greenfield expansion in the wider area, utilising land value capture mechanisms to assist with land assembly, infrastructure provision. It may be necessary for these land value capture mechanisms to extend beyond Section 106 / CIL contributions, to include land acquisition or risk sharing arrangements where appropriate.

The next section of the report introduces various scenario for the town centre, scaled from ‘minimum’ change and intervention, through to ‘medium’ and then ‘transformational’. Each scenario is then considered against the strategic objectives.

6.2 Scenario 1: Minimum growth

This scenario represents the minimum amount of change that is required to regenerate Swanley Town Centre. Any less than this is really just infill and not likely to really change and improve the centre. There are four main actions:

- A coordinated redevelopment plan for the area south of the High Street between the High Street, the railway, the recreation ground and Nightingale Way (the southern High Street block marked in blue on fig 6.2);
- A new leisure facility located close to the town centre;
- Improved pedestrian links to the station
- Gateway development at Bevan Place/Meeting Point

Key deliverables

In this scenario we estimate that just over 3Ha of land may be redeveloped delivering approximately 350 – 400 dwellings after amenity and other non-developable land has been accounted for. We estimate that approximately 3,000 – 4,000 sqm of non-residential (retail / leisure / community space) would be provided and derive a GDV of approximately £95m.

The scenario seeks to capitalise on, and extend U+I's proposals to reconfigure the retail area lying between the Recreation Ground and ASDA by bringing forward comprehensive regeneration of this area.

A new leisure centre would be located adjacent to the Recreation Ground on the site of the existing tennis courts and would increase footfall and encourage linked trips into the town centre as well as improving public transport

access. It could be possible to co-locate a new Primary Care and Well-being Centre within the Leisure Centre.

Delivering new links between the rail station and town centre via the recreation ground would be secured, with the north-south connectivity through the U+I land an important planning consideration. Improvements to the railway station facilities would also be prioritised.

Deliverability

Perhaps the greatest delivery challenge associated with this option is bringing forward viable redevelopment of the entire U+I land holdings due to the high existing use value of the retail parade and apartments located above it. If this is to be delivered the Council will need to ensure a coordinated approach rather than piecemeal development. This might involve the preparation of a development brief in advance of a planning application being submitted, and working closely with U+I to consider how viability can be improved. This may require greater flexibility on affordable housing provision or developer contributions and seeking grant funding and cross subsidy opportunities and / or the use of CPO to remove delivery barriers.

Compared with the other town centre options presented within this report, this scenario is easier to deliver, is less disruptive to residents and existing businesses, and requires less public sector resource and political capital / ambition. It is a lower risk scenario.

However some of the draw backs and limitations are:

- It may fail to deliver the critical mass for transformational change, addressing perception issues and delivering significant economic growth.

- It may fail to make the most of the regeneration opportunity, and is unlikely to secure the redevelopment / intensification of the ASDA site, leaving a single sided active frontage on the pedestrianised street.
- A separate leisure centre introduces another separate civic building in the town centre going against the desire for consolidation and combining of services, and it is located on a higher value site.



