



**Report of Findings
Community
Consultation
Exercise**

SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT OF FINDINGS – COMMUNITY CONSULTATION EXERCISE
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

The Local Development Framework Core Strategy will set out Swale Borough Council's vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the development of the borough until 2031. On adoption it will replace the Borough Council's Local Plan. The changes to planning legislation require all Local Authorities to involve the community at an early stage in the preparation of the Local Development Framework document and to tailor the techniques to engage the appropriate parts of the community at the various stages.

MAC Associates (Leicester) Limited were appointed in July 09 to design and deliver a consultation exercise that would engage a representative sample of Swale's communities in consultation on the Issues and Options for the Core Strategy. One of the underlying aims was to ensure that people who had not previously been engaged in the planning process would be given the opportunity to do so.

2. METHODOLOGY

Large visual questionnaires were developed to enable consultees to be able to give some views either by answering direct questions with a small pin or by giving more detailed information on a post it note. Copies of the visual questionnaires are included in Appendix 2 of the full report. The consultation process was facilitated at all times by Consultants from MAC Associates who were able to guide residents through the questionnaires, and provide practical help and support when necessary, for those who had a range of barriers and difficulties such as language, sensory or physical disabilities and literacy issues. The large questionnaires included local photos so that they provided a visual attraction which encouraged people to find out what was happening.

In addition a questionnaire was set up on the Council website so that residents who did not have the opportunity to access the consultation at local events and locations were able to input their views. Leaflets were given out at all the consultation events advertising the link to the website. The views inputted by members of the public to the website have been analysed and included in this report. However, this raw data has not been included in the appendices at the end of this report because it contained personal contact information from respondents which is not appropriate to include in a public document.

By using this approach to the research we have tried to ensure that people who do not normally participate in consultation exercises about planning

issues had the opportunity to do so. Respondents may not be totally representative of the whole population and in making their responses will largely have given a personal view based on the knowledge and experience they have of living in the Borough. However, we have tried to ensure that views were gathered from a wide age range and had some representation from people of ethnic minority backgrounds.

3. CONSULTATION

A total of 18 consultation events were organised across the Borough. Venues included local supermarkets, shopping centres, community events and local markets. A total of 79.5 hours were spent in direct consultation with members of the public. A total of 455 males and 474 females attended the consultation events making an overall total of 929 people who participated in the consultation exercise.

In addition opportunities were provided for members of the public to give their views via a website link. Details of the website address were publicised at consultation events. The information provided by members of the public via the website has been analysed and included in this report. However, the raw data gathered via the website has not been included in the appendices of the full report because they contain personal contact details which would not be published in a public report.

4. KEY MESSAGES FROM THE CONSULTATION

4.1. Prosperity

- Residents are unsure of how the target for the creation of new jobs would be achieved
- To create prosperity in Swale you must address transport needs, provide housing and improve educational attainment as well as creating employment opportunities
- Create employment for lower skilled workers as well as skilled workers
- Attract and create more graduate employment
- Create a robust employment regeneration policy for Faversham
- Create higher density employment on existing sites
- Provide a mix of sustainable manufacturing and service industry employment
- Attract some 'flagship' employers as well as small and medium sized employers
- Provide employment for local people
- Site new office developments in locations that have good road and rail access
- Utilise the existing buildings at Kent Science Park rather than extend it

4.2. Learning and Skills

- Provide adult education facilities at some schools in the borough
- Create practical trade apprenticeships
- Subsidise apprenticeship opportunities so employers more willing to provide them
- Provide more local training opportunities
- Develop Higher Education facilities on the old Paper Mill site and at Kent Science Park
- Develop University or Further Education facilities in Faversham
- Provide more Adult Education courses in Faversham
- Encourage local Universities to set up satellite sites in the Borough
- Improve College facilities in Sittingbourne and Sheppey
- Invest more money in education on the Island
- More emphasis to be placed on raising aspiration in the borough
- Provide better educational facilities on the Island for children with special needs
- Make courses more affordable
- Increase and improve training opportunities for the unemployed
- Undertake research to identify the skills gap locally and provide relevant training to reduce it

4.3. Homes and Communities

- Concerns were expressed about the impact new homes will have on the existing infrastructure on the Isle of Sheppey
- Caravan and chalet owners expressed concerns about the level of Council Tax increases they have experienced over the last three years
- Residents living in Faversham indicated that they are not treated as equally as residents living on the Isle of Sheppey and in Sittingbourne
- Residents living in the rural villages expressed concern about the lack of social housing that is available
- Concerns were expressed that much of the new housing is being occupied by people who commute out of the borough to work
- Residents are concerned about the number of empty properties there are in Swale
- It was highlighted that Kent Science Park is not a good location to build housing due to the lack of infrastructure that exists there
- Residents living in Sittingbourne highlighted the need for additional infrastructure to be provided to support new housing developments
- Residents living in Kemsley and Murston feel there should be more children's play areas built
- 93% of respondents feel that new housing should be built in deprived urban communities
- Provision should be made for Gypsies and Travellers by creating small council owned sites or encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites

4.4. Affordable Housing

- Affordable housing in Swale is not within the price range of many people who need housing
- Concerns expressed about the length of time people have to remain on the housing waiting lists before accommodation becomes available
- Refurbish old and abandoned houses to meet housing demand
- There is a need for more affordable one and two bedroom properties to be built in Swale
- Develop affordable housing close to existing services
- 40% of respondents agree with the target offered for affordable housing. 50% of respondents disagreed – as this information was gathered via a direct question about whether people agreed with the target it is not possible to identify how many people feel the target should be higher or lower
- 51% of respondents do not feel that the borough offers a wide enough choice of housing

4.5. Transport

- Concerns were expressed that future proposals all seem to be linked to the development of roads and increased car usage
- Current roads, trains and buses should all be improved to reduce the need for new roads to be built
- New housing developments will be unviable unless there is the right transport infrastructure to support them
- More emphasis should be placed on sustainable transport
- Create more local jobs and encourage local shops to reduce the need for car journeys
- Make better provision for cyclists and walkers throughout the borough
- Improve and extend public transport facilities across the borough
- Concerns were expressed about the cost of rail travel
- Create a new railway station in Sittingbourne
- Concerns were expressed about the road system on the Island and the quality of the current road surfacing
- Align new development sites along the A249
- Complete the Northern Link Road

4.6. Retail

- Attract another major supermarket to the Island to provide choice and competition
- Upgrade Sheerness town centre
- Attract a landmark store to Sheerness
- Attract more tourists and holiday makers to the Island
- Ensure the market in Faversham continues to flourish
- Provide more support to the small and independent traders in Faversham

- Ensure that the high street in Faversham provides a good mix of retail and avoid over-duplication
- Help rural shops to survive
- Clean up Sittingbourne town centre
- Encourage more businesses growth in Sittingbourne town centre
- Provide more choice and variety of retail in Sittingbourne town centre
- Action the master plan for Sittingbourne town centre quickly
- Attract some landmark stores to locate in Sittingbourne town centre

4.7. Environment and Climate Change

- Residents provided mixed views on where new developments should be sited, some were in favour of developing on brownfield sites and taking remedial action against flooding whilst others felt land that is known to flood should not be built on
- Many residents (71% of respondents) were in favour of wind farms being developed locally
- 54% of respondents supported the idea of combined heat and power systems but others did not want to commit until they knew the type of system the Council would be proposing
- More eco friendly homes should be built in the borough
- All new buildings should incorporate positive energy and environmental measures
- Concerns were expressed that the cost of creating eco friendly homes may be prohibitive
- People need to be made more environmentally aware and understand the benefits of recycling
- More protection is needed of the wildlife habitats and conservation of the landscape character
- Create more opportunities for growing food locally
- Changes in food production must take account of conservation needs

4.8. Culture

- Not enough cultural activity provided in the borough
- Provide more recreational sites, community spaces and facilities for local people that are not profit driven
- Improve maintenance of children's play equipment in the borough
- Ensure there are sufficient amenities provided to meet the needs of new housing developments
- Create more facilities for young people
- Provide more facilities for skateboarding
- Provide more evening/night entertainment for teenagers in Sittingbourne
- Provide a cinema in Sittingbourne
- Provide more affordable playschemes in Faversham
- Reduce the cost of using the swimming pool in Faversham
- Allow under 16s and over 60s to swim for free

- Provide more sports facilities/opportunities for young people in Faversham
- Provide an affordable golf course that accommodates all ages
- Promote the history and heritage of the Isle of Sheppey
- Attract more tourists to the Island
- Improve the swimming pool in Sheerness
- Develop more opportunities for sailing and water sports on the Island
- Provide more opportunities for showing films on the Island or build a cinema
- Create more sustainable activities for young people and senior citizens on the Island

4.9. Geographic Areas

Isle of Sheppey

- Ensure historic buildings at the Port are maintained and protected
- Encourage the Port to develop plans to unlock its potential
- Bring back the ferry to European ports
- Create a better rail link to the Island
- Provide more regular bus services to the Eastern end of the Island
- Make significant improvements to the lower road link to Leysdown
- Open up more of the Island for tourism
- Create better facilities on the Eastern end of the Island to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of residents and for tourists
- Create activities that will attract more families to Leysdown
- Promote the Island's history
- Develop more facilities for sailing and water sports
- Ensure that good quality accommodation and well maintained sites are provided for holiday makers
- Provide more and better quality affordable housing on the Island
- Expand the prisons if the need arises

Faversham

- Consider the needs of Faversham residents more
- Encourage more small shops to open in Faversham
- Preserve the charm of the old parts of the town
- Do not over-develop Faversham
- Further development should be focussed around the Creek
- Ensure all existing buildings are fully utilised before there is further development
- Encourage diversity on the high street and prevent over-duplication
- Support local events such as the Hop Festival
- Be more proactive in advertising Faversham's historic assets
- Develop water activities at the Creek
- Lower the parking fees

- Promote and develop the Creek (architecture, historical aspects, green tourism, bird watching and walking/cycling)
- Provide mooring for visiting boats and water based community activities at the Creek
- Create more affordable places for tourists to stay
- Develop more Information Technology Industries in Faversham
- Create more affordable housing
- All new development to be sympathetic to the town's heritage

Rural Areas

- Design cold stores and packing houses to blend into the landscape
- Poly tunnels are needed to support food production
- Ensure food production does not have an adverse effect on the environment
- Find alternative uses for redundant shops and pubs
- Build more housing in rural areas to support local facilities
- Create more affordable housing to meet **local** needs
- Protect rural communities from invasive developments
- Make better use of brown field sites and build higher density housing developments on them
- Confine development in rural areas to those villages that have existing services
- Improve IT infrastructure in rural areas
- Locate low impact businesses in rural areas and confine industry to urban locations
- Sustainable transport needs to be developed to meet the needs of rural communities and businesses located in those areas
- Prevent towns from merging into surrounding villages
- Do more to protect the coastline, wetlands and Grade 1 agricultural land
- Protect all areas from unnecessary and poorly thought out developments
- Make more people aware of what the countryside offers but don't turn it into a giant theme park

Sittingbourne

As a considerable amount of consultation had already been undertaken regarding the future development of the town centre residents were asked to highlight on a map of Sittingbourne where they felt future development should be focussed. They responded by highlighting that future development should be focussed alongside the A249. In addition it was also suggested that the Paper Mill site in Kemsley and Milton Creek provides future development opportunities

5. Conclusions

It is evident from the consultation that many of the residents we have spoken to are concerned about the effect any new developments in the borough will have on current infrastructure provision. Many residents believe that an increase in the current population will result in an over demand on doctors' waiting lists and hospital provision. In addition many are convinced that there will be insufficient school places for future generations of children growing up in the borough.

Residents from across the borough expressed their concerns about the ineffectiveness of the current public transport system. It was highlighted that many communities both rural and urban are poorly served by the current public transport system with buses ceasing operation early in the evening and often not providing a service on Sundays. This results in many people having a greater reliance on car usage. However it was highlighted that the road system in the borough has difficulty coping with the demands placed on it, which many believe prohibits future development opportunities. Fears were expressed that an increase in developments locally both housing and employment sites will create a greater pressure on the road infrastructure. Many residents were keen to ensure that current employment sites are developed to capacity before new ones are developed. Similarly concerns were also expressed about the number of empty houses in the borough suggesting that these should be refurbished and brought back into use to meet the current housing demand.

Further concerns were expressed that many of the housing developments are attracting new people into the borough rather than addressing the needs of local people. It was evident that many residents are finding it difficult to get on to the property ladder and questioned what is affordable housing as they feel that much of it is beyond their price range.

The consultation exercise has highlighted the need to develop the retail centres of Sittingbourne and Sheerness as residents recognise that they currently do not meet the needs of local people. It was emphasised that the Isle of Sheppey and Faversham provide good opportunities for tourist development with suggestions indicating that more should be done to promote the history of these areas.

Other important issues that were highlighted during the consultation relate to the need for more employment opportunities to be created locally. Concerns were expressed about the lack of higher education facilities locally and the lack of graduate employment opportunities. In addition it was felt that more local employment opportunities should be created on the Isle of Sheppey to meet the needs of young people and those who are currently unemployed.

As the Issues and Options for the local development framework are developed it will be crucial to identify how the current infrastructure will cope with the increased demands placed on it. At present local people are basing their concerns on their individual experiences which may not be reflective of the bigger picture. It will be important for Officers from the Council to demonstrate the positive impact new development could bring to the borough and explain how residents concerns highlighted in this report have been addressed.

The enthusiasm and interest residents have shown demonstrates how successful this method of engagement can be. Many people took time to consider the questions posed and have provided information that can be used by the Council in helping to draw up the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy. It is evident from the response to the consultation and the comments members of the public made that they were pleased to be asked to share their knowledge and experiences of living in the Borough.

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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the members of the public who took the time to participate in the consultation process. In addition we are grateful to the Parish Councils who advertised the events on their website and encouraged local people to support the consultation events. We would also like to thank the Market Operators for allowing us to have stalls on Sittingbourne and Faversham Markets and to the organisers of the Leysdown Car Boot sale for providing us with a pitch. We are grateful to Sainsburys, Aldi and Asda in Sittingbourne for allowing us to set up our consultation stall in or near to their premises.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION

The Local Development Framework Core Strategy will set out Swale Borough Council's vision, objectives and spatial strategy for the development of the borough until 2031. On adoption it will replace the Borough Council's Local Plan. The changes to planning legislation require all Local Authorities to involve the community at an early stage in the preparation of the Local Development Framework document and to tailor the techniques to engage the appropriate parts of the community at the various stages. The Government's principles for community involvement include:

- Community involvement that is appropriate to the level of planning arrangements should be built on a clear understanding of the needs of the community and be fit for purpose
- Front loading of involvement. There should be opportunities for early community involvement and a sense of ownership of local policy decisions.
- Using methods of involvement which are relevant to the communities concerned and;
- Clearly articulated opportunities for continued involvement as part of a continuous programme, not a one-off event

Swale Borough Council appointed MAC Associates (Leicester) Limited in July 09 to design and deliver a consultation exercise that would gather the views of residents living throughout the Borough who would not normally engage in the Planning process.

MAC Associates has a proven track record of community engagement in Swale as they have previously undertaken a number of consultation exercises namely;

- The pre-master planning consultation in Queenborough and Rushenden (2005/06)
- The Strategy Delivery Framework for Sheerness (2006)
- Community Consultation exercise to support the Flying Start Lottery Application (2007)

3. METHODOLOGY

Large visual questionnaires were developed to enable consultees to be able to give some views either by answering direct questions with a small pin or by giving more detailed information on a post it note. The consultation process was facilitated at all times by Consultants from MAC Associates who were able to guide residents through the questionnaires, and provide practical help and support when necessary, for those who had a range of barriers and difficulties such as language, sensory or physical disabilities and literacy issues. The large questionnaires included local photos so that they provided a visual attraction which encouraged people to find out what was happening.

In addition a questionnaire was set up on the Council website so that residents who did not have the opportunity to access the consultation at local events and locations were able to input their views. Leaflets were given out at all the consultation events advertising the link to the website. The views inputted by members of the public to the website have been analysed and included in this report. However, this raw data has not been included in the appendices at the end of this report because it contained personal contact information from respondents which is not appropriate to include in a public document.

By using this approach to the research we have tried to ensure that people who do not normally participate in consultation exercises about planning issues had the opportunity to do so. Respondents may not be totally representative of the whole population and in making their responses will largely have given a personal view based on the knowledge and experience they have of living in the Borough. However, we have tried to ensure that views were gathered from a wide age range and had some representation from people of ethnic minority backgrounds.

4. CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

Research was undertaken to find out what community events were happening across the Borough during August. A number of consultation events were organised at locations or activities where we knew it would be easy to access members of the public. Not only does this approach increase the number of people who participate in the process but it also reduces the reliance on publicity as people become aware of the consultation while they are going about their day to day business. The programme of events was advertised in the local press and also on the Council's website.

DATE	LOCATION	TIME
1 st August	Community Event – New Road Community Centre, Minster	10a.m. – 2p.m.
2 nd August	Leysdown Car Boot Fair	7a.m. – 2p.m.
	Fun Day, Stones Garden Centre, Isle of Sheppey	3p.m. – 5p.m.

7 th August	Clock Tower, Sheerness	9a.m. - 1.30p.m.
	Sainsburys, Sittingbourne	3.00p.m. – 7.30p.m.
8 th August	Faversham Market	9.00a.m. – 4p.m.
9 th August	Charity Car Show, Abbey School Field, London Road, Faversham ME13 8RZ	10a.m. – 3p.m.
14 th August	Sittingbourne Market	9a.m. – 4p.m.
	Milton Regis High Street	5p.m. – 7p.m.
15 th August	Sittingbourne Town Centre – outside Forum Shopping Centre	9a.m. – 1p.m.
	Clock Tower, Sheerness (including Carnival Parade)	2p.m. – 7p.m.
16 th August	Bapchild Village Green	9a.m. - midday
	Rodmersham Village Green	1p.m. – 4p.m.
17 th August	Teynham Library, 131 London Road, Teynham ME9 9QJ	2p.m. – 5p.m.
22 nd August	Bredgar Farm Shop, The St, Bredgar ME9 8EX	9a.m. – 4p.m.
23 rd August	Walking the Plank - Queenborough	1p.m. – 4p.m.
28 th August	Aldi - Sittingbourne	10a.m. – 2.30p.m.
18 th September	Asda - Sittingbourne	2p.m. – 6p.m.

A total of 79.5 hours were spent in direct consultation with members of the public.

5. ATTENDANCE AT CONSULTATION EVENTS

MALE	Your age	Under 18	18-25	26-45	46-65	66+
WHITE:						
British		23	28	84	155	125
Irish					2	1
Gypsy/Roma		1		3		
Traveller of Irish Origin						
Any other White background		1	1	2	2	1
MIXED:						
White and Black Caribbean				2	4	3
White and Black African						
White and Asian						
Any other mixed background			1		1	
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH						
Indian				2	3	
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi						
Any other Asian background			1			
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH						
Caribbean					3	

African			4		
Any other Black background					
Chinese					
Other ethnic background					
I do not wish my ethnic background to be recorded				2	

FEMALE	Your age	Under 18	18-25	26-45	46-65	66+
WHITE:						
British		37	20	95	161	111
Irish					1	
Gypsy/Roma		3	2	1	1	
Traveller of Irish Origin				1	1	
Any other White background		1	1		9	1
MIXED:						
White and Black Caribbean		2		1	3	
White and Black African						
White and Asian						1
Any other mixed background						
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH						
Indian						
Pakistani						
Bangladeshi						
Any other Asian background						
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH						
Caribbean				2	3	2
African				6	3	
Any other Black background						
Chinese						
Other ethnic background						
I do not wish my ethnic background to be recorded					1	4

A total of 455 males and 474 females attended the consultation events making an overall total of 929 people who participated in the consultation exercise.



6. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

When analysing the results we have used the raw data gathered at the consultation events. Because the views are based on public knowledge and perception some of them may be factually incorrect. However, we believe it is important to adequately reflect what people have told us and not change the information provided by them in any way.

6.1. PROSPERITY

a. Context

The economy in Swale has largely grown up around the manufacturing sectors, logistics and transport. However, these sectors are likely to see further reduction in the future. Whilst business survival rates in the Borough are good there is a higher level of economic inactivity and benefit claimants compared to the Borough's competitors. Workplace earnings in Swale are relatively low compared to the South East generally, but are average for Kent.

A jobs target for the Thames Gateway has been set at 58,000 of which it is anticipated 18,000 need to be created in Swale. There are significant development opportunities in the Borough such as Sheerness Port, Neatscourt and North East Sittingbourne. Kent Science Park offers a potential growth sector for knowledge driven businesses.

