

PLAN 2040 - REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION (November 2022) UPDATE

Development and Conservation Advisory Committee - 11 July 2023

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services

Status: For information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: This report provides a full analysis of the responses to the Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation (November 2022).

This report supports the Key Aim of:

Protecting the Green Belt

Supporting and Developing the Local Economy

Supporting the wellbeing of residents, businesses and visitors

Ensuring that Sevenoaks District remains a great place to live, work and visit

Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Simon Reay

Contact Officer(s): Emma Coffin ext. 7315 and Elisabeth Holness ext. 7046

Recommendation to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee:

That the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee

- a. Note the content of the report

Reason for recommendation: To provide an update and full analysis of responses to the Plan 2040 initial Regulation 18 Consultation.

Introduction and Background

1. The Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation took place from Wednesday 16 November 2022 and ran for 8 weeks, concluding on Wednesday 11 January 2023.
2. The consultation took place in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). It was the first of three prescribed consultation processes and will be followed by a second Regulation 18 Consultation in autumn 2023 and a Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation in spring 2024.
3. The consultation covered 10 key topics and sought views from communities and stakeholders on what the new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District should contain.
4. A previous report was bought to Development and Conservation Advisory Committee (DCAC) on Thursday 2nd March 2023, which provided initial high-level summaries and statistics of responses received and the key themes identified. The report looked initially at the key, quantitative questions included in the Short Survey
5. This report provides a full analysis of all responses to the Policies included in the initial Regulation 18 consultation document.

Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation Responses

6. A total of 598 responses were received to the Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation. This total includes responses to the full survey, the short survey and responses from Schools.
7. This response rate is comparable with that of our Neighbouring Authorities at the same stage, with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council received 551 responses at Regulation 18 and Maidstone Borough Council receiving 550 responses at the same stage of consultation.
8. We anticipate a greater response rate to our second Regulation 18 in autumn 2023, which will take a District-wide approach (including considering potential Green Belt sites). As a comparison, despite the similar response rate at their first Regulation 18, Maidstone Borough Council received over 3000 responses at their second Regulation 18 consultation.

9. Below is a breakdown of responses received:

Citizen Space	Short Survey	526
	Full Survey	72

10. Responses were received from 33 Statutory Consultees, including Thames Water, National Highways and the Environment Agency. A full list of Statutory Consultee responses is set out in Appendix A including a summary of the key matters raised. Included in the list of Statutory Consultees, responses were received from 17 of the Districts 31 Town and Parish Councils, and these are also set out at Appendix A, along with Neighbouring Authorities.
11. Appendix B sets out responses made by other organisations, including a list of landowners and developers.

Consultation Findings

12. Through analysis of the survey responses, we are also able to determine that 63% of respondents live within the District. Of these respondents, the top 5 'commented from' towns/parishes were:
- Sevenoaks Town - 32.3% (167 responses)
 - Swanley - 7.9% (34 responses)
 - Otford - 6.3% (27 responses)
 - Hartley - 5.3% (23 responses)
 - Edenbridge - 4.9% (21 responses)
13. The remaining 37% of respondents mainly consists of students who live outside of the District boundary, as well as developers and other organisations.
14. The consultation also included an 'Age Range' question. Across both surveys, 73% provided an age range in their answer. Of these respondents, we can see that 68% of respondents are aged 17 and under, followed by 10.5% aged 65 and over.
15. The full analysis of the responses to the policies within the initial Plan 2040 Regulation 18 consultation are set out at Appendix C to this report.
16. As highlighted above, the Council received 598 responses to on the Regulation 18 consultation. The majority of these responses were on the key questions included in the Short Survey.

17. Across the two surveys, the top 5 'commented on' chapters were:
- Vision and Objectives - 199 responses
 - Chapter 1 - Development Strategy - 197 responses
 - Chapter 4 - Climate Change - 186 responses
 - Chapter 8 - Natural Environment - 182 responses
 - Chapter 10 - Transport - 171 responses
18. Across the two surveys, the top 5 'commented on' policies were:
- Policy ST1 - A Balanced Strategy for Growth (197 responses)
 - Policy CC1 - Climate Change (186 responses)
 - Policy BW1 - Safeguarding Places for Wildlife and Nature (174 responses)
 - Policy T3 - Vehicle Parking (172 responses)
 - Policy H2 - Provision of Affordable Housing (171 responses)
19. Both surveys also included a 'free text' response questions and 79.1% of respondents made comments here. Across both surveys, the top 5 'most mentioned topic areas' were:
- Town Centres / Retail / Shops - 193 responses
 - Transport - 130 responses
 - Green Belt - 101 responses
 - Parks and Local Nature Reserves - 75 responses
 - Affordable Housing - 69 responses
20. Going forwards, as part of the preparation of the second Regulation 18 Consultation in Autumn 2023, Officers have taken account of the consultation responses received to this initial consultation and these will feed into the further development of the emerging Local Plan.

Conclusion

21. This report provides a full analysis of all responses to the Plan 2040 initial Regulation 18 Consultation, which ran for 8 weeks from 16 November 2022 to 11 January 2023. Officers will be happy to take any questions on the content of this report at the meeting.

Other options considered and/or rejected

The option not to progress a new Local Plan would leave the Council open to reputational damage and likely Government intervention to produce a Local Plan for the District Council.

Key Implications

Financial

The Plan 2040 Regulation 18 Consultation was funded from the Local Plan reserve.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

Preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement. There are defined legal requirements that must be met in plan making, which are considered when the Plan is examined by a Government Planning Inspector. Risks associated with the Local Plan are set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Net Zero Implications

This is a 'for information' report, and therefore there are no decisions recommended through this paper related to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. However, the adoption of the Local Plan, which includes policies in relation to climate change and the environment, is likely to have a positive impact to help decrease carbon emissions in the district, and support the resilience of the natural environment.

Appendices

Appendix A - Statutory Consultees, Neighbouring Authorities and Town and Parish Councils - Key Matters Raised

Appendix B - List of Landowners, Developers and other organisations who responded to the Plan 2040 consultation

Appendix C - Full Analysis of Regulation 18 Consultation (November 2022) Responses

Richard Morris

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer - Planning and Regulatory Services