Fig 6.1 Precedent images

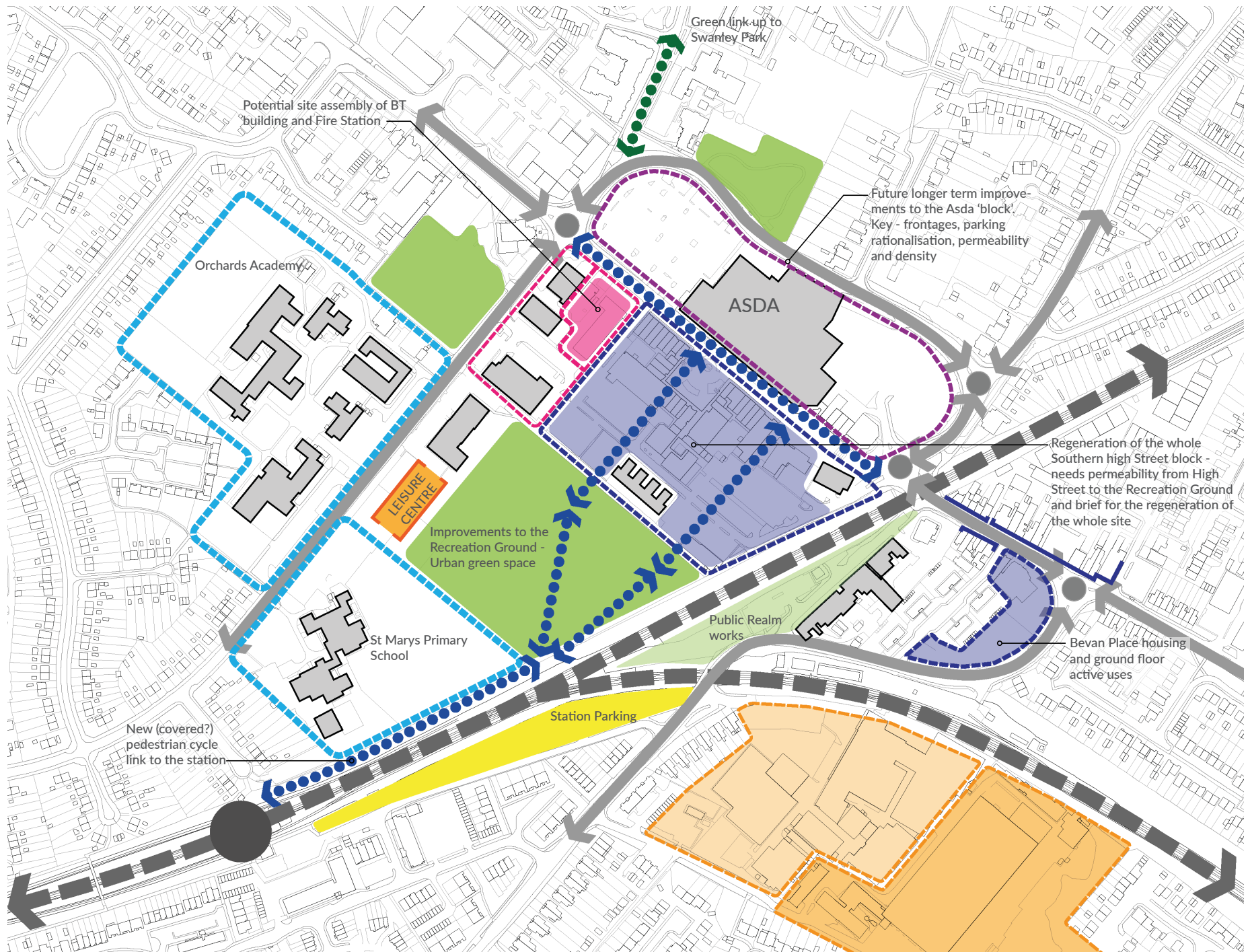


Fig 6.2 Scenario 1: Minimum Growth

6.3 Scenario 2: Medium growth

This scenario builds on the key elements of the previous one and develops them further into more substantive change. Over and above the key actions in scenario 1 are:

- The regeneration of the ASDA block (market in purple on fig 6.4) to diversify the retail offer, create permeability and connect the town centre to the north;
- A new Healthy Living centre that incorporates Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Civic facilities in one building.
- Development alongside and footbridge link across the railway overlooking and adjacent to the recreation ground;
- Increased regeneration benefits at Bevan Place by including the West Kent Housing blocks.

Key deliverables

In this scenario we estimate that 7.5Ha of land may be redeveloped delivering approximately 900 - 1000 dwellings after amenity and other non-developable land has been accounted for. We estimate that approximately 8,000 – 9,000 sqm of non-residential (retail / leisure / community space) would be provided and derive a GDV of approximately £275m.

The scenario seeks to further capitalise on U+I's proposals as outlined in the minimum option but extends this to include the redevelopment of ASDA and the pedestrianised street.

The delivery of a new multi storey car park is envisaged and changes in levels around Bartholomew Way may offer the opportunity to reduce the visual impact.

This scenario seeks to rationalise and bring together civic uses, freeing up a new development site in a critical location currently occupied by the Swanley link and library.