Swale provides a strong business location but this is not well known. It is sited within the Thames Gateway and has good road and rail networks. It is also home to the UK's fourth largest freight port at Sheerness.

b. Future Economy

Members of the public were asked to identify what type of economy they would like to see in Swale in the future and what changes they felt would be needed to achieve this. It was evident from conversations with many members of the public that they found this a very difficult question to consider at this moment in time. Many were sceptical about the long term impact the current recession would have on the economy and at present couldn't visualise how 18,000 new jobs could be created when unemployment is continuing to grow.

This question also triggered some vociferous comments about the use of migrant labour locally and concerns about the long term unemployed.

People who attended consultation events on the **Isle of Sheppey** suggested that to create prosperity you had to address transport needs, provide housing

and improve educational attainment as well as creating employment opportunities. It was also highlighted that currently there isn't sufficient work undertaken to find out what skills are needed to fill vacant jobs on the Island resulting in graduate or graduate equivalent jobs being filled by people who don't live on Sheppey as they don't have the skills that are required. One person also suggested that there would need to be a change in attitude towards planning if the economy were to diversify.

Responses from people living in **Faversham** highlighted that there is a need for employment to be created for lower skilled workers as well as skilled workers. It was highlighted that it is very difficult to get employment in Swale if you have a degree and as a result you are forced to either work in London or elsewhere in the South East. Further comments indicated that finding part-time work for graduates was only achievable if you had contacts into local companies/organisations. Transport also posed a challenge if you live in the rural areas or on Sheppey as it was felt that you needed to have a car to get to work.

One local business person indicated that they had previously owned a business in Swale and felt that they had received good support from the Council, but now that they have moved to Canterbury they do not feel they receive the same positive level of support. It was identified that there is a need for a robust employment regeneration policy to be created for Faversham that has a qualitative emphasis and includes the development of small to medium sized office parks to be created to attract inward investment.

Responses from residents living in the **rural areas/villages** raised concern about how the target of 18,000 jobs would be achieved because the Kent Science Park have said that they will create a further 500 jobs in the next 10 years leaving a further 17,500 to be created elsewhere. A further comment suggested that the current employment sites should be put to better use by creating a higher density of employment on them.

It was suggested that it is unfair to apply urban business rates to rural shops as this practice is slowly draining the vital life out of rural communities. Residents also commented that when jobs are created local people should take priority in recruitment. Concern was expressed about the current benefits system as it was felt that it does not encourage people to seek work, a suggestion was made that people should be offered 3 jobs and if they don't accept one of them then their benefits should be cut.

Respondents who attended the consultation events in **Sittingbourne** suggested that there is a need to provide a mix of manufacturing and service trade jobs but felt that these needed to be sustainable. In addition they felt that there should be more apprenticeships created. It was also highlighted that it may be useful to open a 'birthing centre' to support new businesses. It was highlighted that local businesses need more assistance from the local Chamber of Commerce and Business Links. A suggestion was made that the

industrial/retail developments should be moved to the other side of the M2 motorway.

Once again residents took the opportunity to highlight that local jobs should be filled by local people. Concern was expressed that Morrisons had promised to create local jobs but there is a perception that most of these have been filled by Polish and Russian migrants. However, some respondents did highlight that migrant workers are prepared to work hard. It was also indicated that there is a need to reform the benefits system to encourage people back into work.

One comment indicated that Swale Borough Council is not good at communicating their plans to the public in the way that other authorities do.

A number of older residents suggested that life was better in the 1950s when there were more local shops and employment, making it easier for people to get work. They also felt that people were much friendlier then.

Some residents took the opportunity to input their views into the **online consultation**. They highlighted that Swale is divided between middle class commuters who make little use of Swale amenities and a largely unemployed, unskilled population who have little interest in improving the local economy. As a result it was identified that the economy needs to be heavily geared towards the unemployed so that their interests and commitments can be harnessed. It was felt that this would be achieved by starting at grass roots level by encouraging the development of extended schools so that centres of learning are drawing in all sectors of the family to develop their skills collectively.

Many respondents identified that there needs to be a mix of service and light industrial economy. It was felt that small and medium sized employers are needed as they will provide the bulk of employment opportunities and are able to respond more quickly and dynamically to changes in the economy. However it was also felt that Swale needs to attract a couple of large 'flagship' employers such as UBS, JP Morgan Chase, CitiCorp, Bank of America etc as they can help to build a knowledge economy and create an interest in education locally. It was identified that the improved train links to London should be used as an incentive to encourage companies to relocate to the area from the Capital.

A number of comments highlighted that the current road and rail infrastructure is a barrier to development. It was highlighted that locations are important as different areas will affect land prices. It was suggested that Eurolink and Kemsley Fields are large enough as a manufacturing, industrial and engineering base. However it was identified that there needs to be a number of sites created for large employers (providing 1000+ employees) but the current road infrastructure will not allow for this.

One comment indicated that there should be a more balanced economy where everyone living in the borough has a decent paid job and a nice area to live in. It was identified that better use should be made of the obsolete industrial areas to attract developers. Further comments suggested that maybe tax incentives should be offered or a reduction in business rates or even a 10 year business rate holiday.

It was identified that a consumer based economy should be developed where culture and industry based opportunities are created to provide jobs for local people. It was felt that this would reduce the need to travel and create a better infrastructure for Swale residents. There is a need for Sittingbourne to move away from its existing image of being purely an industrial and manufacturing town and capitalise on its heritage and recreation opportunities. However, it was felt that it also needed to provide more interesting retail and not just supermarkets which are perceived to be the Council's focus at present. In addition it was highlighted that St. George's Centre and the industrial park create a good basis for local employment. One resident suggested that a training centre needed to be developed where Government and Company sponsored apprenticeships and skills development can be encouraged through Swale Business Partnerships.

Comments indicated that the development of the high street would create more jobs, particularly if some priority was given to smaller more creative type shops rather than those that can be found in any high street.

It was highlighted that the economy will be forced to diversify as we will need to create locally things we currently import. It was felt that practical skills such as building, repairing and maintaining will be more important than the jobs in marketing and advertising. It was also predicted that we will be more reliant on local food production and it was felt that support should be given for training new farmers and other food producers. It was identified that more land will need to be provided for growing food and many more allotments will be needed.

Concerns were expressed about where new development would be sited and suggested that it should be confined to existing brown field sites. It was identified that the Kent Science Park is in the wrong location for any new development. It was felt that the road infrastructure cannot cope with the demand that would be placed on it and that it would be morally wrong to consider an extension from the M2 motorway in this area. It was suggested that future economies should be based on a green ethos and be sustainable. It was also identified that planning policy needs to adapt to enable businesses to expand and respond to changing market requirements. It was identified that to attract new IT, science and knowledge based industries to the Borough appropriate sites need to be identified and market ready premises created.

Finally, it was highlighted that climate change will mean that more people will need to work closer to their home so we need to capitalise on industries that allow them to do this. It was suggested that we need to develop a local economy that keeps money in the area and that small businesses producing local food and other products need to be encouraged and helped. A concern was also raised that in the past Swale has relied heavily on one or two major employers/industries and we need to broaden the opportunities locally to avoid this continuing.

c. Diversifying the Economy

A question was posed asking residents if they agreed that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need. 225 people responded to this question with 89% of responses agreeing that it should.

d. Creating Future Employment Opportunities

Residents were reminded that there is a need for the Borough to widen its employment base into the knowledge economy. To achieve this new employment opportunities will need to be created by either extending existing employment sites or creating new ones. The chart below highlights resident's responses based on the options that were presented to them.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Kent Science Park	108 (69%)	46 (29%)	3 (1.9%)
Existing Employment Areas	149 (97%)	4 (2.5%)	1
New sites in urban areas	98 (82%)	19 (16%)	2
Greenfield sites	29 (28%)	73 (71%)	1

During consultation events held on the Isle of Sheppey the highest number of responses was in favour of developing existing employment areas. In Faversham residents were most keen to see the development of new sites in urban areas and were more opposed to the development of green field sites. In the rural villages residents favoured developing existing employment areas but were more opposed to the development of Kent Science Park. In Sittingbourne respondents favoured developing existing employment areas, followed by Kent Science Park but were opposed to developing employment areas on green field sites.

e. New Office Developments

Research undertaken by/or on behalf of the Borough Council has indicated that new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent in Faversham. During the consultation residents were asked to indicate if they agreed with this assumption. 186 people responded to this question with 55% of responses agreeing with this assumption.

However a number of individual comments were also made by members of the public in response to this question.

A question was posed as to who was consulted in the research as it was identified that Developers will always be in favour of development because that is what they are paid to do. Businesses frequently say they need development because they presume they will always expand, but the number of failing businesses means that existing space comes back into circulation for future use. A question was raised as to whether there is a need for new office developments as often the people who are most in favour of these are the people who build them. It was also queried what the carbon cost of developing new buildings is versus the costs of either renovating or rebuilding existing sites.

Comments were made that jobs are needed in Faversham as well as Sittingbourne and Sheppey. During the consultation events in Faversham many people remarked that a lot of emphasis is placed on creating new jobs/development on the Isle of Sheppey and in Sittingbourne and the needs of Faversham residents are often overlooked. One resident questioned why all the development, particularly the poorer quality development (rubbish bits) are focussed on Sittingbourne and the nicer developments go to Faversham. It was suggested that more development should be focussed on Faversham as they have better access to the M2 than Sittingbourne does. It was identified that there is a need for industrial starter units and units for businesses to move into once they are getting established.

Concerns were expressed that the whole of the UK is being allowed to become a mass of urban sprawl with little attention being paid to the conservation areas. It was felt that more emphasis should be placed on quality of life as well as new development.

Residents living on the Isle of Sheppey felt that more offices should be developed on the Island in Sheerness and Neatscourt. Again people expressed a desire for local people to be given priority over any new jobs created.

Residents living in the rural villages indicated that they felt there is too much emphasis placed on Kent Science Park and wanted to ensure that some development took place in the remainder of the Borough, particularly in Faversham and on the Isle of Sheppey. It was suggested that if new office developments were going to be used they could be sited in Faversham. It was also highlighted that there are currently unused office blocks situated outside of Sittingbourne which are wasting land. A further suggestion was made that all new sites should be aligned along the A249 to ensure good road access is maintained.

It was highlighted that new office developments need to be sited in optimum unconstrained locations that have good access to the rail and arterial road

network. It was identified that these developments have high initial infrastructure costs and should be more achievable and sustainable if they are part of a mixed use development, where a complimentary residential development can cross subsidise the start up of office development. It was felt that this approach would simultaneously provide sustainable modern housing to attract the professional and skilled employees who will contribute to the Borough's economic regeneration. In addition it was felt that smaller units could be developed in villages close to residential areas as this would help to reduce travelling time for employees and help to maintain the village economies.

Further comments from people living in Sittingbourne indicated that at present the Science Park has empty buildings which should be utilised by either reusing or rebuilding them. It was felt that there is no need to extend this site but there is a need to utilise what is already there. One person also indicated that a new motorway entrance should be put there to facilitate greater utilisation of the existing site. Further comments suggested that brown field sites need to be developed as opposed to using green field sites.

A suggestion was made that the Council should look at how Swindon has developed as it is clean and packed with vibrant traders. It was highlighted that Swale should use this once in a lifetime opportunity to take a calculated risk before others start to compete with Swale.



PROSPERITY - KEY MESSAGES

- Residents are unsure of how the target for the creation of new jobs would be achieved
- To create prosperity in Swale you must address transport needs, provide housing and improve educational attainment as well as creating employment opportunities
- Create employment for lower skilled workers as well as skilled workers
- Attract and create more graduate employment
- Create a robust employment regeneration policy for Faversham
- Create higher density employment on existing sites
- Provide a mix of sustainable manufacturing and service industry employment
- Attract some 'flagship' employers as well as small and medium sized employers
- Provide employment for local people
- Site new office developments in locations that have good road and rail access
- Utilise the existing buildings at Kent Science Park rather than extend it



6.2. LEARNING AND SKILLS

a. Context:

Currently the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the Regional and National averages. There is a shortage of graduate labour employment opportunities and no Further Education provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

b. Access to Further Education

Residents were asked to consider how access to Further Education could be improved in the Borough.

Suggestions were made that local schools could be used both in the daytime and outside of school hours to provide adult education facilities. In addition young people should be encouraged to stay in education post 16. It was highlighted that quality graduate opportunities will not develop in the Borough unless you provide quality space to house them. A question was posed as to where a quality employer could be sited in Faversham.

It was suggested that more practical trade apprenticeships should be developed as not everyone aspires or is able to acquire academic qualifications. It was also highlighted that we need more apprenticeships to be developed in skills that we will need in the future. One comment indicated that more work experience and taster opportunities should be provided for 15 and 16 year olds. In addition it was suggested that primary level teaching should be improved and no child should leave school without being able to read and write.

It was evident from many conversations that we had with local people during the consultation events that a significant number of young people currently travel out of the Borough to attend Further Education courses. It was suggested that student's travel costs should be funded when they attend courses in Canterbury and elsewhere. In addition it was felt that if there were local training opportunities young people wouldn't have to spend so much time and money travelling to colleges outside of the Borough.

A suggestion was made that a Higher Education College should be developed on the former Paper Mill site alongside a retail village. This would also bring young people into the central area which would benefit from their disposable income.

In addition a number of comments raised concerns that the promised Resource Centre had not been developed at Kent Science Park. It was also suggested that a Further Education College or University could be developed at Kent Science Park or linked closely with this establishment. Concern was

expressed about the courses currently on offer at KSP stating that residents did not want courses in Excell, Word or Powerpoint. A suggestion was made that a Further Education College should be sited in the new town centre development. It was also highlighted that branches of local universities could be brought into the Borough. Questions were raised about why Swale Training Centre closed as it provided training in construction and service industries. In addition it was felt that existing colleges in the borough should try to create alliances with the University of Kent or Medway campuses to improve the quality of education provision in Swale and enhance the perception of the area.

It was highlighted that the College facilities at Sittingbourne and Sheppey should be improved. It was suggested that Swale should look at how the usage of Broadstairs College was maximised as it is understood to have grown into a very good campus. Comments were made that further education colleges must be built in the borough or we must expand existing services like Adult Education Centres, so that they can provide further education. We also need to increase aspirations so that young people can see a reason for gaining qualifications and skills. As well as providing basic skills these centres must also train students in the practical skills like plumbing, electrical work, horticulture, food production and other skills that are lacking in the area. It was identified that it is important to train people in skills that lead to jobs as this will result in prosperity and raised self esteem.

A suggestion was made that University or College of Further Education facilities should be developed in Faversham because it has good rail links. It was felt that people in Faversham should not have to travel to Medway or Canterbury for a university place. It was highlighted that adult education is hard to access in the borough and is very limited and as a result a dedicated centre for further education should be developed preferably in each major town to cut down the need for car travel.

Further comments indicated that more money should be spent on education on the Island. It was highlighted that there is a need for more investment to be made into the Island's schools.

One young person highlighted the lack of support they had received when they tried to seek information and help about college courses from Connexions and the Job Centre. It was suggested that incentives should be offered for the NEET (not in employment, education or training) population and also to explore the opportunities for distance learning. In addition it was highlighted that more emphasis should be targeted on raising aspirations in the Borough as it is felt that many residents do not have high expectations of themselves. A further comment was made that the cost of courses is often prohibitive even for people in employment. It was identified that a lot of people would consider further education to improve their career prospects if they could afford it.

One resident highlighted the need to raise aspirations amongst parents and families so that they can support and encourage their children

c. Improved opportunities for Training and Skills Development

Residents were asked to identify what else could be done to improve opportunities for training and skills development locally.

Respondents living on the **Isle of Sheppey** highlighted that the change in the school system on the Island is causing problems, not least the size and quality of the new builds. Concerns were raised that at Cheney School the size of the year groups had increased but there was to be no increase in the size of the building.

One resident raised concerns that her son had missed three years of schooling because the education system on the Island could not cope with children who had autism or ADHD. Concerns were expressed that the education system on the Island is very poor and due to the number of children who have special needs or suffer from ADHD there is a need to develop a 'special school' here. One resident highlighted that her child has to travel to a special school 40 miles away on a daily basis. It was also suggested that there is a lack of good teachers in Island schools as they don't want to come and work there.

A suggestion was made that more sustainable projects should be developed that encourage long term support into work. In addition relevant and vibrant courses should be developed to encourage a diverse range of skills. It was also highlighted that for people on the Island to gain better skills and increased job prospects they needed to be able to access public transport which is currently not available.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of job opportunities on the Island, especially for young people that resulted in it becoming an 'Island of unemployed people'.

Residents who attended the consultation events in **Sittingbourne** suggested that more affordable courses should be made available both for people who are in employment as well as those who are unemployed. One resident expressed concern about the lack of further education facilities in Sittingbourne as she has to go to Sheerness to attend a course. This is logistically very difficult for her as she lives in Sittingbourne and her young child attends a local school – she doesn't have a car and has difficulty fitting in with school hours. It was also acknowledged that if people were able to study in the borough they would spend money in local shops which would improve the local economy and attendance was likely to be higher because they wouldn't have as far to travel.

Further suggestions indicated that more work based training should be provided and funding for training should also be made available. It was highlighted that training should be provided in skills and subjects that would interest young people and a programme of taster sessions should be provided to help them make choices.

People living in the **rural areas** also highlighted that more Higher and Further Education sites should be provided in the Borough as they feel Canterbury is too far away. It was suggested that young people who have children should be allowed to attend college for more than 16 hours a week without losing their benefits.

Concerns were expressed that there is no 'science' provided at Kent Science Park and that it does not have any links to universities. One resident highlighted that Carillion provides skills training for the borough that is of an excellent quality.



During the consultation events in **Faversham** many residents raised concerns about the lack of Adult Education courses in the town. It was highlighted that a range of courses used to be provided which many people living on the Isle of Sheppey also travelled over to attend. Concerns were raised about the lack of retraining opportunities that are available to unemployed people who have aspirations. In addition further concerns were raised about the length of time you have to wait, if you are unemployed, to be eligible for a retraining programme. One resident also questioned what 'skills' actually are.

Residents who responded to the consultation on line highlighted the need for more apprenticeships to be created. It was suggested that the schemes

should be heavily subsidised so that businesses are keener to exploit these opportunities. Alternatively suggestions indicated that incentives could be offered to businesses who take on apprentices such as a reduction in tax or development opportunities. In addition it was highlighted that garages, solicitors and IT companies should be encouraged to offer apprenticeship training.

It was identified that research should be undertaken with local businesses to find out what skills are lacking in local applicants so that training can be developed that is more relevant to the local economy and local residents. In addition it was highlighted that there should be an increase in the number of education centres provided. It was highlighted that if the times courses run are varied then both those in work and the unemployed can access them. Suggestions were made that courses need to be better publicised and the number and depth of courses should be increased to appeal to students of different abilities. Courses need to be focused at overcoming the current skills gap and to develop the skills that will be needed for the future i.e. low carbon building methods, repair and maintenance of bikes, woodwork and other traditional skills.

In addition it was highlighted that courses should not just be targeted at people below 25, as many older people are faced with having to consider retraining. It was also highlighted that opportunities should be created for people to gain work experience locally – many employers are not interested unless you have experience to back up the qualifications you have acquired.

LEARNING AND SKILLS - KEY MESSAGES

- Provide adult education facilities at some schools in the borough
- Create practical trade apprenticeships
- Subsidise apprenticeship opportunities so employers more willing to provide them
- Provide more local training opportunities
- Develop Higher Education facilities on the old Paper Mill site and at Kent Science Park
- Develop University or Further Education facilities in Faversham
- Provide more Adult Education courses in Faversham
- Encourage local Universities to set up satellite sites in the Borough
- Improve College facilities in Sittingbourne and Sheppey
- Invest more money in education on the Island
- More emphasis to be placed on raising aspiration in the borough
- Provide better educational facilities on the Island for children with special needs
- Make courses more affordable
- Increase and improve training opportunities for the unemployed
- Undertake research to identify the skills gap locally and provide relevant training to reduce it

6.3. HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

a. Context

In Swale there is a need to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of the Kent Thames Gateway growth area. Good progress has been made in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

b. Housing

At the consultation events it was apparent that people from across the Borough felt that they had a lot to contribute to the housing debate. 31 general comments were made by people living on the **Isle of Sheppey** about the need for more homes to be built in the borough. Concerns were expressed about what residents perceive to be the impact new homes will have on existing infrastructure. Residents took the opportunity to highlight their concern about the limited hospital facilities on the Island and the distance that Islanders have to travel to get to hospital, one resident indicated that “you could be dead by the time you got there”. Suggestions were made that before new housing is developed additional infrastructure should be put in place such as Doctors’ surgeries, schools and activities.

