

Dear Swanley Town Council

Swanley Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16 Consultation. Representation from Sevenoaks District Council.

Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation, as prepared by Swanley Town Council (STC). Swanley parish contains the District's second town, one of our higher-tier settlements, as well as Swanley Village, one of our hamlets. It was designated as a Neighbourhood Area in November 2014.

Contact between SDC and STC

The Local Authority is only required to consider whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions after the Examination. However, it is important to recognise that there has been regular contact between SDC and STC and we have been providing advice to the Town Council up to this point, as an informal part of the plan making process.

The Town Council and the associated neighbourhood plan clearly recognise the relationship between the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Development Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. For Sevenoaks District, this consists of the Core Strategy (2011) and the Allocations and Development Management Plan (ADMP) (2015). They are also cognisant of the emerging Local Plan (Plan 2040), referencing the Regulation 18 consultation undertaken over the autumn/winter period last year and into this year.

As well as the test of 'general conformity' with the Local Plan strategic policies as a whole, it is also required that Neighbourhood Plan policies 'do not undermine strategic policies' for the local area. It is considered that this Regulation 16 Neighbourhood Plan for Swanley broadly conforms with the strategic aims and policies of the District's existing policy framework.

The emerging Local Plan

SDC is currently preparing the Local Plan for Sevenoaks District. We undertook an informal Regulation 18 consultation between November 2022 and January 2023. It explored the opportunities to accommodate our strategic development needs in existing settlements and the potential that exists within them, including different density scenarios.

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We are now running our second Regulation 18 consultation, which started on 23 November 2023 and which will finish on 11 January 2024; it closes on the same day as that of the Regulation 16 Consultation for this Neighbourhood Plan. This takes a more district-wide approach, including consideration of the potential contribution of Green Belt land, and focuses development in and around our 8 higher-tier settlements, including Swanley, as these are considered more sustainable locations, in line with our Settlement hierarchy. Sites within and adjacent to the built-up areas of Swanley are proposed for allocation. In addition, a stand-alone settlement, known as Pedham Place, located to the south/south-east of Swanley is being consulted upon as a potential growth scenario.

A Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Consultation is to follow in spring/summer 2024, with submission (Regulation 22) to the Planning Inspectorate envisaged in summer/autumn 2024.

Detailed comments

The Planning Policy team's comments are attached as an appendix.

Representations from other sections of Sevenoaks District Council are attached

Other Comments

Our previous communications with the Town Council at Regulation 14 stage of the plan are also attached for the Examiner's information.

Conclusion

This representation, along with all other representations received during the Regulation 16 public consultation period, will be sent to the Independent Examiner, once appointed.

Kind regards

The Planning Policy Team
Sevenoaks District Council