A new 'Healthy Living' Centre, incorporating Primary Care and Wellbeing, civic and cultural centre and a new leisure centre would be located adjacent to the Recreation Ground on the site of the existing tennis courts and town council offices. This would increase footfall and encourage linked trips into the town centre as well as improving public transport access.

New links between the rail station and town centre via the recreation ground would be secured, with the north-south connectivity through the U+I land an important planning consideration. Improvements to the railway station facilities possibly including a new entrance and covered walkway north of the railway line would also be prioritized. These would be complemented by a new pedestrian and cycle bridge across the railway.

Deliverability

In addition to the delivery challenges outlined in the minimum scenario, incorporating ASDA could present a significant challenge. We understand that the store is one of their best performing outlets in the region and they will, no doubt, be keen to secure an ongoing retail presence in the town at a major scale throughout any works. They will also be unlikely to accept any reduction in car parking. Very careful planning and phasing options will need to be considered if they are therefore to be brought on board. Linking the development proposals to an increased customer base within the immediate catchment area of the store and that associated with settlement expansion may be the key driver for them.

Partnership working arrangements between public and private sector land owners will be essential to securing implementation. The Council will have a key role in coordinating the support and investment of the wider public sector including the Town Council (whose offices and banqueting suites are impacted), Network Rail and funding bodies.

A clear infrastructure delivery plan and investment strategy, including the prioritization of CIL and performance-related funding from Central Government will aid developer confidence. The Council may also wish to consider raising capital for investment based on the potential increase in business rates redevelopment would provide – we estimate this could be in the region of £1.25m per annum.