It is apparent from some of the comments that many residents on the Island feel that new housing will bring other improvements to the area. One resident commented that the new road system around the bridge is an improvement to the area. Another suggested that the new executive homes that have been built on the Island will boost the economy especially if jobs are provided as well.

It is evident however, that some people are experiencing difficulties in finding somewhere to live. We met three people during our consultation at the Clock Tower in Sheerness who were currently homeless and experiencing difficulties in finding somewhere to live. One family we spoke to said they had found it very difficult to raise the deposit on a privately rented accommodation, they had to find a £1,600 deposit which had been difficult to achieve when they were both earning the minimum wage. It was suggested that when local people apply for housing they should be awarded additional points for being local.

Concerns were expressed about the volume of new housing that is being built on the Island. Many residents suggested that there aren’t enough facilities to support the number of houses being built. It was highlighted that a significant number of houses are being built near Eastchurch which is causing

traffic problems as the road system cannot cope with the increased volume of traffic. In addition the roads here do not have pavements making it very dangerous for local people to walk along there. Questions were raised as to why so many houses are continuing to be built on the Island when there are significant numbers of properties available to buy.

Residents on the Island also highlighted that they would like to be informed about the designs and plans for new buildings as they feel that the lack of information and miss-information leads to negativity and ultimately results in the Council receiving negative comments.

Additional concerns were expressed by people who have caravans and chalets on the Island about the increase in Council Tax over the last three years. This has resulted in many of the chalets being given up and being left to deteriorate. It was highlighted that the Chalet owners have to pay more council tax than the caravan owners.

Residents also expressed concern about the cleanliness of the streets and the condition of many roads and pavements on the Island.

During the consultation events in **Faversham** residents expressed concern that they didn't appear to be treated as equally as residents living in Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey. Strong feelings were expressed that Faversham appears to be a third choice when money is spent in the Borough and many residents feel they do not get back sufficient for the financial contributions they make. Again residents took the opportunity to highlight the need for improved infrastructure before new housing is built.

One comment indicated that no more housing should be built in Faversham. Concerns were also expressed that the cost of repairing buildings in the conservation areas is really expensive and there are no grants available to help residents with these costs.

A further concern was raised requesting that no developments are built on the local orchards as they are a valuable part of the local heritage and will take years to replace.

Concerns were expressed by residents living in the **rural villages** about the lack of social housing that is available. A number of people indicated that they had been on the housing waiting list for a significant amount of time. One couple with a young child had been on the waiting list for two years and were currently living in inappropriate accommodation sited on a very busy main road. Concerns were expressed about the housing scoring system with one person querying why they had more points when they were single than they now have as a couple with children.

One resident highlighted concerns that much of the housing that is being built is for people who do not work locally and therefore this has an impact on the

'sense of community'. Iwade was sited as an example where it was felt it just provides housing for commuters and doesn't have a community feel. Concern was also expressed about the volume of housing that has been built in Iwade, with one gentleman commenting that he had originally bought his house on the edge of a village and now he feel that he lives in the centre of a town.

Concerns were expressed about the amount of empty properties that are available in the Borough. It was felt that these should be renovated as it would help to solve the current housing shortage.

Residents also took the opportunity to identify the need for more additional infrastructure to be put in place to support new housing developments. It was highlighted that the Kent Science Park is not a good location for housing development because of the lack of infrastructure that exists on that site. One resident who lives in the Eden Village development supported the idea of a mixed development as they feel it is working well there.

Residents who attended the consultation events in **Sittingbourne** highlighted the need for additional infrastructure if new housing is to be developed. In addition they feel roads, schools, jobs etc should all be put in place before the housing is built. Concerns were expressed that there isn't sufficient water to meet the needs of all the new developments as this part of Kent is often subjected to hose pipe bans in the summer months. In addition it was felt that the road system is inadequate to meet the demand from the increased volume of traffic that new housing developments will generate. Concerns were also expressed that some of the new housing developments will be built on flood plains so properties will flood regularly.

It was highlighted that in Kemsley all the children's play areas are being lost to new housing developments, leaving them with nowhere to play. In Murston it was identified that the new developments do not incorporate play areas for the children, even though they have been planned none have been built. It was also highlighted that the entrance to the new housing estate off Oak Road in Murston is very dangerous. One resident questioned where all the parks and open spaces are, as they feel that you now need a car to drive to those that are left. A further comment suggested that the area is becoming over populated. One resident suggested that we need to cap the number of people coming into the area rather than building houses to accommodate them. A further suggestion indicated that small housing developments should be built in each village, but not of a sufficient size as to lose the 'village feel', that way the impact of large developments would be reduced. Other comments indicated that no new housing should be built in rural areas.

When residents across the Borough were asked where the remaining 1,200 houses should be built they responded as follows:

	Yes	No	Don't know
In the deprived urban communities	228 (93%)	16 (6.5%)	1
On green field sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable housing with access to existing services	27 (19%)	114 (81%)	
A mixture of both	113 (92%)	8 (6.5%)	2 (1.5%)

On the **Isle of Sheppey** residents favoured building the remaining homes in the deprived urban communities and were opposed to building on green field sites on the edge of town. In **Faversham** residents felt similarly to those living on the Island. In the **rural villages** residents again favoured building homes in deprived urban communities but this was closely followed by a mixture of both. Residents who attended the consultation events in **Sittingbourne** felt similarly to those living in the rural villages.

c. Gypsies and Travellers

Swale has the second highest need for Gypsy and Traveller site provision in the Region. To meet this need the Borough Council will be looking to identify suitable sites. Residents were asked if they knew of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose.

A member of the public highlighted that Gypsies and Travellers are a very difficult sector of society to satisfy and it was suggested that it would be more beneficial if they were to inform the Council of where they wished to be sited rather than the other way around.

In addition another member of the public suggested that Gypsies and Travellers have an obligation to accept that their nomadic way of life can no longer be accommodated regardless of the needs of the greater majority of settled permanently employed residents who will be expected to fund, through local and national taxation, their chosen lifestyle. It was suggested that we should only encourage Gypsies and Travellers into the district if they are prepared to 'pay their way'. It was highlighted that small areas should be created for those Gypsies and Travellers who still lead a nomadic lifestyle so that they can stop there for the period of time they are in the District, but that these sites should be monitored regularly and that they are only allowed to stay there for an agreed time limit.

It was acknowledged that there will always be an anti site movement wherever you decide to build a site. It was suggested that Swale needs to demonstrate to the wider public that Gypsies and Travellers will pay rent and service charges for these sites. In addition it is felt that stringent controls much be placed on them to keep sites clean and safe so that they do not become a dumping area. It was felt that when this is established the public

may be prepared to accept further proposals for site provision. The respondent identified that it isn't an 'anti traveller movement' as such more a concern about the mess that they leave and the perceived lack of contribution they make towards services.

One comment questioned why the needs of Gypsies and Travellers should be considered when we are unable to meet the needs of the disabled and hard working residents. It was suggested that 'real' Gypsies did not cause a problem but current travellers residing in the Borough have caused many problems and it was felt that they were their own worst enemy. A comment suggested that the law should be vigorously applied and that all illegal sites should be closed and the Gypsies and Travellers moved out of the Borough. A further comment expressed concern about the amount of rubbish that is currently left behind when groups of Gypsies and Travellers move/are moved on. However a positive comment was made indicating that the Romanies are respectable and respectful people.

A number of comments indicated that the provision of small sites would be acceptable to the housed community providing they met the planning regulations. It was suggested that sites could be provided on the Isle of Sheppey and preferably developed on brown field sites.

Further comments indicated that Gypsies and Travellers should be required to pay Council tax. Many people appear to be unaware that when Gypsies and Travellers live on sites they are required to pay rent and Council tax.

Six comments questioned whether any compensation would be provided to the landowner for developing sites on their land, or if sites were developed close to their house or land. It was recognised that there is not much available land to buy but a suggestion was made that maybe they could rent unused land from the Council.

It was also highlighted that sites need to be developed to an acceptable standard and close to amenities, and that the residents who live and work on the site should respect it. It was acknowledged that everyone needs a place to live but they shouldn't set up a home and business on land without appropriate permissions. In addition it was recognised that they need to have play areas for the children to play. A further comment highlighted the need to refurbish existing sites or develop new sites to replace them.

Some of the Gypsies and Travellers who responded to the consultation highlighted that they had settled so that their children could attend school and get a good education and be part of the wider community. Concerns were also expressed that on one of the sites there used to be a mobile building provided where the community could meet but this has now been taken away.

Residents were asked to consider a number of options to ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The chart below highlights their responses:

	Yes	No	Don't know
By creating small Council owned sites	89 (83%)	18 (17%)	
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites	66 (70%)	25 (26.5%)	3 (3%)
By using developer contributions for affordable housing	28 (56%)	18 (36%)	4 (8%)

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES - KEY MESSAGES

- Concerns were expressed about the impact new homes will have on the existing infrastructure on the Isle of Sheppey
- Caravan and chalet owners expressed concerns about the level of Council Tax increases they have experienced over the last three years
- Residents living in Faversham indicated that they are not treated as equally as residents living on the Isle of Sheppey and in Sittingbourne
- Residents living in the rural villages expressed concern about the lack of social housing that is available
- Concerns were expressed that much of the new housing is being occupied by people who commute out of the borough to work
- Residents are concerned about the number of empty properties there are in Swale
- It was highlighted that Kent Science Park is not a good location to build housing due to the lack of infrastructure that exists there
- Residents living in Sittingbourne highlighted the need for additional infrastructure to be provided to support new housing developments
- Residents living in Kemsley and Murston feel there should be more children's play areas built
- 93% of respondents feel that new housing should be built in deprived urban communities
- Provision should be made for Gypsies and Travellers by creating small council owned sites or encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites

6.4. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

a. Context

The regional affordable housing target is 35% and 30% in the sub-regions. Local evidence suggests that there needs to be increases at Sittingbourne and Faversham. Swale recognises that the amount of affordable housing they need to provide exceeds the housing quota that has to be built. The Borough recognises that they need to set ambitious but achievable targets for the amount of affordable new homes that are built. They believe 35% is an achievable target.

b. General Comments:

Through the consultation process residents took the opportunity to highlight concerns they have about current 'affordable' housing pointing out that it is not within the price range of the vast majority of people who need housing. One resident highlighted that there is no 'affordable' housing in Swale. It was highlighted that affordable housing should be able to be afforded by those who earn an average wage and it was felt that this currently isn't the case in Swale where property prices are high.

A number of comments related to the current shortage of social and affordable housing in Swale. One resident suggested that local people should take priority for these types of housing, especially those who have been on the housing waiting list rather than it going to Londoners who are moving into the area. In addition it was also suggested that the housing waiting lists should be reviewed and some priority should be given to people who are on the waiting list who are forced to rent privately while they wait to be accommodated in social housing. A further comment indicated that more points should be awarded for those people who are on the waiting lists who are working and won't need to have their rents paid through the benefits system. It was also suggested that more Council housing is needed for young people as private accommodation is expensive and generally of a poorer quality and they are unlikely to be able to afford to buy a property locally.

A further comment was made suggesting that the priorities for social housing are unfair and that the waiting system is wrong. A suggestion was made that old and abandoned houses should be refurbished then there wouldn't be such a need to build new housing. It was also highlighted that Swale Housing should bring their existing housing stock up to a decent standard before developing more.

Concerns were expressed about the volume of 3 and 4 bedroom properties that are being built, it was highlighted that there is a need for more affordable 1 and 2 bedroom properties to be built. In addition it was suggested that affordable housing should be developed in areas where they have services nearby, for example on brown field sites.

One comment raised concerns that developers have to incorporate social housing into their developments which isn't always acceptable to those who are looking to buy properties on these sites.

A number of respondents took the opportunity to highlight their particular housing problems. One resident indicated that they have been on the housing waiting list for 15 years and have been forced to rent in the private sector while they wait for a property to be allocated to them. One young woman explained that she currently has her mother, disabled brother, sister and their dog living with her and her child in a two bedroom house. Her brother has learning difficulties and has violent outbursts. At 23 she has to share a bed with her Mum and her brother sleeps on the floor and her sister shares a room with her one year old son. She questioned why there is no help available for people in her situation. Another person explained that they are currently working at the Steel Works on the Island but have had their working hours reduced which means they cannot afford to save for a deposit on private rented accommodation and have spent the last three years sleeping on friends' sofas.

Once again respondents, particularly those living on the Isle of Sheppey took the opportunity to raise concerns about the strain new housing developments would place on the existing infrastructure. It was highlighted that the Island in particular needs a better hospital, more doctors' surgeries, more shops, better roads and an improved public transport system before any more housing is built. In addition it was also suggested that the commercial aspect should be developed before the housing is built so that there are jobs available when people move in.



Concern was also raised about the percentage of net income that is now required to pay for rent and council tax – one resident remembers when people living in affordable/social housing had to pay 27% of net income to cover these bills and questioned why this has now risen to 74%.

It was highlighted that some of the housing developments that are being built on the Island appear to have come to a standstill. It was questioned whether these developments have run into financial difficulties due to the recession.

c. Targets for Affordable Housing

Residents were asked if they agreed with the target of 35% for affordable homes. A total of 301 people responded to this question with 46% agreeing with the target and 50% disagreeing. The remainder were undecided.

On the Isle of Sheppey some residents who disagreed with the target suggested that it should be increased to between 50% and 60%, whilst other residents suggested it should be lowered to 25%. In Faversham residents were more cautious and those that disagreed suggested that a 15% maximum would be better because the existing infrastructure would not be able to cope with more. In Sittingbourne a number of residents who disagreed with the target suggested by the Council felt that an increase to between 50%-70% would be a more realistic target, however one resident suggested that a 95% target was needed because houses are so expensive locally and wages are low. A further suggestion was made that 40% would be more realistic.

In the rural areas residents who disagreed with the target suggested that 50% would be more realistic but recognised that this wouldn't be profitable for the developer. It was highlighted that 35% is too low and does not relate to the social demographic nature of Swale, where it is recognised that many people have low skills resulting in poor employment opportunities. However one resident did feel that 20% would be a more realistic target.

Residents who responded on line provided a varying degree of suggestions ranging from 10% through to 60%.

d. Choice of Housing

Residents were asked if they felt the Borough provided a wide enough choice of housing. A total of 273 residents responded to this question with 31% of respondents believing it did. A further 51% of respondents felt that it didn't and suggested that there was a need to build more council housing as it was felt that only people with money could afford to rent in the private sector due to the deposits being so high. In addition concerns were raised that the Council was not working for local people because it was selling off Council houses when people needed them. It was also questioned whether the waiting lists were favoured towards non-working residents. It was highlighted

that the loss of Council owned housing is what created the initial property boom which has led to most people being unable to afford their first home. It was suggested that the Council should liaise with KCC to surcharge owners of more than one property that isn't rented out. In addition it was suggested that empty properties should be compulsorily purchased if the owner is unwilling to rent them. It was felt that these measures would act as an incentive to get empty properties back into circulation which in turn will bring prices down to a more affordable level. A further suggestion was made that the council could look into becoming a mortgage lender to help those unable to get mortgages because of the restrictive lending criteria of the main banks.

Again, the need for more affordable housing that is really affordable was highlighted here. Suggestions indicated that more affordable housing should be provided in rural areas particularly for people who are in work. This was also highlighted as a need in Faversham.

Other suggestions include:

- Affordable housing for young men
- Housing that has been adapted to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- Smaller properties (1 and 2 bedroom)
- Create social housing estates that are separate to private developments
- Affordable homes for young people
- Housing for families and older people
- More opportunities for first time buyers to get on the property ladder
- Put infrastructure into new estates first rather than waiting until all the housing has been built
- Choice of garden size
- More social housing especially bungalows
- More support for single people
- Provide suitable housing for local people to stay within their local support networks
- Create more social housing for one parent families
- Provide help with deposits on rented accommodation

One comment indicated that Swale currently has an excellent variety of housing.

Concern was expressed that planning requirements are not always enforced on new developments. An example was sited in Bapchurch when a barn was converted and there was a requirement that the frontage had to be landscaped so that no farm machinery was visible. This has not been enforced and it was felt that this leads local people not to trust the Parish and Borough Councils.

It was highlighted that sometimes it is the mix of people who live in a development that cause the issues in an area. Concerns were expressed that the latest housing developments have been too densely populated and have not had supporting amenities. It was suggested that some high end housing should be created to attract people to live in the Borough who have more disposable income.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING – KEY MESSAGES

- Affordable housing in Swale is not within the price range of many people who need housing
- Concerns expressed about the length of time people have to remain on the housing waiting lists before accommodation becomes available
- Refurbish old and abandoned houses to meet housing demand
- There is a need for more affordable one and two bedroom properties to be built in Swale
- Develop affordable housing close to existing services
- 40% of respondents agree with the target offered for affordable housing. 50% of respondents disagreed – as this was information was gathered via a direct question about whether people agreed with the target it is not possible to identify how many people feel the target should be higher or lower
- 51% of respondents do not feel that the borough offers a wide enough choice of housing

6.5. TRANSPORT

a. Context

With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints there will be a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use. There are currently high levels of road and fuel use in the Borough. In addition the semi rural character of the Borough has resulted in the use of public transport being below the UK and County average. The 2001 census reveals that there are 22% of households in the Borough who have no access to a car which is higher than the average for the region as a whole.

The congestion along the A2 corridor is impacting upon the environmental quality of the villages situated nearby. A Northern Relief road is proposed but this has a missing link to the A2. Junction 5 of the M2 has a poor safety record and is ill equipped to cope with the capacity it has to deal with. It is felt that this is the single greatest transport constraint in the Borough causing additional traffic stress at junctions 6 and 7 of the M2. There are local aspirations for a new A2/M2 link to be developed but at present there is no funding available or regional support for this.

There is an un-developed transport network on the Isle of Sheppey and poor road conditions to the Eastern end of the Island increases isolation for the communities who live here. In addition there are poor facilities for cyclists in the Borough and the quality of the pedestrian environment in certain areas of the Borough is also poor.

b. Future Transport Priorities

Residents were asked to identify what they felt the priorities for transport should be for the Borough in the future. A total of 184 individual comments were received in response to this question.

Concern was expressed that future proposals all seem to be linked to the development of roads and increased car usage. It was recognised that the motorway system locally doesn't work and it was suggested that a circular tram system should be developed as this would be more sustainable and reduce dependence on cars. It was suggested that the current roads, trains and buses all needed to be improved then there wouldn't be such a need to build more roads.

Concerns were expressed that new housing developments would be unviable unless we have the right transport infrastructure to support them. It was also

highlighted that if you encourage local shops then you minimise the traffic journeys into the towns.

It was identified that more emphasis should be placed on sustainable transport. It was felt that more school 'walking buses' should be developed where possible and the trains must be less expensive to use. It was also highlighted that the bus routes for the rural areas must be increased and bus fares reduced. In addition there should be better co-ordination between the train and bus timetables and that buses should run later into the evening. It was also recognised that if there is an expansive and cheaper public transport system there is a better likelihood of people using them.

One resident identified that living in a village is good except that the poor public transport links means that you need a car to survive. Concern was expressed that when villagers become too old to drive or can't afford to run a car they become very isolated.

It was suggested that if more local jobs are created this will reduce the need to commute to work. It was also highlighted that more provision for cyclists should be made throughout the borough. A suggestion was made that car parking should be developed near circular rural walks as most footpaths are inaccessible to people living in towns.

It was suggested that more should be done to get people to think 'local' by using local facilities such as health, education, shops etc. It was felt that the Council should be more proactive in ensuring that residents do not have the need to travel out of the borough for shopping and work and encourage people to take far more journeys by bike or on foot where that is possible.

d. Buses

Concerns were expressed about the bus services throughout the Borough particularly in the rural areas. On the Isle of Sheppey residents expressed concerns about the poor bus services across the Island. Many felt that the buses are expensive and there are poor linkages to and from the Eastern end of the Island. It was also highlighted that there are poor bus connections from Minster to other parts of the Island, particularly Sheerness. In addition the bus stops are situated on main roads and do not connect with some of the housing estates meaning that the elderly and disabled have to walk a long way to get to the bus stop. Bus services across the Island do not run beyond six o'clock in the evening which means that many people cannot use them to get home from work or access leisure facilities in the evenings, and there are limited or no services at weekends and bank holidays. It was highlighted that at present the Steel Works in Sheerness are making people redundant and without a car they would not be able to access employment off the Island. Many Islanders who don't have access to a car find it very difficult to get to hospital appointments. In addition because the buses do not run in the evenings residents are unable to visit family and friends in hospital in the

evenings. A query was raised about the free bus that used to run on market days.

It was highlighted that due to poor public transport provision on the Island taxis do very well as this is the only choice many people have, particularly in the evenings and at weekends.

At the time the consultation was taking place a campaign had been launched to save the post bus that serves some of the rural villages. In Rodmersham residents raised concerns that they have three buses a day at 10a.m., midday and 2p.m. and that the post bus provides a service in the morning and evening. If this service is lost it will mean that people living in this area, who do not have access to a car will not be able to get to and from work. Concerns were also expressed that the 61 buses that run along the valley can't get to Rodmersham.

It was highlighted that if the villages are to survive better bus services must be provided otherwise it will force everyone to use a car so increased development will undoubtedly mean increased car usage.

Residents living in Kemsley expressed concerns that their bus service stops at 6.30p.m. This has been attributed to the vandalism that has been caused to buses travelling this route. As a result residents who need to get to and from the area beyond this time are subjected to long walks along dark roads.

Concerns were expressed that on many routes there is no direct route into Sittingbourne and in some areas it is easier to travel by bus to Maidstone which means that many people chose to do their shopping outside of the Borough.

It was highlighted that there is a need for a 'hopper bus' which will provide vital connections for some of the housing estates, and that there is a need for a community transport service to be developed both in the urban and rural areas. It was suggested that this scheme could be run by trained volunteers.

Residents living in Faversham highlighted that this town is not a 'backwater village' and deserves a more regular and frequent bus service. It was highlighted that an improved service is needed on Sundays as many people have to travel to work by public transport at weekends.

It was also highlighted that bus links to South Kent should be improved to link into the new developments that are happening in Ashford and the surrounding areas.

Many concerns were expressed about the older people's bus passes. Some residents were worried that these passes are means tested and others were raising concerns because they had heard that these passes were to be phased out.

Residents with mobility problems highlighted that they often can't use local buses as they cannot get on and off them. This is a particular problem for people living on the Eastern end of the Isle of Sheppey as no kneeling buses are available on this route. It was highlighted that people with mobility problems and many elderly people are totally dependent on public transport and without an adequate service they become isolated and often unable to get to essential services such as GP surgeries and hospitals.

It was also highlighted that there is a need for improved bus shelters and that seats are needed in them because you often have to wait so long for a bus. Concern was expressed that the local communication centre (the train station) is cut off from the town centre in Sittingbourne.

Suggestions were made that improved bus services are needed for local events such as the Hop Festival and at weekends and bank holidays to connect to local tourist attractions.



e. Trains

Concerns were expressed about the cost of rail travel with many respondents identifying that it is too expensive both during the high peak times and the off peak times. It was felt that if the cost of travelling by train was cheaper more people would use them. It was also highlighted that children and pensioners should be allowed to travel free. In addition a number of respondents felt that the various tariffs are confusing and should be made easier to understand.

A question was posed as to whether the new high speed train will create more trains or just more expensive ones. It was also highlighted that the introduction of a two tier 'high speed' ticket system was a big mistake as it was felt to be unfair and the Council are urged to exercise what influence

they may have to rectify this. Additional concerns highlighted that the introduction of the new high speed trains has meant a reduction in local trains. Residents living in Faversham were particularly concerned about this. It was also highlighted that many residents living in Kent who travel into London to work want to go to Victoria and Cannon Street and not to St. Pancras.

It was suggested that there is a need for a new railway station in Sittingbourne and that 'proper' lifts should be installed in the existing one. One resident highlighted that the replacement disabled access to Sittingbourne Railway Station is totally unworkable. It was also highlighted that all railway stations in the Borough needed upgrading. In Sheerness concern was expressed about the difficulties of getting across the footbridge with a pushchair – it was highlighted that parents and carers cannot use the disabled ramp and no help is provided at the station. A suggestion was made that a railway stop should be created in Milton Regis in the vicinity of the pedestrian bridge just north of the triangular rail junction.

Concerns were highlighted that the transport system as a whole in Sittingbourne is very poor and trains finish running too early. It was felt that the public transport system should be relevant and accommodating to people's needs. In addition residents were also keen to ensure there is a proper public transport system on the Isle of Sheppey that accommodates current needs. It was suggested that transport police should travel on the Sheerness trains.

One comment highlighted the need to have a more regular train service in Teynham and a further comment raised concerns that when you travel to Canterbury by train you have to change in Faversham. It was highlighted that there should be a new train line installed between Faversham and Ashford.

In addition many residents wanted to see a greater choice of train services with trains running more frequently, some connecting all local stations while others provided faster or non stop routes.

A suggestion was made that the tram line between Queenborough and Sheerness should be re-opened as the track is already in place. The person who suggested this is aware of the tram system that exists in Croydon.

f. Roads, cars and parking

Concerns were expressed about the road system on the Isle of Sheppey. Particular concerns were raised about the lower road link to Leysdown and its inability to cope with the increased traffic that is being generated by the new housing developments in this area. It was highlighted that the road structure on the Eastern end of the Island is totally inadequate. Further concerns were raised about the quality of the road surfacing on many roads on the Island,

particularly around some of the housing estates. It was also queried why there are so many unadopted roads on the Island and why the Council doesn't do something about them, particularly as residents living on or near these roads pay the same levels of Council tax as those serviced by adopted roads.

It is felt that a more imaginative approach is needed to planning. It was suggested that all new sites should be aligned along the A249. In addition it was highlighted that the Kent Science Park is already in place and should be used to full advantage and if necessary a new motorway entrance should be developed there. However many residents living in nearby villages have highlighted their opposition to this idea. It was also highlighted that the Northern Link Road needs to be completed to alleviate some of the current traffic problems. It was suggested that sufficient road structures should be created throughout the Borough to support new housing developments, but especially on the Isle of Sheppey.

Concerns were highlighted about speeding traffic in Milton Regis and Sittingbourne. In Milton Regis residents expressed concern about traffic speeding along the high street and also the parking 'anarchy' that exists there – it was highlighted that people show a lack of regard for road markings when parking and there is an absence of policing to deter these problems.

Speeding traffic was highlighted as an issue for residents living in Southsea Avenue in Minster where this road is used as a short cut. Concerns were expressed that residents have nearly been hit by speeding cars on a number of occasions. Concerns were also raised about the speed cars travel along Marine Parade in Sheerness.

It was highlighted that unless you have a car it is hard to get to work. However, it was suggested that people don't use public transport because it is cheaper and more convenient to travel by car. Parking problems were highlighted in Teynham where residents expressed concern about the lack of parking spaces for 'shoppers' which results in people parking on the pavements along a very fast moving road. Concerns were also raised about people who park dangerously near the Village Hall in Leysdown.

It was highlighted that the road structure around and into Sittingbourne needs to be improved. Residents are concerned that the new masterplan for Sittingbourne doesn't take account of the need for parking, especially for people with disabilities. It was highlighted that the closing of St. Michael's Road will pose a real problem for residents and businesses. However one comment indicated that St. Michael's Road shouldn't have been built as it is a real disaster.

The cost of car parking was highlighted with many people feeling that it is too high. It was suggested that parking costs should be reduced and it should be made free outside of the town centre to reduce the volume of cars coming

into Sittingbourne. The lack of parking outside schools was also highlighted, with residents acknowledging that the lack of public transport results in more children being taken to school by car. Poor policing of parking was highlighted, concerns were expressed that 'disabled' parking bays are not adequately enforced and that many supermarkets do not police the usage of parent and toddler and disabled parking spaces. It was also suggested that parking charges in Faversham should be reduced as the current rates are too high and are driving away the tourists. One respondent highlighted that residents only parking schemes are unfair and queried why people should be charged to park outside their homes.

g. Pedestrians and Cyclists:

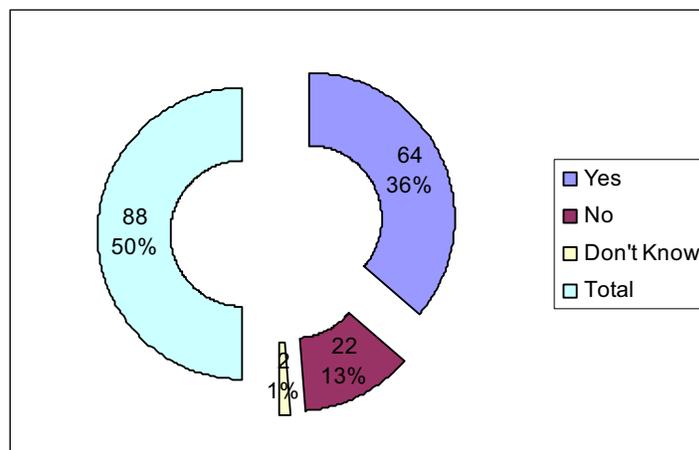
It was highlighted that many footpaths have been lost in road widening schemes and had previously been used for walking and cycling into Sittingbourne as the roads were too dangerous to walk and cycle on. This has now forced people to catch a bus or use their car.

Concern was expressed that there is only one pedestrian crossing in Teynham on the London Road. It was highlighted that this is a very busy road and people need to cross it to access the local businesses.

A further concern was raised about the lack of a pedestrian crossing to access Homebase in Sittingbourne. It was highlighted that this area should be made more accessible to pedestrians who walk from the town centre.

It was suggested that footpaths should be kept clear for walkers. A number of comments also highlighted the need to make the Borough more 'cycle friendly'. It was felt that if cycle paths were installed this would encourage more people to use their bikes.

Residents were asked if they would be prepared to accept more growth in the Borough if that meant that infrastructure needs could then be met that otherwise could not be brought forward. The chart below highlights their responses:

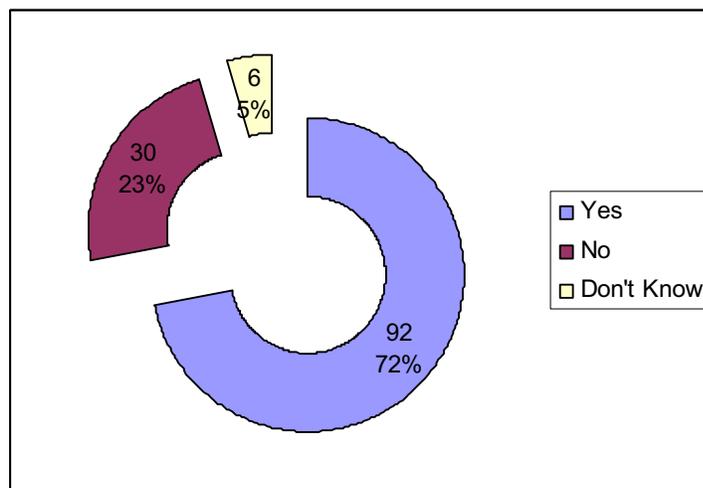


It was highlighted that the question was disingenuous because a decent infrastructure is necessary before large scale housing and economic development can take place. It was queried why residents should accept increased growth in order to attract investment in infrastructure. It was highlighted that this should only be on the basis that existing vacant facilities are fully and effectively utilised before new development is even considered. A number of comments suggested that they wouldn't trust developers to provide the infrastructure as this had been promised in the past but wasn't forthcoming.

One respondent identified that they would not support further development of transport by road as they believed this would be short sighted and would not benefit the community in future years.

h. Differing restrictions on new developments in rural areas

A further question was posed to residents about whether the Council should apply different parking restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage. The chart below details resident's responses.



A concern was raised that if you apply different restrictions in rural areas it will give transport providers an excuse not to provide adequate public transport systems.

TRANSPORT - KEY MESSAGES

- Concerns were expressed that future proposals all seem to be linked to the development of roads and increased car usage
- Current roads, trains and buses should all be improved to reduce the need for new roads to be built
- New housing developments will be unviable unless there is the right transport infrastructure to support them
- More emphasis should be placed on sustainable transport
- Create more local jobs and encourage local shops to reduce the need for car journeys
- Make better provision for cyclists and walkers throughout the borough
- Improve and extend public transport facilities across the borough
- Concerns were expressed about the cost of rail travel
- Create a new railway station in Sittingbourne
- Concerns were expressed about the road system on the Island and the quality of the current road surfacing
- Align new development sites along the A249
- Complete the Northern Link Road



6.6. RETAIL

a. Context

Sittingbourne is recognised as the retail heart of the Borough but like many towns is struggling to survive. There is a large leakage of retail spend as residents shop elsewhere in Kent leading to further decline in the town centre. A master planning exercise has been undertaken in Sittingbourne and it is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted this year to redevelop the Town Centre. Other retail centres are provided in Sheerness and Faversham.

b. Isle of Sheppey

Residents were asked to identify how frequently they used their local shops. Of the 90 responses to this question 88 people identified that they used their local shops frequently.

When asked what they liked about their local shops residents responded by saying that they found the staff helpful and friendly and that over time you got to know them. In addition they feel that the local shops are part of the community and the area's history. Because they are local it was also felt that they are better used by the older age group. However they did identify that access to shops was difficult on the Island because of the lack of choice provided in Sheerness. They indicated that they would like to see bigger shops selling a greater range of items. Residents also identified that they would like to see another supermarket such as Sainsburys or Morrisons move on to the Island.

The chart below details how regularly respondents use their local shops:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	22 (24%)	69 (75%)		1 (1%)
Supermarket	24 (25%)	70 (75%)		
Post Office	1(1.2%)	77(97.5%)	1(1.2%)	
Bakers	1 (2%)	45 (90%)	1 (2%)	3 (6%)
Butchers	1 (2%)	36 (88%)	2 (5%)	2 (5%)
Greengrocers	2 (5%)	35 (95%)		
Newsagent	5 (7%)	66 (92%)		1 (1%)
Farmer's Market	1 (14%)	4 (57%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)
Farm Shops	2 (4%)	46 (94%)		1 (2%)
Other Hairdressers Corner shop				

When residents were asked what more the Council should be doing to support the local economies they highlighted that in Sheerness they needed a

landmark shop such as Primark, Argos or Wilkinsons which would then attract other stores to come to the area. Concern was expressed that some shops are closing due to the increase in Business Rates. It was suggested that rates should be reduced to help the local shops to survive. In addition it was highlighted that Sheerness town centre needs upgrading and should be pedestrianised. Many concerns were expressed about Tesco's with some residents blaming them for the demise of Sheerness Town Centre. Some residents feel that Tesco's is very expensive so they chose to shop off the Island where they feel the supermarkets provide better value for money. A number of comments identified that there is a need for another named supermarket to come on to the Island so that Tesco's is provided with some competition.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of choice that Sheerness town centre provides with many residents highlighting that they travel off the Island to places such as Bluewater, Maidstone and Chatham as they provide a greater choice of shops.

One comment suggested that a Farmers Market in Sheerness may revitalise the town centre. It was highlighted that Sheerness needs to be improved so that it can attract people with a disposable income to spend money there. In addition it was felt that the Island needed to attract more tourists and holiday makers who could contribute to the local economy. Positive comments were also made that since the running of the market had been handed over to a co-operative the rents had reduced and the market had increased in size. Now the challenge is to attract a greater footfall of people to ensure it survives.

Residents living on the eastern end of the Island raised concerns about the lack of shops on that side of the Island. However it was acknowledged that the Sunday car boot fairs in Leysdown do help to fill the gap as they provide access to a butchers van, vegetable stalls and cheap and affordable commodities. It was also highlighted that the car boot sale provides a useful outlet for local producers and also employs local people. In addition the boot fair draws people from on and off the Island and certainly in the summer months many of them stay in Leysdown to enjoy the beaches and spend money in the cafes and pubs there.

Concerns were also raised about the lack of hospital facilities on the Island and the distance people have to travel to local hospitals.

In addition many residents suggested more should be made of the Island's history and tourism potential particularly the beaches, heritage and wildlife.

When asked if residents felt there was anything that was overprovided in their shopping areas they responded by saying there are too many bookmakers.

c. Faversham

It was evident from conversations with residents during the consultation events held in Faversham that many feel a strong affinity to the town. 90 respondents highlighted that they use their local shops frequently. One of the aspects that many people like about the town is the range of small independent traders it provides, making it different to other local towns. In addition it also offers a great variety of charity shops with one resident highlighting that the Pilgrims Hospice is their favourite. It was highlighted that the market has improved greatly over the last 6 years and has become a vibrant asset to the town which should be encouraged to continue to flourish.

A further comment indicated that retailers should be encouraged to adapt to changing needs and provide more for the growing number of tourists who visit the town.

The chart below details how regularly residents use their local shops:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	2 (3.5%)	50 (86%)	5 (8.5%)	1 (1.7%)
Supermarket	6 (7%)	76 (87%)	3 (3.5%)	2 (2%)
Post Office	2 (3.7%)	48 (88%)	4 (7.4%)	
Bakers	6 (17%)	25 (71%)	4 (11.4%)	
Butchers	3 (6.3%)	40 (85%)	4 (8.5%)	
Greengrocers	5 (14.7%)	26 (76%)	2 (5.8%)	1 (2.9%)
Newsagent	7 (8.6%)	72 (88%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
Farmers Market		8 (72%)	2 (18%)	1(9%)
Farm Shops	3 (7.5%)	34(85%)	3 (7.5%)	
Other (3)				

When residents were asked to identify what Swale Borough Council should be doing to support the local economies they indicated that the rates and rents should be reduced for the independent small traders and capped at sensible levels. It was suggested that there should be a tiered business rate system operated throughout the UK similar to the one that is operated in France. In addition it was highlighted that landlords in Faversham should not expect shopkeepers to have full-repairing leases as the buildings are largely medieval.

It is evident that residents feel that one of the unique selling points for Faversham is the range of independent shops that can be found there and suggested that these could continue to thrive providing they didn't have too many chain stores to compete against. However, some comments indicated that the town could benefit from some named stores such as Primark. In addition it was felt that emphasis should be placed on developing 'basic retail' such as fruit and vegetable shops, book shops etc and that there was a restriction put on the number of charity shops that could be opened in the main shopping area. One resident highlighted the need to create a better mix

of shops in Faversham. In addition it was suggested that the farmers market should be encouraged and more clothing and shoe shops should be encouraged to open in the town. Concern was expressed about the need to keep the Post Office open.

Some residents also suggested that Tescos should be removed from Faversham and that the Council should discourage multi-national outlets so that local businesses had a chance to survive. However it was also acknowledged that encouraging Morrisons into the town was a positive move as it would provide some competition to Tescos.

It was highlighted that whilst some of the large stores may provide some employment they have no interest in Faversham other than to take money out of it, so more emphasis should be placed on developing small local businesses that have a vested interest in the town.

Residents highlighted that more thought should be given when granting planning permission to ensure there is a good retail and leisure mix on offer as they feel that too many eateries are being established locally, once again they highlighted how this is managed in France and feel that Swale could learn some lessons from this. Further concerns were expressed that the supermarkets are ruining small businesses and they also create a lot of waste and environmental problems. In addition it was questioned whether Faversham needed to have two supermarkets.

d. Rural Areas

When residents living in the rural areas were asked if they used their local shops 22 of them highlighted that they used them frequently, 18 commented that they used them sometimes and 3 said they hardly ever used them. However it was highlighted that it is difficult to use local shops when you live in the rural parts of the Borough as many of them have closed. One comment indicated that to get the items that are needed you have to use your car.

Residents highlighted that they like what local shops they still have because they have friendly and helpful staff and you get a personal service. In addition local shops reduce your need to travel and enable you to buy local produce, however it was noted that if people don't use their local shops they will close. One resident commented that the Butchers shop in Doddington is fantastic. Another highlighted that in Borden they don't have any local shops

The chart below highlights which shops people living in the rural areas use the most:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	3 (33%)	5 (55%)		1 (11%)
Supermarket	5 (35%)	7 (50%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
Post Office	1 (8%)	5 (41%)	5 (41%)	1 (8%)
Bakers		1 (25%)	2 (50%)	1 (25%)
Butchers		3 (50%)	2 (33%)	1 (16%)
Greengrocers	1 (33%)	1 (33%)		1 (33%)
Newsagent	3 (60%)	1 (20%)		1 (20%)
Farmers Market		1 (33%)	1 (33%)	1 (33%)
Farm Shops		23 (88%)	2 (7.6%)	1 (3.8%)

It was evident when residents were asked to identify what the Council should be doing to support the local economies that many people living in the rural areas have to travel into the local towns for much of their shopping. Some comments were made about the need to create more pedestrian crossings in Teynham and to improve car parking facilities for shoppers.

It was also highlighted that for many residents living in the rural parts of the Borough the limited public transport system provides easier access to towns outside the borough than it does to Sittingbourne. Suggestions were made that the Council needs to encourage more shops into Sittingbourne and that the streets need to be cleaned more thoroughly. It was highlighted that if you could sort out the shopping centre in Sittingbourne everything else would fall into place. Concerns were expressed that the external retail parks were killing the high street in Sittingbourne as local traders could not compete with the large corporations.