Fig 6.3 Precedent images

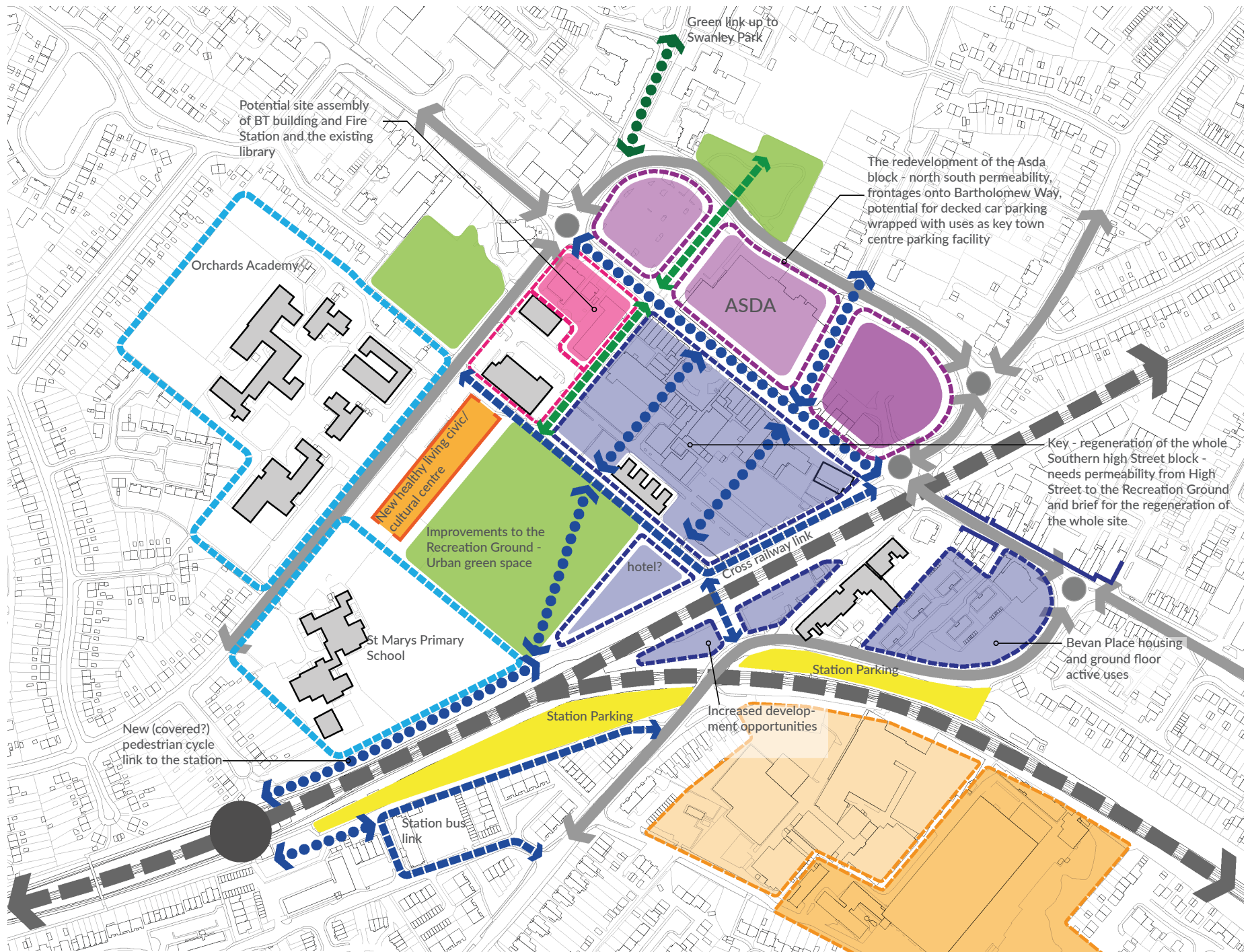


Fig 6.4 Scenario 2: Medium Growth

6.4 Scenario 3: Transformational growth

This scenario indicates transformative change to Swanley Town Centre in keeping with the wider town wide expansion proposals. This scenario addresses the current access issues to the station and provides a new relocated station building and square and rationalises school and education provisions adjacent to the town centre. The key moves in addition to those outlined in the previous scenarios are:

- New relocated station building on Station Road, bringing the station closer to the town centre
- Orchards Academy site redeveloped as an education 'hub' with new secondary and primary facilities;
- Development on the site of St Marys Primary School, with direct links to the town centre;
- New Civic, Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and hotel facilities overlooking a new civic space;
- New open space built across the railway lines to connect the town centre to Station Road.

Key deliverables

In this scenario we estimate that 11Ha of land may be redeveloped delivering approximately 1400 - 1500 dwellings after amenity and other non-developable land has been accounted for. We estimate that approximately 14,000 – 16,000 sqm of non-residential (retail / leisure / community space) would be provided and derive a GDV of approximately £490m.

In addition to the deliverables set out in the two other town centre scenarios, a key outcome of this one is to ensure that coordinated interventions unlock transformational change – delivering a more diverse and prosperous retail economy, and retaining greater levels of consumer spending within the town. This would be complemented by a more diverse and affluent population served by a thriving leisure and evening economy.

The scenario seeks to maximise the benefits of the fantastic transport links to London, expanding the housing, leisure, cultural and retail offer to appeal to commuters.

Civic and educational uses are consolidated and rationalised in a lower value area, including provision of the new leisure centre, whilst minimising the impact on the key green space at the Recreational Ground.

The additional commercial floor space, which will include offices as well retail and leisure / community uses, will significantly enhance the number of jobs available in the town centre and helping to reduce local unemployment

The option proposes decking over the railway line to create a new linear green space and improved connections over it, as well as significantly improved rail station facilities with a new entrance closer to the town centre. This will combine with improved bus routes and an interchange linking to the station to give excellent public transport services.

Deliverability

This scenario is the most ambitious for the town centre and to deliver it will require a very high level of leadership, along with enduring political and community support.

In addition to the delivery challenges set out in the other two scenarios, this option in particular will need to be supported by significant greenbelt release and housing expansion to attract retail and leisure investors, and to fund infrastructure improvements.

Orchard Academy and St Mary's Primary school are key stakeholders in this option and the Council will need to work with them to form a clear and coherent investment plan and development / relocation strategy which they are happy to support.



Fig 6.5 Precedent images

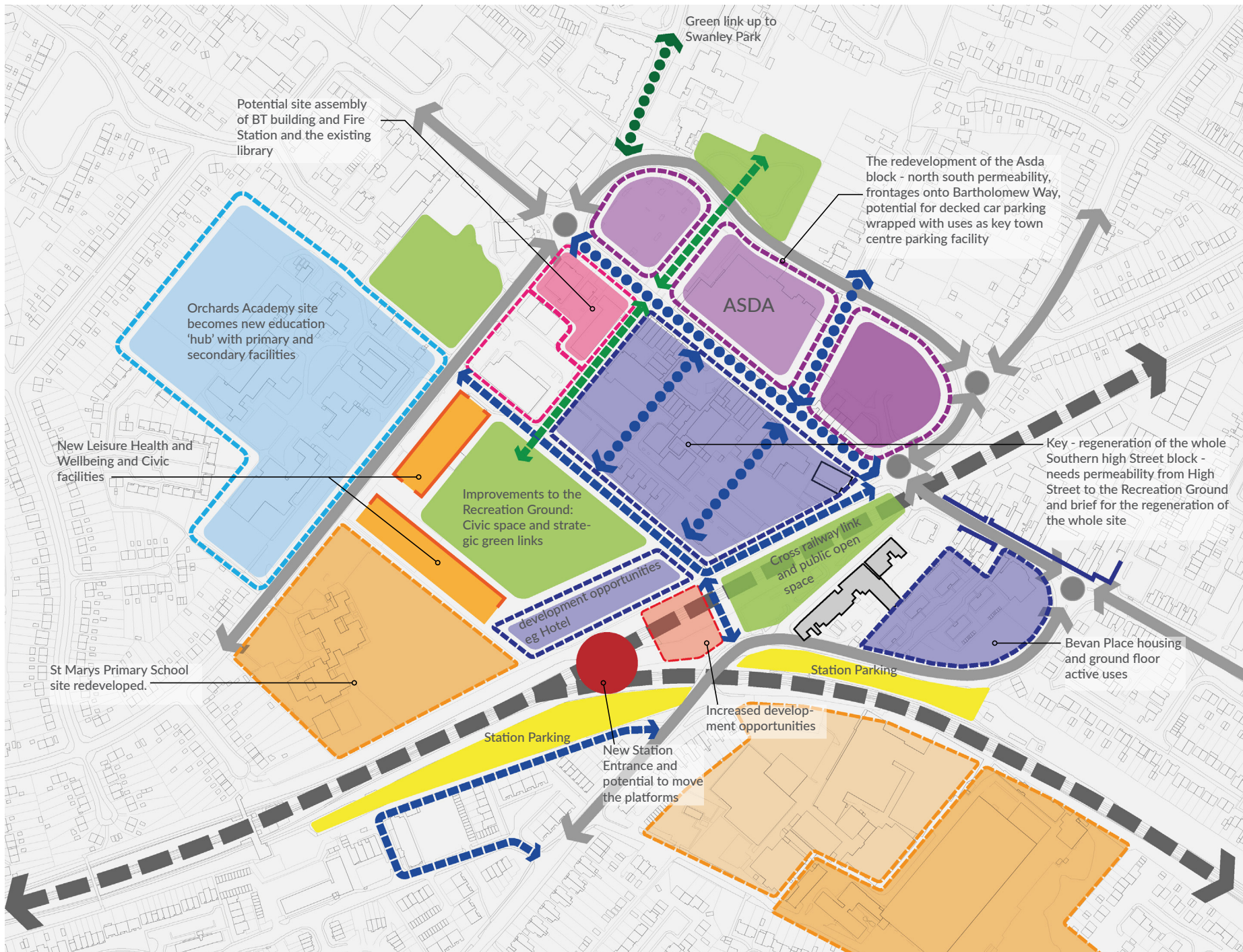


Fig 6.6 Scenario 3: Transformational Growth

6.5 Transport Commentary

All the scenarios seek to enhance pedestrian links to and across the town centre, seeking to provide a convenient and coherent pattern of access throughout. These will provide the various shops, services and amenities with a greater town centre presence, increasing the awareness of local people regarding what is available to them in their town centre. Rationalising the space and access routes will also provide opportunities for social space in the town centre, encouraging the community to dwell and interact whilst going about their business.

It is important that town centre development scenarios recognise and respond to the pressures of vehicle generated traffic and parking demand associated with development. Unfettered development may lead to an unattractive living and working environment – counteracting the intended town centre outcome.