It was suggested that more support and finance should be provided to encourage businesses to set up in the town centre. In addition suggestions were made that the business rates should be lowered and that they should have a tiered system for setting rates. It was highlighted that initiatives should be developed that are designed to 'keep the community alive'.

Further comments indicated that people need to support their local shops and that if the Council supported the development of more local shops it would minimise the journeys people have to make.

When residents were asked if they felt anything was overprovided in their shopping areas they highlighted that there are too many charity shops in Sittingbourne and too many empty shops.

e. Sittingbourne

During the consultation events residents identified some concerns they have with the facilities provided in Sittingbourne. Concerns were expressed about

the limited variety of shops that are provided in the town and highlighted that there isn't enough choice of men's clothing or clothes for older people. It was highlighted that many of the shops are closing because the rents are too high. One resident highlighted that they are put off from using the town because the car parking charges are too high.

Further comments indicated that there is a need to action the master plan quickly otherwise the town will have died completely as everyone is very disheartened and are abandoning the town's retail area. It was felt that urgent attention should be placed on encouraging more shops so that the town centre is developed into a more pleasant shopping experience.

It was highlighted that some residents don't want to lose Somerfields as they would rather have this than a Tesco's. It was identified that if Tesco's moves into the town centre it will create even more congestion.

When residents were asked how frequently they used their local shops 98 of the 151 respondents indicated that they use them frequently, 13 used them sometimes and 40 hardly ever used them. When they were asked what they liked about their local shops most respondents identified that they have to go elsewhere as the town centre does not provide them with the facilities they want to use. However, one resident did comment that local shops are quite handy and convenient.

The chart below details the shops residents use most frequently:

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	3 (5%)	46 (79%)	9 (15.5%)	-
Supermarket	27 (37)	44 (60%)	2 (3%)	-
Post Office	1 (3.5%)	13 (45%)	11 (38%)	4 (14%)
Bakers	4 (19%)	3 (14%)	10 (47%)	4 (19%)
Butchers	-	11 (46%)	5 (21%)	8 (33%)
Greengrocers	2 (7%)	7 (26%)	10 (37%)	8 (30%)
Newsagent	10 (34%)	11 (38%)	1 (3%)	7 (24%)
Farmers Market	3 (8%)	14 (39%)	11 (30.5%)	8 (22%)
Farm Shops	7 (19%)	8 (22%)	14 (39%)	7 (19%)
Other				
Bike shops 3 comments				
Toy Shops 3 comments				

When asked what more they felt the Council should be doing to support the local economy residents highlighted the need to develop the town centre and provide a greater mix of shops. It was highlighted that there is a need to bring in some landmark shops such as Primark and other large superstores that sell clothes and household goods. However some concerns were expressed about the perceived monopoly Tesco's have on the area. One respondent felt that Tesco's have too much control over the Council and it was suggested that there is little concern for other supermarkets such as the local

Asda. In addition it was suggested that Tesco's have drained the high street and more should be done to encourage local and individual shops to open up. One respondent identified the findings of a study that was commissioned by the Government in 1998 to look at the impact big stores have on market towns. The report highlighted that when large food stores are built on the edge of a centre, other food shops lose between 13 and 50% of their trade resulting in the closure of town centre food retailers, increase in vacancy levels and a general decline in the quality of the environment of the centre. On that basis it was suggested that the Council should oppose new supermarkets and the expansion of existing ones as they are detrimental to the town as a whole.

Concerns were expressed that the market and the high street is dying in Sittingbourne and soon there won't be any point coming into the town. A suggestion was made that a farmers market and a French market should be developed in Sittingbourne, the respondent pointed out that this is the Garden of England with so much produce being grown locally.

It was highlighted that there are too many gadget and gift shops in the town and what is really needed are shops selling clothes, household items and department stores.

Further comments indicated that parking is too expensive in the town and that the prices should be lowered and more parking for people with disabilities should be provided. It was also highlighted that local people want the shops to stay in the high street and for the town centre to thrive - they feel they do not want to be forced to shop away from the Borough.

However, residents do feel that there are too many charity shops opening up in the town centre. In addition it was highlighted that there are too many nail bars and tanning shops, it was suggested that these are a visual indicator of a poor economy! Further suggestions highlighted that there are too many Estate Agents in the town centre and also too many takeaways.

A suggestion was also made that there are too many takeaways operating in Milton as well.

Residents living in the rural parts of the Borough also identified that transport links from there to Sittingbourne were inadequate and more direct routes were available to shopping areas outside of the Borough. Further comments were made about retail facilities in Sittingbourne indicating that the retail parks were killing off the town centre and that more effort should be made to improve it.

f. General Comments

It was highlighted that the Council could encourage the building of smaller shopping areas in the communities where local residents can obtain food

supplies and also gather and talk. In addition it was felt that more should be done in all the local towns to encourage shop owners to improve their fascias.

A concern was expressed that Gore Farm had been denied retrospective planning permission to allow it to have a marquee and paved terrace for weddings. It was also identified that the council should do more to support localisation. It should start by encouraging its employees to buy local, if it has a canteen it should ensure that locally sourced produce is used and communicate to businesses the value of buying locally produced goods.

It was also identified that the Council need to meet with local retailers to discuss their needs and support small businesses to find their niche in the market.

RETAIL - KEY MESSAGES

- Attract another major supermarket to the Island to provide choice and competition
- Upgrade Sheerness town centre
- Attract a landmark store to Sheerness
- Attract more tourists and holiday makers to the Island
- Ensure the market in Faversham continues to flourish
- Provide more support to the small and independent traders in Faversham
- Ensure that the high street in Faversham provides a good mix of retail and avoid over-duplication
- Help rural shops to survive
- Clean up Sittingbourne town centre
- Encourage more businesses growth in Sittingbourne town centre
- Provide more choice and variety of retail in Sittingbourne town centre
- Action the master plan for Sittingbourne town centre quickly
- Attract some landmark stores to locate in Sittingbourne town centre

6.7. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

a. Context

Like all local authorities across the UK Swale has to confront the challenges posed by climate change. Increased risk of flooding poses a considerable threat for parts of the Borough with low lying land and coastal areas. Swale is in the front line of climate change, which will mean more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten both communities and wildlife. The Council may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites that are known to flood or new land on green field sites.

During the consultation exercise residents were asked to consider which option they felt the Council should make. Responses to this question were mixed. Some residents felt that new development should be sited on brown field sites but remedial action could be taken to reduce the risks of the land being flooded. Others highlighted that there was little point building homes on land that is known to flood or marshland which will cause misery to the people who live and/or work in these developments.

It was acknowledged that homes can be built with an extra storey so that the street level is not occupied. However concerns were raised that some residents would be allowed to convert the ground floor into living accommodation which would defeat the purpose.

Concerns were also raised that if you build on land that is known to flood you are taking away more of the existing flood plains and causing additional problems elsewhere.

b. Wind Farms

Residents were asked whether they felt Swale should develop wind farms as part of their sustainable energy strategy. 315 residents responded to this question with 71% agreeing that wind farms should be developed locally. However comments were also made that wind generated power is inefficient and expensive and that wind farms are unable to generate the consistency of power that is required. It was highlighted that nuclear power is more effective. However, some comments suggested that other forms of alternative energy should be researched as well. It was suggested that hydro and solar power could also be used and domestic and public buildings could have solar panels installed on them.

Additional concerns were expressed about the appearance of wind farms and the blight they create on the landscape. However some respondents felt that they should be seen as a 'badge of pride' for the Council. It was also

highlighted that we should be encouraging people to use less energy as well as providing alternative sources of production.

Those residents who were in favour of wind farms being developed suggested that they could be located:

- In the Thames Estuary – however a concern was expressed that they may disturb the wildlife along here
- The Science Park
- In the Creek
- On the land between Sittingbourne and Sheppey
- Along the coast (but not so that it spoils the view) – this was identified as a location where they would not take up land space and the wind will not be restricted by trees and buildings
- Around the Montgomery
- On Swale Marshes
- Off shore all around the UK – not just around Swale
- Allow wind generators on people's houses
- Near the prisons on the Isle of Sheppey

c. Combined Heat and Power Systems

Residents were also asked to consider whether Swale should develop Combined Heat and Power systems as part of its sustainable energy strategy. 229 residents responded to this question with 54% of respondents supporting this proposal. However, many residents were reluctant to answer this question as they were not sure what type of system the Council would be proposing. One resident stated that they are anti-nuclear but are in favour of using sun, wind and tidal systems to generate heat and energy. In addition it was felt that heat exchange systems should be used as they are very efficient.

When asked where these systems should be sited if they were developed residents suggested the following locations:

- On an existing development site, but you must be considerate of the wildlife and the environment
- On the coast and linked into the wind farms
- In industrial areas
- Near the rubbish tip
- At the Paper Mill
- Harty Way
- Near to end users – in Southampton and Woking the CHP plants are hidden in the town centre car parks and most residents don't even know they are there
- Close to the fuel source but far enough away from the houses so that it will not cause a disturbance
- Kemsley Fields/Ridham Dock area

It was highlighted that the technology works at various scales but putting them in towns minimises the energy loss through transporting electricity long distances. Having more and smaller systems increases resilience in case of the rare failure at one site or the risk from flooding, which means others sited elsewhere in the area will keep working.

d. Eco Friendly Homes

Residents were asked to consider whether the Council should require developers to build more eco-friendly homes, even if this meant the cost of a new home would be more expensive. A total of 181 people responded to this question with 141 (77%) indicating that they should. However, comments were made indicating that some residents felt that this has come too late and the damage to the environment has already occurred. Other suggestions indicated that all new homes should have large water butts fitted to downpipes so that water can be conserved. In addition it was felt that all new houses should also have solar panels installed as well.

Other respondents indicated that the construction of all new buildings should incorporate positive energy and environmental measures and that these should be regarded as the 'norm' and not treated as 'add ons'. It was identified that currently there are no stringent laws governing this.

Suggestions were also made that new properties should be built from recycled materials or materials from sustainable sources. It was highlighted that modern energy efficient windows can be incorporated into properties in conservation areas.

A number of residents queried what the cost of these homes would be, because it was felt that if the cost was significant people probably would not be able to afford to buy them. One respondent highlighted that the present eco-friendly homes are prohibitively expensive and the benefits derived are too small to make them worthwhile. It was highlighted that in a few years time the materials may be less expensive which would increase the benefits. It was also identified that solar and wind generators/turbines can be incorporated into homes and save a significant amount of mass energy creation.

One respondent highlighted that the cost of eco friendly homes does not have to be borne by the house buyer as there are many different ways of building homes all with different costings. It was highlighted that due to Peak Oil the cost of producing bricks and cement will increase making alternatives relatively cheaper. It was suggested that the council should encourage these alternative building systems and they should refuse planning permission to new homes that don't have energy efficient low carbon features incorporated.

e. Future land uses

The Council are aware that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in them having to make choices about future land uses. Residents were asked how they feel the Council should prioritise demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of the landscape character.

Three residents responded to this question by saying that they did not want an airport built on the Island. Other residents suggested that we should use everything we produce and people should be encouraged to grow food in their gardens.

Others responded by saying that we need to keep all of the options as it is important not to lose any of them. Concerns were expressed about the effect fly tipping has on the natural environment with some residents believing that the charges to take away large household goods from homes needs to be scrapped.

It was highlighted that people need to be made more environmentally aware and need educating about the benefits of recycling.

Other responses suggested that the priority should be character, wildlife and food in that order, whilst others suggested that wildlife should take priority. Residents were keen to see more protection for the wildlife habitats and conservation of the landscape character. It was noted that food production should take third priority as much of it is produced outside the area.

Additional comments highlighted the need to keep neighbourhoods cleaner and organise more community clean ups as these help to promote tidiness and respect.

It was highlighted that increased development, cars, factories etc result in reduced air quality and ultimately affects the quality of the food produced. It was suggested that we need greater inner city green spaces with trees and shrubs incorporated into housing estates. In addition we need to expand the wetlands and develop a woodland park which will take several decades to fully mature. A further suggestion highlighted that we can keep the beautiful local landscape by promoting the growing of well known Kent crops such as fruit, cereal and brewing crops. In addition we need to ensure that no more hedges are grubbed and that farmers are required to leave wide headlands around the edges of fields.

Again, residents took the opportunity to highlight the need to prioritise food production in small farms and make areas of land available to the public. It was suggested that more allotments should be provided and also that the Council could buy existing available farmland and sub divide it into two acre

plots and rent these at low cost to users who can develop them into viable farms and sell excess produce locally.

It was highlighted that changes in food production must take account of conservation needs. One resident indicated that they believed food production will have to increase by 80-100% by 2050 to meet future demand. The respondent highlighted that the UK will be in a strong position to not only produce food for home consumption but also for export as well. Further suggestions highlighted that we need to increase our ability to farm organically and that assistance should be given to farmers so that they can protect the local wildlife on their land.

In addition it was suggested that the large farms that grow rape and other cash crops should help to foot the bill, especially as they all have large farm machinery and use less local labour. It was felt that more should be done to encourage them back to using local labour in the future.

It was noted that the rise in sea level was highlighted as the biggest threat to Swale. It was suggested that a managed retreat may have to be undertaken in the future with the possible creation of salt marshes as a buffer between the sea and the land.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE - KEY MESSAGES

- Residents provided mixed views on where new developments should be sited, some were in favour of developing on brownfield sites and taking remedial action against flooding whilst others felt land that is known to flood should not be built on
- Many residents (71% of respondents) were in favour of wind farms being developed locally
- 54% of respondents supported the idea of combined heat and power systems but others did not want to commit until they knew the type of system the Council would be proposing
- More eco friendly homes should be built in the borough
- All new buildings should incorporate positive energy and environmental measures
- Concerns were expressed that the cost of creating eco friendly homes may be prohibitive
- People need to be made more environmentally aware and understand the benefits of recycling
- More protection is needed of the wildlife habitats and conservation of the landscape character
- Create more opportunities for growing food locally
- Changes in food production must take account of conservation needs

6.8. CULTURE

a. Context

A significant amount of market research has been undertaken to identify how people use their leisure time and to ascertain what sports, leisure and cultural facilities residents are involved in.

During the consultation residents were asked to highlight what cultural facilities they expect to have in their neighbourhood, in the most local town and in Sittingbourne. The charts below detail the responses received from residents across the Borough.

b. SITTINGBOURNE

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	21	14	19
Cinema	8	23	38
Sports Centre	4	7	14
Football pitch	6	3	11
Local park	28	6	20
Formal park	5	6	15
Access to nature	10	10	13
Museums	4	12	14
Theatre	6	5	16
Library	11	4	19
Swimming pool	4	11	21
Art Gallery	2	4	6
Restaurants	6	5	8
Café	8	7	15
Pubs	6	5	9
Music Venue	7	9	21
Studio space	1	6	6
Recording/rehearsal space	1	8	4

Residents who attended the consultation events held in Sittingbourne highlighted that they felt there was not enough cultural activity in this area and they wanted more opportunities to socialise with interesting people. It was suggested by one resident that more street theatre should be provided in the town centre. One resident highlighted that a Historical Heritage Centre should be developed in Milton Regis where the heritage is considered to be at least equal to that of Faversham but has been neglected over the years.

In addition they also identified that there is a need to provide more recreational sites, and more community spaces and facilities for local people that are affordable and not profit driven. It was highlighted that you cannot continue to build homes in Sittingbourne without creating the amenities to match otherwise it encourages people to commute to shopping and leisure facilities elsewhere. Concerns were expressed that most leisure facilities such as bowling/skating/cinema aren't available anywhere in the borough.

Activities for Young People

Suggestions were made that young people need a skateboard park, sea fishing trips and sailing opportunities. Concerns were expressed by a number of young people about the lack of skateboarding facilities in Sittingbourne. We were told that the skate park near to Asda has closed and the young people were questioning why this had happened as they had nowhere to go especially during the summer holiday period. It was highlighted that the skate park was well used but young people had to pay to use it. A number of people highlighted that it should have been supported by Swale Borough Council, particularly as it was well used.

Young people also expressed concerns that housing had been built on some of the land they had previously used to 'chill' on and that they had nowhere to hang around with their mates now.

It was highlighted that more provision/activities/facilities should be created for children and young people with suggestions including the development of a bowling alley, arts activities, cooking classes, singing and dancing facilities. In addition it was felt that more sports provision should be made available including basketball, football, kung fu, gymnastics and boxing.

Concerns were expressed about the lack of evening/night entertainment for teenagers in Sittingbourne. It was highlighted that they need music venues and a cinema. Questions were raised about why retail parks were developed when some of these should have been developed with activities that would keep young people off the streets.

A suggestion was made that a motorbike track should be developed in Sittingbourne.

Additional concerns were expressed that the Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway had closed even though it was a good educational and well like attraction. In addition it was highlighted that the new pirate ship in Swallows swimming pool can be hazardous due to the water spray making the surfaces slippery.

Other Facilities

Further comments indicated that there is a need for a cinema in Sittingbourne and that there should be a greater choice of restaurants established, at present these are mainly Indian and Chinese. It was suggested that there is a sense of isolation in Sittingbourne and that arts and cultural activities will help to bring people together. A number of residents indicated that the theatre in Sittingbourne should be more like the Marlow with a more varied programme provided.

Suggestions identified that maps should be displayed in the towns highlighting local attractions and that there is a need for an Information Centre to be established in the town. 2 residents questioned what was happening about the Court Hall in Milton Regis as this building is becoming dilapidated.

Concerns were expressed about the three lakes in Murston, it was highlighted that Gypsy and Traveller encampments were discouraging local people from using this facility.

c. FAVERSHAM

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	9	13	
Cinema		25	1
Sports Centre	3	10	
Football pitch		11	1
Local park	3	16	
Formal park		2	
Access to nature	9	8	
Museums		10	
Theatre	1	13	
Library		18	1
Swimming pool	1	23	3
Art Gallery		11	
Restaurants		8	1
Café		13	
Pubs	3	14	
Music Venue	1	10	
Studio space		10	
Recording/rehearsal space		2	1

It was highlighted that there is a need for more summer play schemes to be provided that are affordable to local families. Concerns were expressed

during the consultation that because of the high number of Londoners living in the town there is an expectation that all residents have money to spare which is not the case.

Concerns were raised about the cost of swimming in Faversham, it was highlighted that it costs nearly twice as much for a family to go swimming in the town compared to the cost of using swimming pools in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. It was noted that the charge for children to swim is considered high particularly for the low waged and those with more than one child. It was also highlighted that swimming is restricted in Faversham in the evenings due to the pools being taken up by swimming clubs. Additional concerns were expressed that all family tickets are for four people and it was felt that there needs to be recognition that some families have more children. A question was also posed about why people are charged to sit and watch their family/friends swim, especially when they are likely to spend some money in the coffee shop.

It was suggested that there is a need for a cultural centre in Faversham. In addition suggestions indicated that there is a need for more local sports clubs to be set up so that local young people have something to do. A further suggestion indicated that local sports facilities need to be extended so that they can cater for more people. It was suggested that an out door community café/bar/music/theatre venue should be developed in Faversham possibly on the recreation ground.

d. RURAL AREAS

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	12		5
Cinema		1	10
Sports Centre	1	1	8
Football pitch	2		4
Local park	6		4
Formal park	4		4
Access to nature	4		1
Museums			4
Theatre		1	9
Library	2	1	7
Swimming pool		1	10
Art Gallery			3
Restaurants	1	2	7
Café	4	1	5
Pubs	9	1	4
Music Venue	1		4
Studio space			2
Recording/rehearsal space			2

Residents living in the rural villages indicated that there is a need for an affordable golf course that can accommodate all ages. A comment was made that the Sittingbourne Spectacular should be improved with high profile marketing to ensure it was an event that people looked forward to being involved with. It was suggested that Swale Borough Council needs to vastly improve the litter issues around town and to encourage people to take a greater pride in the area.

It was also identified that cycle routes and walks should be incorporated into the development e.g. path from Fans Lane to the estuary to Upchurch/Lower Halstow for people to walk the dog, cycle, take children for a walk with a possible link up to the Riverside Country Park.

e. ISLE OF SHEPPEY

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	21	11	
Cinema	27	18	2
Sports Centre	10	10	
Football pitch	12	6	
Local park	25	7	
Formal park	4	6	
Access to nature	7	5	
Museums	4	7	1
Theatre	9	8	1
Library	6	5	
Swimming pool	12	6	1
Art Gallery	6	6	
Restaurants	6	7	
Café	14	4	1
Pubs	2	5	
Music Venue	9	12	
Studio space	6	4	
Recording/rehearsal space	6	4	1
Other Outdoor swimming pool x 5 We should have diving boards in the swimming pool because all we have is one big pool and a baby pool – it will keep the kids occupied x 2 Dance Studio x 1 Gym x 1 Scouts x 1 Football Club – with smaller goals x 1			

The information in the chart above highlights that people living on the Island don't recognise Sittingbourne as their borough centre and host to more major attractions.