The scenarios represent varying intensities of implied car-based travel demand if viewed in light of the present travel mode context. Scenarios 2 and 3 imply both a substantial re-planning of the ASDA site and the road network serving it requiring sensitive planning over time to provide a site and uses integrated into, and contributing to, a rational and high quality street environment. There are a range of road network, parking management and access options to be explored in detail for this site in efforts to achieve an optimal arrangement on the presently congested peak time road network.

Sensitive development planning is needed to provide a strong focus on sustainable transport initiatives to manage that demand through appropriate planning controls and



Fig 6.9 Sustainable transport precedents

the availability of convenient and high quality alternatives to car use. Forward planning to establish an appropriate develop car based travel demand 'cap' will provide a basis for managing road network impact, providing appropriate sustainable travel alternatives and encouraging development complementary to that approach.

A key aim is to substantially improve pedestrian and cyclist links to the station, effectively shortening the perceived distance between access to the station platforms through provision of more legible and higher quality, dedicated links. This will move forward the Active Travel agenda, promoting alternative routes and options for short journeys, promoting healthier lifestyles for residents and reducing congestion on the road network

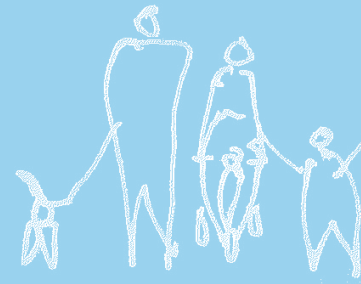
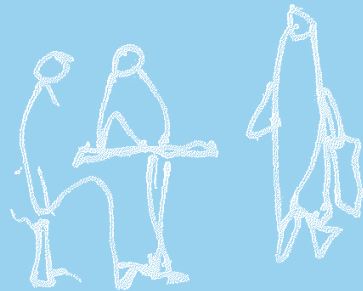
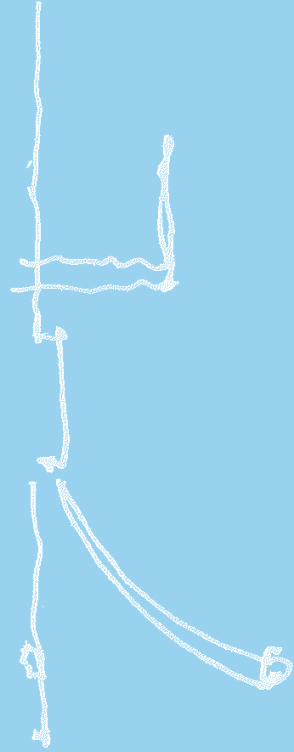
Updating and remodelling the station buildings would provide a substantial benefit in improving the rail travel offer for existing and new users. Relocating the station buildings further towards the town centre's heart could do much to raise the profile and convenience of rail travel for local people and those new to the area. It would provide a town centre hub for travel and a range of related activities for those travelling and others. Achieving such transformative change would require substantial funding and detailed consideration of the operational impacts, particularly in relation to the splitting of the railway line at the town centre's heart.

6.6 Option assessment

The three scenarios have been assessed against the strategic objectives as below: High level viability assessment has also been undertaken for each growth option, but due to commercial sensitivities the findings are not set out in this paper.

| | 1. Minimum | 2. Medium | 3. Transformational |
|--|------------|-----------|---------------------|
| 1. To embrace the investment opportunity to shape future town centre improvements. | X | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2. To capitalise on excellent transport links by road and rail, and proximity to London, to help to create a new urban living, retail and service offer. | X | X | ✓ |
| 3. To maximize the opportunities for growth by responding to housing need and demand, and changing demographic patterns. | X | X | ✓ |
| 4. To strengthen the quality of the town wide green infrastructure network. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. To retain the separate identity of Swanley and Hextable. | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

Assessment of the town centre options against the Strategic Objectives



7: Conclusions and Next steps



7 Conclusions and Next Steps

7.1 Conclusions

There is an excellent opportunity for growth and transformation in Swanley and Hextable. The Local Plan is currently being reviewed and there is ongoing investment in the town centre. This represents an opportune moment to deliver a step-change in the quality of housing and infrastructure, community facilities and transport investment.

Swanley has excellent strategic transport connections, but at the same time suffers from congestion on the local network and poor pedestrian and cycle connections. It is the biggest combined centre of population in the district but has an under-performing town centre. It has a large stock of housing but a limited, modern offer and lack of different housing types to cater for changing demographics.

The research and consultation undertaken through this project has pointed towards a vision for change and transformation where the critical mass can be generated that supports and helps deliver a new model of development.

Swanley has the potential to be re-invented as a new 'Garden Town'. The proposed eastwards expansion of Swanley could similarly be progressed as a new garden village to reflect the horticultural heritage of the area. There is momentum behind this. The Government has launched a prospectus promoting the delivery of new Garden Villages. For Swanley and Hextable this would mean:

- Development of family-friendly lower density housing, supported by parks, play spaces, health and education.
- Embedding the landscape and enhanced network of green spaces into the town, improving the quality of and access to these spaces. It was also mean rethinking how

to use that space, exploring the provision of community gardens and ownership of local space.

- Growing in a 'sustainable manner' - that brings improvements to the town centre, access to the railway station and an enhanced role for the market.
- Ensuring development sites within clearly identifiable settlement boundaries and defined by a strong green edge.

At the same time, and recognising proximity to London and the wider South-East, Swanley can become a thriving commuter town, and dynamic hub for business and enterprise. This might mean:

- Enhancing the rail links and access to and from the station;
- Diversifying the retail offer with smaller units in the town centre that might appeal to first time buyers;
- Creating a strong and vibrant town centre with a greater mix of uses and enhanced retail offer
- Maximising proximity to the A20 and M25 to grow the town as a major employment locations;
- Promote space for new start up businesses as well as larger scale organisations;
- Investment in education and training to help local people access these opportunities.

In response to this the study explored a series of growth scenarios. It is only the more significant scenarios that deliver the scale of growth necessary to deliver the transformation envisaged in Swanley.

This study therefore recommends:

- Major restructuring of the town centre, using current investment as a catalyst to drive further improvement. This would see an improved education hub and healthy living facilities as being integral to the mix, new homes, rationalisation of the transport network, new and improved station access arrangements. This scale of change, which would be phased over several years, would help change perceptions and market values. We also see potential for reconnecting the town centre, breaking the barrier caused by the railway line.
- Growth of Swanley, particularly to the east, following the principles of the Garden Cities movement. This would include new public transport provision, potentially a new station halt, and dedicated bus provision into the town centre and beyond.
- Wider improvements to the quality of the town wide Green Infrastructure Networks, including improved and more direct access to Swanley Park (from both Swanley and Hextable), improvements to the park itself, plus expansion of this to (a) deliver improved town-wide sports provision, and (b) strengthen the green lung between Swanley and Hextable and thus the individual character and identity of both settlements.

7.2 Next Steps

The study area, as a whole, is an area of major opportunity. This report has set out a series of strategic options for Swanley and Hextable as well as more focused opportunities around Swanley town centre and other drivers such as the future of the leisure centre. The options presented are not mutually exclusive: each of the town centre options can work with each of the strategic growth options but the combination chosen will present a different future for the area, and the more transformative options for the town centre are likely to only be viable and deliverable with significant growth of the area.

Sevenoaks District Council is currently preparing its new Local Plan and collecting the evidence to support policy formulation within this. The Council faces some big decisions. This report and the options within it need to be reconciled with the pressures being faced within the District. Key questions include:

- How ambitious should plans for Swanley town centre be?
- Can land within the ownership of public agencies, including education, leisure and recreation, be reorganized to help facilitate and deliver change?
- How much new housing should be accommodated within Swanley and Hextable?
- What is the potential for releasing land from the green belt to accommodate new growth?

To answer some of these questions it may be that the Council needs to weigh up the evidence being generated through the Local Plan process. Future studies that might

be required to help move towards a final preferred strategy include:

- A comprehensive masterplan and development brief for the town centre that presents a long-term planning and investment strategy.
- Require that proposals for the Swanley Square town centre (U+I ownership) show how they respond to help facilitate the long-term opportunity for change in Swanley.
- A 'directions of growth' study identifying the most appropriate areas for new development outside of the settlement boundaries.
- A review of the green belt, including assessment of potential growth locations against the tests of the green belt as set out in national policy (see section 9 of the NPPF).