Heritage and History

Many residents expressed frustration that more is not done to promote the history and heritage of the Island. It was highlighted that a starting point would be to promote the Manors at Minster, Queenborough and Shurland. It was suggested that more should be done to help people with listed buildings as they need to be preserved and are a mechanism for encouraging tourism.

Tourism

It was recognised that the Island has the potential to attract tourists but it was felt that more should be done to make it a place that people want to come to. It was felt this could be achieved if more is provided for tourists such as improving the swimming pool in Sheerness, particularly now that the flumes have been taken away, provide more ice cream vendors, toilets, a bandstand and café. It was highlighted that years ago Sheerness had a theatre, bandstand, pier and paddle boats but over time this has all been knocked down or closed and there's nothing here now for visitors to do. In addition it was highlighted that entertainments should be provided through the summer months for both visitors and locals to attend.

Concerns were expressed that there are not many seats on the coastal paths and those that are there are often memorial seats where flowers have been laid, which can discourage people from using them.

It was recognised that the Island has the potential to develop excellent sailing, jet-ski facilities, scuba diving and a harbour/marina, it was suggested that something similar to Poole Harbour or Southampton's Ocean Village could be created here. However some residents feel that the car park near the Yacht Club is underused and there are some problems when people are trying to bring their boats out of the water at Marine Parade – if they forget to lower the masts they get caught on the overhead cables and local people often find themselves without telephone or electricity supplies.

Local Facilities

Concerns were expressed that Sittingbourne cinema has closed down and there is no cinema on the Island or close by. A suggestion was made that a current film could be shown once a month at the Blue Town Heritage Centre. In addition many residents took the opportunity to highlight their concerns about the sustainability of some of the local clubs and activities. Concerns were expressed that the youth club at New Road Community Centre in Minster is well attended but is threatened with closure due to lack of funding. In addition Age Concern have been running some activities for 6 weeks for

older people but no-one is sure what will happen once the programme comes to an end.

It was highlighted that there is a need for more activities for people of all ages on the Island but they need to run continuously and be sustainable.

Residents also questioned why Swale Borough Council have not taken up the Government initiative that allows under 16's and over 60's to swim for free. It was highlighted that many other local councils have implemented this scheme with great success.

A number of residents expressed concern about policing on the Island. The main source of concern is that the police station isn't staffed which causes problems during the holiday period.

Events

A suggestion was made that a Gay Pride Festival should be held annually on the Island as it would generate income and encourage people to visit.

f. GENERAL COMMENTS

There is not enough emphasis places on partnership with other public service organisations in Swale, it was identified that the Peckham Pulse project built a partnership between the local PCT, GP Surgery and the local gym.

Concerns were expressed about the costs of policing and insurance at public events. It was highlighted that the Millfield Allotments are unable to host a firework display due to the high costs of insurance. It was identified that other events such as a funfair often bring unwelcome problems such as noise but are able to take place.

It was highlighted that there is a need to provide better maintenance of children's play equipment in the Borough. It was also highlighted that there is a need for more inclusive play equipment for children of all abilities to be installed in playgrounds across the Borough.

CULTURE - KEY MESSAGES

- Not enough cultural activity provided in the borough
- Provide more recreational sites, community spaces and facilities for local people that are not profit driven
- Improve maintenance of children’s play equipment in the borough
- Ensure there are sufficient amenities provided to meet the needs of new housing developments
- Create more facilities for young people
- Provide more facilities for skateboarding
- Provide more evening/night entertainment for teenagers in Sittingbourne
- Provide a cinema in Sittingbourne
- Provide more affordable playschemes in Faversham
- Reduce the cost of using the swimming pool in Faversham
- Allow under 16s and over 60s to swim for free
- Provide more sports facilities/opportunities for young people in Faversham
- Provide an affordable golf course that accommodates all ages
- Promote the history and heritage of the Isle of Sheppey
- Attract more tourists to the Island
- Improve the swimming pool in Sheerness
- Develop more opportunities for sailing and water sports on the Island
- Provide more opportunities for showing films on the Island or build a cinema
- Create more sustainable activities for young people and senior citizens on the Island



6.9. GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

a. ISLE OF SHEPPEY

Context

There is significant deprivation on the Isle of Sheppey with 11 neighbourhoods falling within the 20% of the most deprived in England. Two of these neighbourhoods fall into the bottom 100 out of a total of 32,000. There is a longstanding learning and skills shortfall with the Island providing mostly low skill based employment opportunities. It is recognised that tourism is under exploited and there are significant opportunities to capitalise on the historic assets the Island has as well as its place in aviation history. The Island also has significant environmental and wildlife assets that can provide some unique opportunities for eco-tourism. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island's economic and historic assets and it is expected that they will create major expansion plans.

Port of Sheerness

Residents were asked to consider how the Port's potential could be unlocked. It is evident from talking to local people that they feel an immense amount of frustration that the Island's tourist potential is under exploited. Residents expressed concern that there is a lack of funding to maintain the historic and heritage buildings on the Island. They highlighted the dilapidated state of the dockyard church as an example of a lovely old building that will soon be lost.

It was suggested that the Port of Sheerness should be given the freedom to develop their own plans. One resident suggested that it would be good to bring back the ferry that used to sail to Southend either for pedestrians and/or cars. In addition it was felt that a diversity of use should be encouraged and that the Port would benefit greatly from encouraging a ferry company like Olau to be based there. Additional comments suggested that a high speed ferry service to Vlissingen or other European ports should be developed, and even an upriver service to Gravesend and London could be achieved. It was also highlighted that people need to know the port is there, because since the large boats carrying passengers ceased many people are unaware of its existence. A suggestion indicated that the port should be enlarged with more deep water access to a wider area. In addition if a better rail link were provided to the Island this would help to develop tourism and create jobs as well as removing some of the heavy commercial traffic from the roads. It was also suggested that a cruise line centre with a rail link may also be possible which could compete with Dover.

In addition it was highlighted that Gunwharf Quays in Portsmouth and Poole Harbour would be good places to look at to see how they have developed.

A further comment suggested that a FE College should be built on site focussing on providing training in engineering, service and maintenance industries.

Eastern Sheppey

Respondents highlighted that Leysdown and Warden on Sea are not suitable locations for major growth as they are unattractive to the business market, are isolated and have poor transport links. Residents were asked to identify what could be done to assist communities living on the Eastern side of the Island.

Residents suggested that there is a need for a more regular and longer bus service that travels around the estates. It has been highlighted earlier in the report that maybe this could take the form of a 'hopper' bus that takes people to and from Sheerness.

Concerns were expressed about the inadequate road system that services the Eastern End of the Island. This coupled with poor public transport services leaves many residents isolated or totally dependent on car usage. It was highlighted that these communities are poorly served by local facilities such as shops and schools and concerns were expressed about the volume of new houses that are being built in this area. It was recognised that significant improvements need to be made to the lower road link to Leysdown as it cannot cope with the increased traffic demands that are being placed on it. Once again the issue of hospital facilities was also highlighted.

Tourism

When asked what more could be done to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island respondents suggested that the Council should stop spending all the money in Sittingbourne and target some to the Island. It was suggested that more of the Island should be opened up for tourism especially things that people can see or develop activities that they can do. However, it is evident that many of the regular tourists who visit the Island have done so for many years and are reluctant to see it change and develop. It was highlighted that the Eastern side of Sheppey provides an opportunity for people to get away from the hustle and bustle of their lives in London and like it being a very traditional seaside place. It was highlighted that there is a need to create better and nicer shops, pubs and restaurants that attract families who have more money to spend.

Local people feel that more investment should be put into Leysdown to increase its tourist potential and enable it to provide more activities. It was suggested that the seafront at Leysdown could be developed with a nice hotel and cafes. It was highlighted that the quality of the beach in Leysdown is very good but is under promoted. In addition it was highlighted that the chalets and caravans should be smartened up and this should be a condition

of the lease. More should be done to promote the nudist beach positively to discourage the undesirables who are perceived to hang around there. It was highlighted that some sand could be imported to create better quality beaches similar to what has been achieved in the Canary Islands. It was identified that the area would benefit from either a major attraction being developed there or a major holiday park operator being encouraged to invest there.

During the consultation events many local people highlighted the improvements that had taken place in Whitstable and identified that there was scope for Leysdown to be developed in the same way. However, it was recognised that some work would need to be undertaken to change people's perceptions of the Island. Concerns were expressed that all Leysdown offers now is arcades and there is a need to develop more affordable activities, parks and play areas that attract more families to the area. In addition comments were made highlighting the need to upgrade Leysdown and make it cleaner and safer.

Residents identified that there are immense tourism opportunities on the Island which are on a par with places such as Cornwall. The Island has a rich flora and fauna and history dating back to the Saxon period. It was felt that more effort should be made to promote the history and heritage of the Island, particularly of places such as Blue Town, the Island's aviation history, the connections with Henry VIII and Nelson. It was recognised that in other parts of the country they capitalise on the history and heritage and ensure that people know about it. A suggestion was made that an annual air show should be held on the Island, particularly as it is the birth place of aviation similar to those held in Folkestone and Eastbourne. In addition it was felt that if large scale events (horse shows or water sports) were organised this would encourage people to visit the Island and would also fill up the local guest houses.

It was identified that not enough use is made of the potential offered by the river and the sea. Suggestions were made that sea fishing opportunities could be developed for young people both locals and tourists. The coast at Sheerness also provides opportunities for sailing that are currently under exploited.

Further suggestions indicated that more tourist shops should be developed in Sheerness. In addition one comment suggested that an airport should be developed on the Island but some locals have already identified that they wouldn't want to see this happen. It was also highlighted that there is potential to extend the railway along the north coast of the Island.

A concern was expressed that in reality increasing tourism will create short term poorly paid jobs and does not bring the investment that people think it will. It was identified that the Island needs long term, secure employment which tourism cannot provide.

Holiday Accommodation

It is recognised that some of the Island's holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Residents were asked if this should be allowed, even if it means that people are living in sub standard accommodation in areas that are prone to flooding. 96 people responded to this question with 55% identifying that this shouldn't be allowed.

Further comments highlighted that large parts of the Island are part of a flood plain. It was identified that when caravans and chalets are being used all year it leads to sub standard accommodation and shanty town, the villas in Leysdown were sited as an example of what can happen. However, it was highlighted that this has been happening for a very long time. To overcome this problem it was suggested that people should only be allowed to use the chalets and caravans for 8 months of the year. In addition it was highlighted that Swale Borough Council should take the lead in incentivising owners to provide affordable, but good quality services for holiday makers. It was also suggested that sites should be well maintained and monitored to ensure there are no infringements in the terms of the lease. Concerns were expressed again about the chalet rates being too high. It was also highlighted that there had been a number of burglaries in the chalets this summer.

Affordable Housing

When asked if residents felt there was sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard provided on the Island 71 responses were given, of these 39 (55%) identified that there isn't.

It was suggested that the area could only be improved if there was either major investment from a large holiday company or grants made available by the Council.

It was identified that the Council should make sure the environment and appearance of the holiday sites is properly maintained. Suggestions were also made that some of the sites should be rebuilt to do away with the 1950s army camps.

Concerns were also expressed about the smell that had been emanating from the fields during July. Many residents complained that they had been unable to open their windows, and that it was damaging the holiday trade, as at times the smell had been so bad that some holiday makers had gone home early.

Prisons

One of the main sources of employment on the Island is provided by the prisons. Residents were asked how they would feel if the prisons wanted to

expand. 70 responses were made with 49 (70%) indicating that they would agree to this if the need arose. A number of comments indicated that some residents feel they are of a sufficient size already. However one respondent highlighted that if necessary they should be allowed to expand as long as the prisoners were kept securely within the boundaries.

ISLE OF SHEPPEY - KEY MESSAGES

- Ensure historic buildings at the Port are maintained and protected
- Encourage the Port to develop plans to unlock its potential
- Bring back the ferry to European ports
- Create a better rail link to the Island
- Provide more regular bus services to the Eastern end of the Island
- Make significant improvements to the lower road link to Leysdown
- Open up more of the Island for tourism
- Create better facilities on the Eastern end of the Island to meet the needs of the increasing numbers of residents and for tourists
- Create activities that will attract more families to Leysdown
- Promote the Island's history
- Develop more facilities for sailing and water sports
- Ensure that good quality accommodation and well maintained sites are provided for holiday makers
- Provide more and better quality affordable housing on the Island
- Expand the prisons if the need arises

b. FAVERSHAM

Context

Faversham is situated outside the Thames Gateway growth area. It is a typical Kentish market town with a high quality built environment. It has an outward prosperous image but does have some social and economic deprivation. Any new homes and jobs created in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community and has not been earmarked for any significant growth.

Concern was expressed that Faversham has been enlarged so much over the last 10 years that it no longer has the infrastructure to support this growth. Many residents highlighted that they feel Swale Borough Council does not consider the needs of Faversham residents. It was highlighted that any enhancement should be undertaken sympathetically. In addition comments were made that Faversham should be developed as a market town.

Residents highlighted that there is a need to encourage more shops to open in Faversham and any development should be focussed on increasing the viability of the high street. Concerns were expressed that Swale's retail policy is having a negative effect on the town. It was felt that rentals are too high

and more must be done to encourage additional shops, particularly those selling essential items otherwise the town will die.

It was highlighted that there aren't any decent priced clothes shops in Faversham since Woolworths closed. In addition it was suggested that the town centre be allowed to stay like Whitstable – useful to local people but not all focussed on Tescos. It was highlighted that emphasis needs to be placed on keeping the charm of the old parts of the town without losing jobs.

It was evident during the consultation events that many Faversham residents feel that all the investment in the Borough is targeted at the Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne. Residents indicated that they do not want any more houses to be built in Faversham and they feel the overdevelopment of the edges of the town should be halted. A further comment was made indicating that local community facilities are very expensive to hire and precludes use by many pensioners.

Comments highlighted that it would be unwise to build more houses in Faversham as there is currently not enough employment in the town to support the current workforce. However it was identified that any further development could be achieved around the creek. It was highlighted that there should be some development of smaller industries locally which ideally should be sited close to the M2 at junction 6. If housing is to be developed it should be created in an area which is high enough for flooding not to be a problem. Again people highlighted that new developments should only be considered if all the current buildings are being fully utilised.

Tourism

When asked what more Faversham could do to increase the number of tourists visiting the area residents responded by suggesting:

- More quality clothing and food shops should be encouraged as £ Shops, charity shops and restaurants are not an attraction
- The Council needs to support the Hop Festival and provide other small festivals and events at weekends and bring back the fireworks
- Encourage more arts and craft shops and antique shops
- Better marketing and advertising to attract commuters who use the trains up to London and also attract Londoners who want to take a day trip
- Swale Council should be more proactive in advertising the historic nature of Faversham
- Make it more of a market town it has strong medieval links which could be built on
- Increase the number of events and festivals in the town
- Develop water activities in the creek
- Dredge the creek and make it navigable by larger boats
- Improve the recreational value of the creek side

- Faversham is becoming more of a tourist based town and there is a need to promote this as a golden triangle with Whitstable and Canterbury
- Create more retail and restaurants in the town
- Lower the parking fees as they are driving the tourists away
- More police are needed in the town centre in the evenings to discourage excessive drinking
- Maintain the integrity of the barges and boats, create a barge museum
- Improve the creek tastefully and clean it out
- Create usable tourist spaces around the creek, if this is done properly the investment will be repaid
- Develop the marina behind Morrisons (create a smaller version of Whitstable harbour)
- Promote the creek, its architecture and historical aspects, green tourism with cycling, bird watching and walking
- Provide moorings for visiting boats at the creek and water based community activities
- Create more affordable places for tourists to stay and increase the range of accommodation for visitors

Commuting

It is recognised that many people who live in Faversham commute to nearby Canterbury for work. A question was posed during the consultation asking residents to identify what types of jobs needed to be created in Faversham to reduce the amount of commuting to surrounding areas.

Residents indicated that the Council should be realistic and understand that some people would still need to commute to work in the future. However, it was suggested that more Information Technology Industries could be developed or better links with existing 'knowledge based industries' to encourage remote working.

It was highlighted that as a starting point you need to look at what jobs people are currently commuting to. Once this has been achieved it is recognised that you will need to incentivise people to move out of London, but it was highlighted that this has been achieved in Bromley.

It was identified that more large chain stores such as Marks and Spencers and Debenhams should be encouraged into the town as they would bring new jobs into the area. In addition it was highlighted that the town could benefit from the creation of subsidised studio spaces for local artists and crafts people. Further suggestions highlighted that small clean craft manufacturing businesses could also be established as well as some light industrial businesses. Further comments highlighted the need to create some office and service jobs. In addition there will be a need to attract jobs that pay better salaries that are equivalent to those found out of town.

One resident highlighted that if you create any type of job locally it will reduce the need to commute. A further respondent asked what was wrong with commuting - it's a choice people make so why try to change it.

Heritage

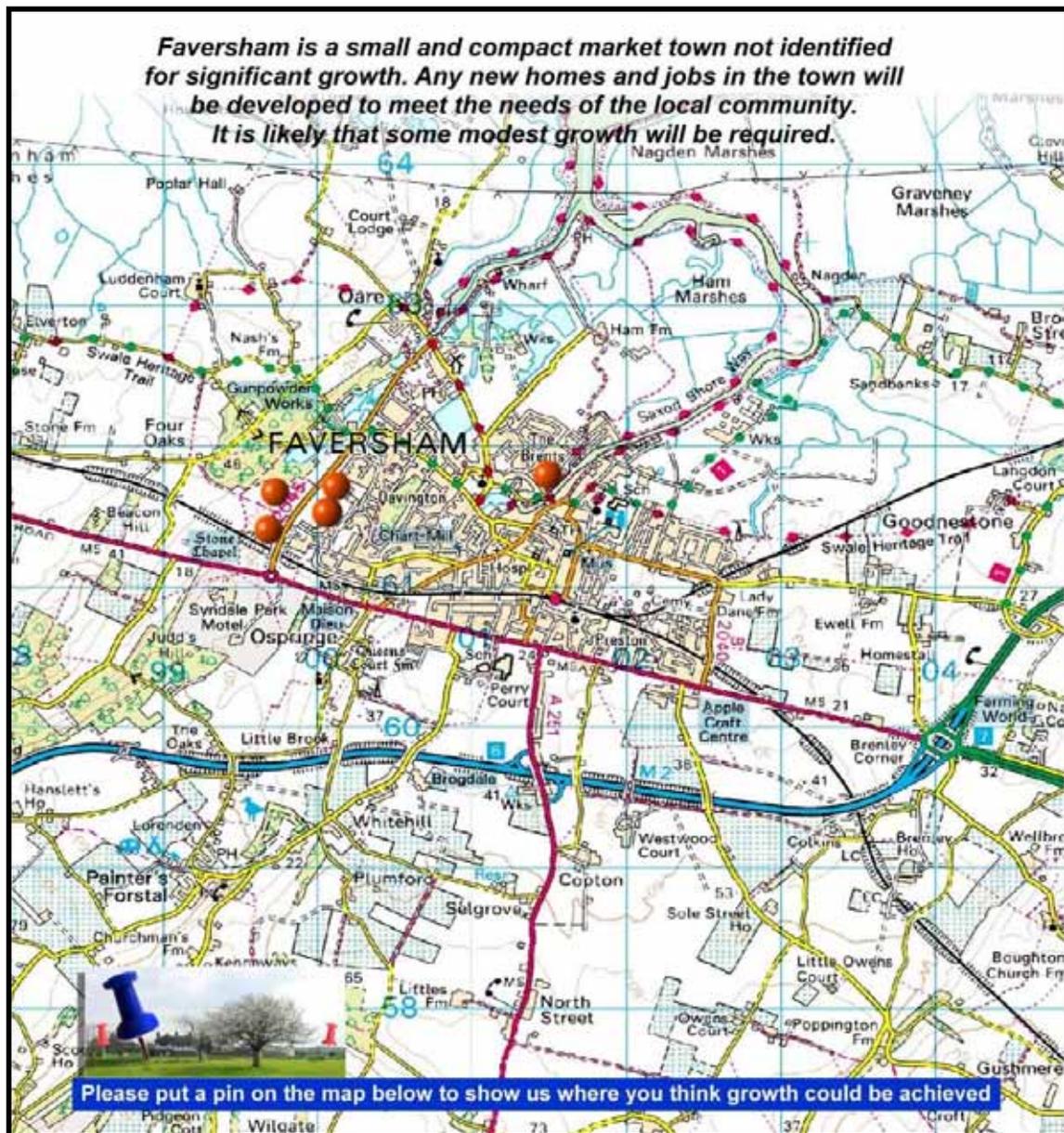
The importance of the town's heritage is well known and residents were asked whether this should remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. They were also asked to consider whether this priority would inhibit further development.

The responses to this question were mixed. Concerns were expressed that heritage is too much of a priority in Faversham and it was suggested that there needs to be a happy medium as the town needs employment and shops and currently all the new development is focussed on Sittingbourne.

However, other residents felt that the heritage is an intrinsic part of Faversham and if you don't consider it adequately you will lose the soul and beauty of the town. It was highlighted that the town's heritage must remain a priority as it is what makes Faversham unique. It was highlighted that any further development must be sympathetic to the town's heritage. It was suggested that the town's priority as a heritage venue must be capitalised on, and strict controls should be placed on new development.

Residents once again took the opportunity to highlight the need to reduce the rates for the shopkeepers in the town. In addition it was indicated that the rental term should be shorter to encourage new businesses to set up locally. One comment suggested that commercial parking needs to be considered.

Concerns were expressed about new housing developments highlighting that the town needed smaller developments and that no more large housing estates should be built. Concern was expressed about the lack of affordable housing indicating that new properties should be available to all incomes. It was suggested that instead of building executive housing more terrace housing should be developed that is affordable. Further concerns were expressed that Faversham is a great place to live but young people are moving away as they can't afford to live there. A concern was highlighted about the unfairness of residents only parking schemes, questioning why residents have to pay to park outside their homes.



A small number of locations were identified where residents felt future growth could be achieved namely:

- Along either side of the A2045 near Chart Mill and the Gunpowder Works
- Near the Brents

FAVERSHAM - KEY MESSAGES

- Consider the needs of Faversham residents more
- Encourage more small shops to open in Faversham
- Preserve the charm of the old parts of the town
- Do not over-develop Faversham
- Further development should be focussed around the Creek
- Ensure all existing buildings are fully utilised before there is further development
- Encourage diversity on the high street and prevent over-duplication
- Support local events such as the Hop Festival
- Be more proactive in advertising Faversham's historic assets
- Develop water activities at the Creek
- Lower the parking fees
- Promote and develop the Creek (architecture, historical aspects, green tourism, bird watching and walking/cycling)
- Provide mooring for visiting boats and water based community activities at the Creek
- Create more affordable places for tourists to stay
- Develop more Information Technology Industries in Faversham
- Create more affordable housing
- All new development to be sympathetic to the town's heritage

c. RURAL AREAS

Context

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores and packing houses)? Residents were invited to give their comments about this.

It was recognised by some residents that Kent is known as the Garden of England and it was felt that farmers need to have poly tunnels and cold stores otherwise we will not be able to grow fruit in this area. It was highlighted that if this happens people would not be attracted to live in Kent.

Many respondents were in favour of poly tunnels as they recognised that the structures aren't permanent, however it was suggested that cold stores and packing houses should be designed to blend into the landscape e.g. built in muted colours and low rise buildings.

It was also recognised that there would be increased demands in the future to grow food locally and therefore residents will have to accept some new

development and more poly tunnels. However, it was also highlighted that too much development of this nature would take away some of the countryside. It was felt that every effort should be made to ensure that food production does not have an adverse effect on the environment. Some comments indicated that poly tunnels should be removed from the fields.

One comment indicated that this is a very important problem that cannot be addressed by tweaking the planning regulations. Concern was expressed that NIMBY attitudes were badly affecting local employment opportunities. It was highlighted that the Council should definitely have a more flexible attitude to agriculture and it should aim to encourage a multitude of smaller farms rather than a few large farms. It was felt that smaller farms were more likely to have the flexibility to cope with changes to weather patterns as they tend to produce higher yields per acre and perhaps being family run are more likely to employ local labour.

Local Amenities

It is recognised that in many rural communities the shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive. Residents were asked to consider whether alternative uses should be found for these buildings or whether the Council should encourage more housing to be built to support these services. The chart below details their responses:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Find alternative use for these buildings?	89 (90%)	9 (9%)	1 (1%)
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?	81 (72%)	26 (23%)	6 (5%)

An additional response highlighted that you cannot assume that if you create more housing it will produce more consumers who will use local amenities. It was suggested that if you reduced the buying power of supermarkets such as Tesco then other local amenities would be better supported, and you wouldn't have to build additional homes. It was also highlighted that rural businesses should not be charged town rates as these were too prohibitive.

However it was also highlighted that rural post offices are being closed by the government as a cost cutting exercise, so any increase in these communities is coming too late to save them. It was also highlighted that local pubs are changing to meet the new needs of the public and those that don't adapt cease to operate. It was identified that this has always been normal business practice and no amount of increased population will change this.

Additional Housing

Residents were asked if they would support the development of more housing to meet local needs, especially affordable housing. 155 residents responded

to this question with a greater number of responses 76 (49%) indicating that they would support the development of more housing. A further 65 responses (42%) indicated that they wouldn't.

Residents suggested that better use should be made of brownfield sites and that they should have a higher density of houses built on them. A suggestion was made that some developments should be created on the edge of villages. It was highlighted that new developments in rural areas should be created to meet local needs only. It was highlighted that rural communities should be protected from invasive developments which should be restricted to existing industrial sites. In addition it was felt that existing communities should be extended and better use should be made of defunct businesses and sites.

It was highlighted that any new developments should be sited where possible on brown field sites. However, respondents also identified that new developments could be used to fill land close to the centre of villages or towns. One suggestion highlighted that new developments should be sited in villages that need rejuvenating such as Bredgar, Bapchild, Tunstall and Borden. Further comments indicated that it is not the siting that is an issue but what the developments actually look like – it was highlighted that there are exciting new designs for small cheap housing using materials that can be locally produced such as straw, clay and recycled materials. These houses can blend into the landscape so well that they look as if they have been there a long time. It was highlighted that maybe Swale should be in the front line of encouraging this sort of eco-building. It was emphasised that the next 20 years is going to be critical in developing local sustainable living.

It was identified that proportionate amounts of affordable and private housing should be developed to meet identified local need in villages that have existing services. However it was felt that development in small remote settlements without public transport links should be discouraged, however some exceptions could be made for those directly involved in local agriculture.

One comment indicated that the countryside and woodlands should be protected as this is one of the reasons why people chose to live in rural areas.

Rural Economy

It is recognised that the Council needs to do more to support the rural economy. Residents were asked to consider what business uses are appropriate or inappropriate to site in the countryside and where they felt these should be sited.

It was highlighted that industry should stay in the urban areas. However it was stressed that the IT infrastructure should be improved to help rural businesses. However it was felt that low impact businesses could be located to rural areas, for example IT Call Centres but they must be positively encouraged to provide adequate transport to bring employees from

surrounding local areas to reduce the reliance on cars. Further comments indicated that businesses should be encouraged into the rural areas but only if sustainable transport is developed alongside it. It was highlighted that office based businesses could be set up in small communities possibly through the conversion of existing unused farm buildings.

Heavy industry and large retail developments or anything that involves large movements of goods and people (except farming) should not be sited in rural areas. It was also highlighted that large offices that require a lot of people movement would not be appropriate as the rural transport system is not adequate to cope with this.

Further comments indicated that the rural economy should remain agriculturally based or should grow up around traditional rural crafts that use local resources. It was suggested that an agricultural training centre could be developed in Swale as the nearest is situated in Hadlow.

In addition it was also felt that more should be done to support the rural businesses with the possibility of charging a lower rate in rural areas. Further suggestions indicated that pubs and post offices should be encouraged to diversify their services. It was recognised that they are the hub of the community

A further comment indicated that every effort should be made to bring jobs to the rural communities, but cautioned that any new buildings should be designed to be sympathetic to the landscape. It was highlighted that 'smelly' organisations such as power stations shouldn't be located in rural areas, however it was felt that most other businesses can be screened by trees or integrated into the environment to make them less intrusive.

In addition it was suggested that supermarkets should do more to support the rural economies by selling local produce instead of imported food. Concerns were also expressed about the poor public transport links to rural communities.

Further comments indicated that there should be a balance of social and private housing provided in villages around the borough.

Protecting the countryside

Residents were asked if they felt parts of the Countryside should enjoy greater protection from development than other areas.

It was highlighted that the Government needs to encourage population growth in the North West and South West of the UK as the South East is becoming saturated with people and development. In addition it was indicated that more should be done to prevent towns from developing to the point where they merged into the surrounding villages. A number of

suggestions emphasised that housing developments in villages should be kept small (6-12 houses) and more consideration should be placed on developing available brown field sites. It was highlighted that green field sites must be protected as a resource for the future.

Concerns were expressed that over development would reduce the rural landscape and ultimately reduce the number of tourists visiting the area as this was one of the main attractions. It was highlighted that all areas of outstanding natural beauty including ancient woodlands and marshes have to be protected. Concerns were raised that more should be done to protect the coastline and the wetlands and also Grade 1 agricultural land. It was highlighted that developments should be judged on their merits and that all areas should have protection from unnecessary and poorly thought out developments. Greater thought should be given when granting planning permission as it is felt that all development uses resources and makes climate change worse and so they should not be granted permission lightly. Residential developments may increase flooding in nearby areas and jobs created by development may cause losses elsewhere. It was felt that the quality of the jobs created and the longevity and pay structures should be taken into account. Further concerns were expressed that if we erode the countryside we reduce the plant life that provides us with oxygen.

It was highlighted that the countryside should be integrated into development rather than the other way round as infrastructure, public transport and cycle areas play an important part.

Tourism

It was highlighted that we could encourage more tourists to visit rural areas by:

- Building a countryside resort to enable people to come and enjoy the area
- Having car parking spaces near circular rural walks as most footpaths are inaccessible to town folk
- Promoting conservation areas
- Providing better transport links to local train stations
- Providing more information about what is available
- Creating a Bredgar website to promote this area of outstanding natural beauty, also featuring our lovely houses and churches
- Promoting the area by creating good signposting, maps etc
- Getting rid of the smell from the fields in the summer months
- Setting up an annual event
- Providing festivals, music and markets
- Make people aware of what is there but don't encourage developers to turn the countryside into a giant theme park
- Create areas of interest
- Provide good places to stay, eat and drink

- Develop a 'country drive' – a round route could be established that takes in local landmarks and restaurants
- Create accessible routes in country parks so that families with young children/people with disabilities can use them
- Provide better rural public transport to encourage people without cars to explore rural areas
- Ensure the assets are kept in good repair

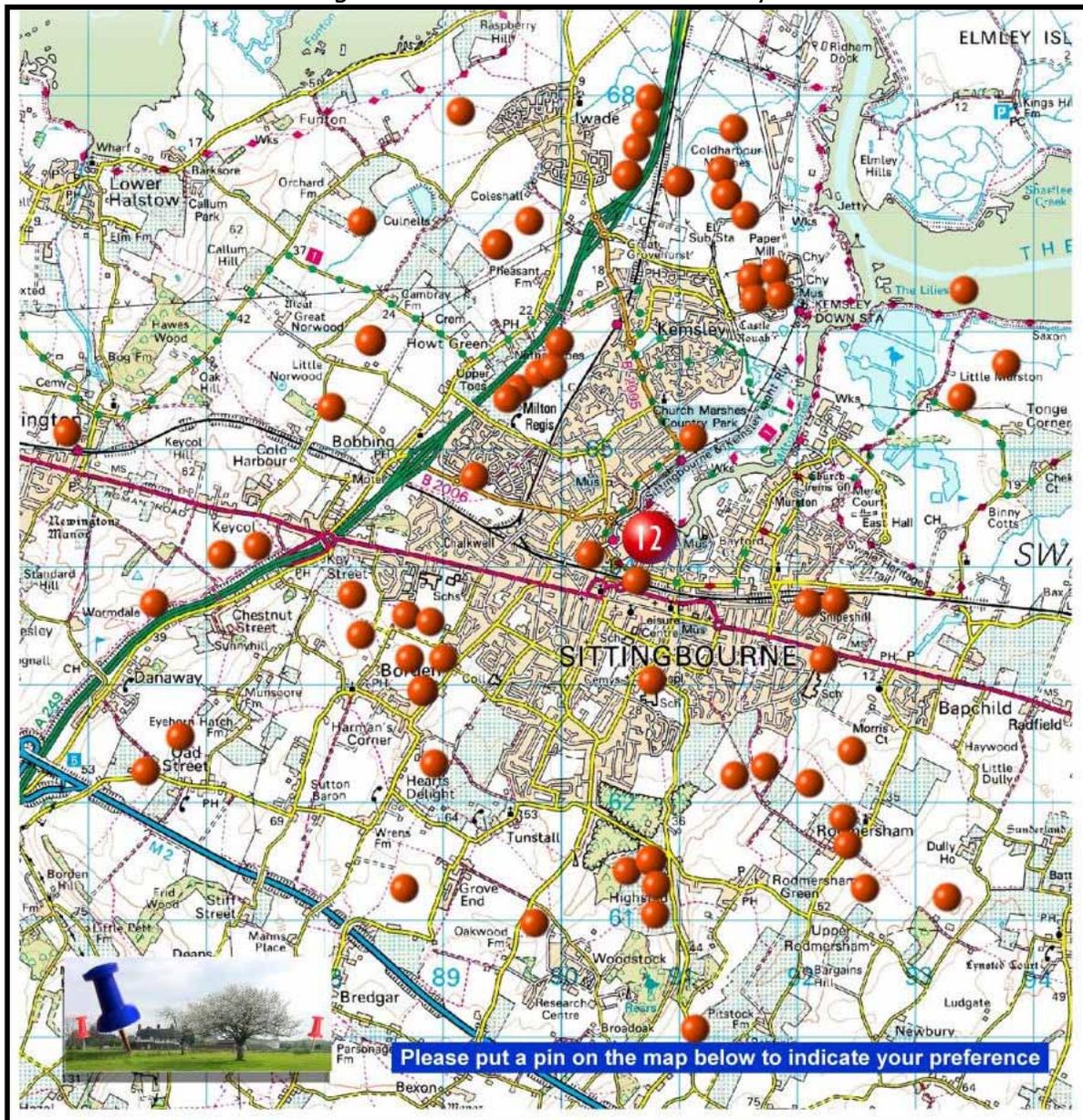
Concerns were expressed that if we encourage more tourists to visit rural areas this will create more traffic. It was identified that tourists should be given information about the different modes of transport that could get them to some of these areas and the multiple choices of routes that are available to them. One respondent queried why we want to encourage tourists to visit rural areas as tourism does not provide secure employment.

RURAL AREAS - KEY MESSAGES

- Design cold stores and packing houses to blend into the landscape
- Poly tunnels are needed to support food production
- Ensure food production does not have an adverse effect on the environment
- Find alternative uses for redundant shops and pubs
- Build more housing in rural areas to support local facilities
- Create more affordable housing to meet **local** needs
- Protect rural communities from invasive developments
- Make better use of brown field sites and build higher density housing developments on them
- Confine development in rural areas to those villages that have existing services
- Improve IT infrastructure in rural areas
- Locate low impact businesses in rural areas and confine industry to urban locations
- Sustainable transport needs to be developed to meet the needs of rural communities and businesses located in those areas
- Prevent towns from merging into surrounding villages
- Do more to protect the coastline, wetlands and Grade 1 agricultural land
- Protect all areas from unnecessary and poorly thought out developments
- Make more people aware of what the countryside offers but don't turn it into a giant theme park

d. SITTINGBOURNE

Residents were asked to identify where new housing and employment should be provided if Sittingbourne had to expand. The map below identifies their responses. It was acknowledged that a great deal of consultation had already been undertaken in Sittingbourne so it was not felt necessary to ask the



range of questions that had been posed to Faversham and Isle of Sheppey residents.

It is evident from the number of sites highlighted that residents feel there is scope in and near to Sittingbourne for future growth. In conversations we had with residents when they were considering this question many highlighted that future development should be focussed alongside the A249.

In addition it was also suggested that the Paper Mill site in Kemsley and Milton Creek provides future development opportunities.

7. CONCLUSIONS

It is evident from the consultation that many of the residents we have spoken to are concerned about the effect any new developments in the borough will have on current infrastructure provision. Many residents believe that an increase in the current population will result in an over demand on doctors' waiting lists and hospital provision. In addition many are convinced that there will be insufficient school places for future generations of children growing up in the borough.

Residents from across the borough expressed their concerns about the ineffectiveness of the current public transport system. It was highlighted that many communities both rural and urban are poorly served by the current public transport system with buses ceasing operation early in the evening and often not providing a service on Sundays. This results in many people having a greater reliance on car usage. However it was highlighted that the road system in the borough has difficulty coping with the demands placed on it, which many believe prohibits future development opportunities. Fears were expressed that an increase in developments locally both housing and employment sites will create a greater pressure on the road infrastructure. Many residents were keen to ensure that current employment sites are developed to capacity before new ones are developed. Similarly concerns were also expressed about the number of empty houses in the borough suggesting that these should be refurbished and brought back into use to meet the current housing demand.

Further concerns were expressed that many of the housing developments are attracting new people into the borough rather than addressing the needs of local people. It was evident that many residents are finding it difficult to get on to the property ladder and questioned what is affordable housing as they feel that much of it is beyond their price range.

The consultation exercise has highlighted the need to develop the retail centres of Sittingbourne and Sheerness as residents recognise that they currently do not meet the needs of local people. It was emphasised that the Isle of Sheppey and Faversham provide good opportunities for tourist development with suggestions indicating that more should be done to promote the history of these areas.

Other important issues that were highlighted during the consultation relate to the need for more employment opportunities to be created locally. Concerns were expressed about the lack of higher education facilities locally and the lack of graduate employment opportunities. In addition it was felt that more local employment opportunities should be created on the Isle of Sheppey to meet the needs of young people and those who are currently unemployed.

As the Issues and Options for the local development framework are developed it will be crucial to identify how the current infrastructure will cope with the increased demands placed on it. At present local people are basing their concerns on their individual experiences which may not be reflective of the bigger picture. It will be important for Officers from the Council to demonstrate the positive impact new development could bring to the borough and explain how residents concerns highlighted in this report have been addressed.

The enthusiasm and interest residents have shown demonstrates how successful this method of engagement can be. Many people took time to consider the questions posed and have provided information that can be used by the Council in helping to draw up the vision and objectives for the Core Strategy. It is evident from the response to the consultation and the comments members of the public made that they were pleased to be asked to share their knowledge and experiences of living in the Borough.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 CONSULTATION RESULTS

**APPENDIX 2 EXAMPLES OF PINBOARD
QUESTIONNAIRES**

FAVERSHAM RESULTS

PROSPERITY

In Swale we will need to provide:

- **18,000 jobs**
- **Provide new sites for employment**

What sort of economy do you want to see in Swale in the future and what changes do you think will be needed to achieve this?

Yes, but how is the question?

Keep local newspapers local.

Employment needed for lower skilled workers as well as for skilled workers.

It needs to be made implicit that any new jobs and new affordable housing goes to local people. Also there shouldn't be any option not to work if you are able.

I've had a business in Swale where the Business people were really good.

Now I'm in Canterbury and the Business people are really terrible.

Swale Bough Council – keep doing the good work.

*Put the 'A' back in F * VERSHAM at the railway station, as it looks so slovenly.*

It seems very difficult to get jobs in this area if have a degree and even harder to find part-time job unless you know someone.

If you don't have a car it is hard to get to jobs outside the area.

Do you agree that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
82		2

In order to be fit for the future we may need to widen our base into the knowledge economy. In order to meet future demand should development for employment take place at?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Kent Science park	33	11	1
Existing Employment Areas	31		
New sites in urban areas	32	8	1
Greenfield sites	14	38	

Our market research to date indicates that any new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent Faversham. Do you agree with this assumption?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
15	6	

If you don't agree where else should they be sited?

Jobs are needed in Faversham as well as Sittingbourne and Sheerness.

Isle of Sheppey

The whole of the UK is being allowed to become a mess of urban sprawl, planning allows for development wherever people wish to live where jobs and industry is allowed to grow. We have just small pockets of conservation areas which are then trampled. Why not even out the North/South divide. Industry and jobs should be encouraged back. What has happened to the quality of life?

There's no new employment in this area and hasn't been for years. The main investment is in Sittingbourne and Sheerness.

The area needs industrial starter units and the next stage too

Brown field sites

Utilise brown field sites to preserve the green fields

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

In Swale we have to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of Kent Thames Gateway growth area. We have made good progress in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

Comments

No more housing in the area

The cost of repairing historic buildings in conservation areas is really expensive and there are no grants

Don't build on Orchards as these are a valuable part of our heritage and more importantly will take many years to replace

Only build homes if there are sufficient GP's, Dentists, schools and policing to service this new population

Don't forget Faversham!! Treat us equally

Faversham should never have gone back to having its own council. We don't seem to get back what we put into Swale BC

Faversham seems to be 3rd choice when it comes to spending money on the three towns in the borough

Do you think we should build these remaining homes?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
In the deprived urban communities?	63	2	
On greenfield sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable housing with access to existing services?	13	33	
A mixture of both?	8	1	

To meet the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers Swale will be looking to identify suitable sites, Are you aware of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose?

*Vigorously apply the law, close illegal sites and move them out of Swale
Yes – Isle of Sheppey
Preferably on brown field sites*

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
By creating small Council owned sites	15	1	
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites	1	5	
By using developer contributions for affordable housing	3	1	

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The term affordable housing means:

- That rentals are below the market value
- That people can share the ownership of a property with a Social Landlord (Housing Association)
- Emergency Accommodation

We know that the amount of affordable housing we need to provide exceeds the housing quota we have to build, therefore we need to set ambitious but achievable target of the amount of new homes we build being affordable. We think 35% is an achievable target.

Comments

*There are no affordable homes here
What is affordable housing? We need people who can pay the rent
Affordable Housing – Total Joke! Look at the local wages
Build the affordable housing in areas where they have services nearby, i.e. brownfield sites.*

Do you agree with our target?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
53	3	2

If you don't agree please tell us what target you think we should be aiming for

15% Max due to existing infrastructure back-up of GP's and Schools, etc.

Do you think the Borough provides a wide enough choice of housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
3	35	2

If not, what do you feel is missing and where?

*Swale has a lot empty housing that needs doing up but they don't. The bidding system is swayed incorrectly. People are desperate to be housed. Private rented property has unaffordable deposits.
Faversham town centre is the only area that appears clean while the other areas – streets and parks have overflowing bins and dirty streets.
There needs to be proper pedestrianisation of the High Street of the town centre – it's not safe – It should be either one or the other.
With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints that there is a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use
There needs to be affordable accommodation for single young men
More housing accommodation that can cater for physical disabilities x3
Provide more rented accommodation for young people
The council should build social housing estates separate to private developments
There needs to be more affordable homes for young people not just executive homes*

Transport

What do you think the proposals for transport in Swale should be to ensure a sustainable approach can be achieved?

Encourage school 'walking buses' where possible. Trains must be less expensive. Bus routes for rural areas should be increased. Bus fares reduced Bring back National Rail and Bus Services.

Better co-ordination between train & bus timetables, More Cycle Routes. Better Trains & Bus services especially later in the evenings to early and more reasonably priced

If there is an expansive and cheaper public transport system there is a better likelihood of people using them. – Something similar to the Oyster System The cost of train tickets is unsustainable if more people are anticipated to be using services in the future

Provide a better public transport service on Sheppey

Affordable fares – I would love a new train line between Faversham and Ashford

Have more trains which run more frequently some fast, some stopping more often. We need cheaper and affordable fares

Make train fares cheaper & easier to understand the various tariffs x 2

Network Rail should reduce its prices

Trains should be less expensive and easier tariffs

Allowing for a two tier "High Speed" ticket system was a big mistake as it is manifestly unfair. Please exercise your influence on the train providers for all our sakes

Reducing local trains due to the introduction to expensive high speed trains – that few can use unless they wish to go to St Pancras. This is bad for Faversham. x 4

It all seems to be about cars – Bus system is v. bad – what about the trains? this is all about roads. Why? x 2

The main road is not serviced with buses as most are double decked which is too high to get under the bridge

People don't use public transport as it is cheaper and more convenient to use the car!

Faversham isn't a backwater village. It deserves more regular and frequent service including Sunday services for workers in Canterbury – there & back!! Links to south Kent need to be improved to link into the developments happening in Ashford and surrounding areas

We think transport is quite good in urban areas but poor in rural areas where more frequent buses are needed

More public transport from rural areas especially suitable for those with mobility problems

People with disabilities have problems getting jobs and then difficulties get to work especially due to cost – get them free bus passes, only for use after 9am Don't abandon the pensioners! Force government to keep supporting free bus transport

Make all public transport free for Over 60's and get cars off the road

Keep free Bus Passes for Over 60's

Free rail travel for 60+ or 65+

Would you be prepared to accept more growth, if infrastructure needs could be met, which otherwise could not be brought forward?

YES 13	NO 10	DON'T KNOW
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*Yes, but not roads – micro rail or more railways
Only if you do have the infrastructure – there have been a couple of power blackouts on Sheppey*

Should we apply different restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage?

YES 26	NO	DON'T KNOW
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LEARNING AND SKILLS

We know that the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the National and Regional average. In addition we also have a shortage of graduate employment opportunities and no Further Education Provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

What can we do to improve access to Further Education in the Borough?

*Adult Education is essential. College annex – why not use existing schools outside of their hours
If there is no FE provision then maybe FE provision could be improved by FE provision
We have no Higher Education College
Not enough graduate opportunities in Swale
Quality graduate opportunities will not develop unless you have quality space to put them in. Where would a quality employer situate in Faversham?
More practical trade apprenticeships – Not everyone aspires to academic qualifications
Use local school space for Adult Education + encourage all age groups x 3
Either affordable travel to college outside the town or a college annexe
Fund travel for students to FE College in Canterbury which has a very good reputation
Create a Higher Ed College on Paper Mill site along side retail village
We do have some very good pre-schools and primary schools and even Abbey is improving
Raise aspirations amongst parents and families – not just children*

If the benefits system was more flexible, to allow you to sign off to take on temporary work while studying but able to get back on benefit quickly and easily if you needed to

What more could be done to improve the opportunities locally for training and skills development?

What are “skills”?

Stop training graduates to do factory jobs

Need Adult Education in Faversham

Why do you wait many months before you can get retrained?

There is a need for retraining opportunities for those who are employed and who have aspirations

RETAIL

Like many towns Sittingbourne is struggling to survive. We recognise Sittingbourne as the retail heart of the Borough and we are bringing forward proposals to address this via a master plan and a planning application is expected later in the year.

However, we recognise that there are other local shopping centres situated elsewhere in the borough.

Do you use your local shops?

Frequently 90	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never
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What do you like about your local shops?

Faversham has wonderful independent traders

Keep the Post Office

Retailers should be encouraged to adapt to the changing needs – tourism

Great variety of charity shops - favourite is “Pilgrims Hospice”

The market has improved greatly since we moved here 6 years ago. A vibrant market should be encouraged to continue

Which ones do you use most?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	2	50	5	1
Supermarket	6	76	3	2
Post Office	2	28	4	
Bakers	6	25	4	
Butchers	3	40	4	
Greengrocers	5	26	2	1
Newsagent	7	72	1	1
Farmer’s Market		8	2	1
Farm Shops	3	34	3	
Other - 3				

Is there anything you feel we should be doing to support the local economies?

Cheaper business rates

Lower rents & rates independent sole traders

Business rates are high for small businesses

Support local independent shops – the less chain shops the better!

Cap rent & rates at sensible levels

Chamber of Commerce – there needs to be a tiered business rate system throughout the UK, as in France

Develop basic retail not multi-national outlets. – Fruit & Veg, Bookshop, not more charity shops

Remove TESCO from Faversham and discourage multi-national outlets thereby giving local businesses a chance. Landlords in Faversham should not expect shopkeepers to have full-repairing leases as the buildings are largely medieval

Retail - Encourage & develop better shops in town as there is currently a poor mix provided

Keep the Post Office – encourage Farmers Market - Faversham needs clothing and shoe shops, etc

More affordable retail shops – kids clothing, etc – Primark x 2

Encourage small businesses. The chain stores may provide some employment but have no interest in Faversham other than taking the money out of it.

Please keep the chain stores out – keep Faversham unique

A Morrison Supermarket coming to town is great, as its competition for Tesco x 5

Is there anything that you feel is overprovided in your local shopping area?

Too many charity shops – something needs to be done to encourage small shops

More thought give to a balance in planning consent to the type of shop granted as there are too many eateries and more coming Faversham can't possibly sustain all of them

The supermarkets are ruining small businesses and creating a lot of waste and environmental problems - KEEP THEM OUT

Too many café's and restaurants created

Cafes and eateries

Too many eating places - local establishments are not being encouraged, in France this would not be allowed – LEARN

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Like all authorities, we must confront the challenges of climate change. Swale has the additional issue of having low lying land subject to flooding .Swale is in the front line of climate change, this means more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten communities and wildlife. We may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites which flood or new land. Which do you think we should choose?

*What is the point of building homes on land that can flood and cause misery
Some of the new housing shouldn't be on flood plains or marshland. Even
planning for the inevitable doesn't work when 3 story homes are allowed to
convert the basement into accommodation*

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop wind farms?

YES 51	NO 15	DON'T KNOW
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If yes, where do you think we should site them?

Off- shore – all around UK, not just off of Swale

*I don't favour wind farms partly due to their appearance on a necessary grand scale and partly because they are not consistent power producers due to varying winds. Other forms of alternative energy should be researched as well
More wind farms on Sheppey*

Off-shore x 3

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop Combined Heat and Power systems?

YES 16	NO	DON'T KNOW 1
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If yes, where do you think we should site them? (Please tell us on a post it note)

It is not clear what is meant by 'combined heat and power systems' I am anti-nuclear and pro sun, wind and tidal systems. Heat exchange systems should be used as they are very efficient.

If it meant paying more for a new home should the Council require developers to build more eco-friendly homes?

YES 27	NO 1	DON'T KNOW
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If you answered no to the question above, how do you think we should adapt to the effects of climate change?

Also acknowledged is that modern energy efficient windows, for example can be incorporated into conservation areas.

Build the homes from recycled materials.

We know that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in us having to make choices about future land uses. How do you feel we should prioritise the demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of landscape character?

Airport on Sheppey – NO! x 3

ISLE OF SHEPPEY

We expect the Port of Sheerness to bring forward major expansion plans. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island’s economic and historic assets, how can we unlock its potential?

If growth is focussed on Western Sheppey where there are transport links and services, what can be done to assist communities on the Eastern end of the Island?

*We don’t have the infrastructure on the island to cope with it
Too many houses being built on Sheppey x 2*

Road structure on eastern end of island is totally inadequate

Public transport is diabolical – especially on the eastern side

What more could Sheppey do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island?

What Canterbury CC has done with Whitstable is so good why can’t Swale BC do something similar, especially on the Isle of Sheppey?

Have some attractions for the tourists – give them something to do x 2

Improve the standards of the arcades and make it worth visiting – a choice of things to do

Some of the Island’s holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Should this be allowed even if it results in sub-standard accommodation or housing in areas that flood?

Already built on the flood plain – Social Housing!

In Leysdown the holiday homes always have been permanently lived in.

YES 2	NO	DON’T KNOW
----------	----	------------

Do you feel there is sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard on the Island?

YES	NO 3	DON’T KNOW
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What could be done to improve the environment and appearance of holiday sites on the Island?

Why aren't there more police during the huge influx of summer holidaymakers while they are merrymaking at our expense. We never see the police the rest of the year either!

The prison is one of the Island's major employers, if the need arises should it be allowed to expand its site?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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As long as they keep the prisoners in

SITTINGBOURNE

*Eurolink expediency. Made by Don Allen providing industrial sites
Why put units on a peninsular so that all the heavy vehicles and workers have to go through town?*

Sittingbourne needs a market

Regenerate Sittingbourne High Street so people visit for different reasons (dining, family events, etc.) not just shopping

Main communication centre (station) is cut off from town centre

St Michael's Road should have never been built, it is a disaster

No good promoting the High Street without parking provision

Town Square needed

Plans for Sittingbourne are awful. Please re-think

Sittingbourne is dying on its feet. It needs to encourage small individual shops – it needs better shoe shops

Turn the Paper Mills into another "Bluewater" retail village

FAVERSHAM

Faversham is a small and compact market town not identified for significant growth. Any new homes and jobs in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community. It is likely that some modest growth will be required.

Comments

Faversham has been enlarged so much over the last 10 years, we don't have the infrastructures to support this additional enlargement. We feel you do not consider the needs of Faversham residents, we are the smaller area – Don't spoil our town anymore

Enhance what is here SYMPATHICALLY

More encouragement for businesses – shops BUT NO MORE HOUSING

More development in the main High Street to attract businesses to the town

The Town Council should be abolished and Faversham should come under Swale BC

No further development (except brown field sites)

Only brown field development

*Develop town centre and stop overdevelopment of the edges of the town
Invest more and stop ignoring Faversham
Eco village houses only*

What more could Faversham do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the area?

The Council needs to support Hop Festival and promote community well-being, also other small festivals and events at weekends

Support from the Council for events

Encourage more arts & craft shops and Antique shops

Faversham is becoming more of a tourist based town, where is a need to promote this as a golden triangle with Whitstable and Canterbury

More retail and restaurants in the town and lower the parking fees as they are driving tourists away

More police in the town centre in the evenings to discourage excessive drinking

Monitor local pubs for public drunkenness and increase the police presence to discourage this antisocial behaviour

Bring back the Fireworks!

Maintaining the integrity of its barges and boats should be priority – Barge Museum?

*Improve the Creek tastefully. No Disneyfying developments though
Improvements to the Creek!*

Faversham Creek – need cleaning out – it belongs to Medway Ports

Clean up the Creek and create usable tourist spaces around it – parking, restaurants, etc. The Chamber of Commerce would help x 2

Dredge the creek and reopen the bridge

Develop the Creek properly. The investment will be repaid! Not for private houses, but for boats

Develop the ‘marina’ behind Morrisons – a smaller version of Whitstable harbour

The Creek should have been a mixed development – work site plus large and small home units

The creek has been spoiled by executive type houses. The thoroughfare around the Creek has now gone – private roads!

Promote the Creek, its historical aspects – its lovely architecture. Green tourism - with cycling, bird watching, walking

The creek needs to be cleaned up, dredged and utilised in a manner sensitive and respectful to its history and the environment. At the same time encourage the use of the creek with moorings for visiting boats and water based community activities

Affordable places for tourists to stay. Increase the range of accommodation for visitors

What types of jobs should be provided to reduce the amount of commuting out of the town?

Faversham needs some larger chain retailers like M&S & Debenhams which will bring new jobs to the area

Provide subsidised studio spaces for local artists and crafts people.

Be realistic, people need to commute to Canterbury

Small clean craft manufacturing businesses

Information Technology

Light Industrial

I.T. Consultancy, remote working

Any type of job will prevent commuting

The importance of the town's heritage is well known, should this remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. Do you think this will inhibit future development?

Faversham is too much about heritage can we have a happy medium?

We want more employment and shops here all the new development goes to Sheppey and Sittingbourne

Faversham is its heritage. Take it away and you will lose its soul and beauty x 3

Commercial Parking needs to be considered

Reduce the rates for shops

Obviously we can't stop progress but development can be done properly and in keeping with Faversham's heritage

Need more reasonable retail rents and rates with shorter commitment terms to encourage new businesses

New houses should be available to all incomes – no more big housing estates, need smaller developments

Rather than executive type housing – build rows of affordable terraced homes

The Town's heritage must remain a priority. The heritage is one of the main that make Faversham unique. Future development must work with the town's heritage

The town's priority as a heritage venue should continue to be built upon. Strict controls on development are required

The resident's parking scheme is unfair why should one have to pay to park outside your own house?

Faversham is a smashing place to live – don't change too much - but the young are moving out as they can't afford it

RURAL AREAS

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores, packing houses)?

Please give us your views about this

In favour of poly tunnels as they aren't permanent x 4

Kent is the garden of England and the farmers need to have poly tunnels, cold stores etc. If they can't have those they won't grow fruit and we might as well live in Essex!!

We need to grow our own food locally and therefore we will have to accept some new development and poly tunnels.

Local shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive, should we?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Find alternative uses for these buildings?	13	1	
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?	9	7	1

Would you support the development of more housing to meet local needs, in particular affordable housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
4	18	

If you do, where should they be sited?

*Where they are sited i.e. Oare – what happened to the trees that were there to hide it? - A line of trees goes along way to maintain a rural aspect.
Build taller on brown field sites not green fields*

We need to do more to support the rural economy. What business uses are appropriate/inappropriate to site in the countryside and where should they be sited?

Encourage a diversity of services to be provided in pubs/post offices e.g. sale of local produce.

Should parts of the countryside enjoy greater protection from development than other areas? If you feel they do please tell us why and which ones

Keep it beautiful.

Yes, a rural landscape its part of England and the reason tourists come from all over the world to see it – not urban sprawl.

All green field sites need to be protected. All areas of outstanding beauty have to be protected.

How do we encourage tourists to visit the rural areas?

Bike, hike and buses. Tour coaches, Tourist Info, Links from train stations

Information

CULTURE

We have been undertaking a lot of market research to identify how people use their leisure time and what sports, leisure and cultural facilities they are involved in.

Comments

More children's summer play schemes - cheap

What cultural facilities do you expect to have?

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	9	13	
Cinema		25	1
Sports Centre	3	10	
Football pitch		11	1
Local park	3	16	
Formal park		2	
Access to nature	9	8	
Museums		10	
Theatre	1	13	
Library		18	1
Swimming pool	1	23	3
Art Gallery		11	
Restaurants		8	1
Café		13	
Pubs	3	14	
Music Venue	1	10	
Studio space		10	
Recording/rehearsal space		2	1
Other			

Is there anything else you want to tell us about leisure and culture provision in the borough?

Theatre

Because of Londoners living here there is an expectation that all residents have money – we don't.

Swimming – family tickets - Sittingbourne = £10.80 Sheppey = the same but Faversham = £20.00? Season tickets are now good.

No cultural centre – open Court Hall, Milton.

Public swimming is restricted in the evening due to pools being taken up by clubs
All family tickets are for 4 people please extend for more children
Why does it charge for people to sit and watch when they are spending money in the coffee shop? x 3
Why does the pool charge so much for children at £2.80 per child? If it was cheaper many more children would be out of the house and using it. Look at society around – low wages and more than one child x 3
Need more local sports clubs so that youngsters have something to do cheaply.
Sports facilities need to be improved in the way of size.

RURAL AREAS RESULTS

PROSPERITY

In Swale we will need to provide:

- **18,000 jobs**
- **Provide new sites for employment**

Related Comments

The KSP have said 500 jobs in the next 10 years - where is the other 17,500 going to come from?
The benefits system also needs altering as you get offered three jobs – you either take one or you lose your benefits – the system is wrong.

What sort of economy do you want to see in Swale in the future and what changes do you think will be needed to achieve this?

Applying urban business rates to rural shops etc is unfair and is slowly draining the vital life out of rural communities.
Local Jobs for local people as per Gordon Brown's directive.
Use the current employment site, to a better use – higher density of employment.

Do you agree that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
28		1

In order to be fit for the future we may need to widen our base into the knowledge economy. In order to meet future demand should development for employment take place at?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Kent Science park	20	28	
Existing Employment Areas	29		1
New sites in urban areas	16	4	1
Greenfield sites	1	21	

Our market research to date indicates that any new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent Faversham. Do you agree with this assumption?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
21	3	7

If you don't agree where else should they be sited?

Too much emphasis on the KSP – Remember the rest of Swale especially Faversham and Sheppey.

If they are going to be used then they could be in Faversham. There are unused office blocks outside of Sittingbourne – a waste of land.

All new sites should be aligned along the A249.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

In Swale we have to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of Kent Thames Gateway growth area. We have made good progress in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

Related Comments

A young couple are finding really difficult in finding somewhere to live. They rent privately on a busy main road with a toddler and have been on the Council waiting list for 2 years.

Housing – the scoring system is all wrong. – as an individual I had 71 points – as a couple with children – only have 41 points.

Very difficult to get any sense out of the local council as no offices communicate with each other.

Swale has been spoilt - it's just housing for commuters – not a community

Housing – I have been on the list for 5 years – I been forced to go into private rented accommodation.

There are many empty housing properties in the area that could be renovated and thus solve much of the housing shortage.

Sittingbourne - Retail/Office/Industrial development should be along the A249 An imaginative approach is needed to planning – Office complex in one place and linked to car parking by an electric rail system.

Mixed development does work! It is working on Eden Village.

No infrastructure for the KSP – not a good location for housing.

No houses on green field sites.

Need more infrastructure to support new housing x 2

There has been a dreadful smell in Bredgar for the last 3 weeks.

Do you think we should build these remaining homes?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
In the deprived urban communities?	26		
On greenfield sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable housing with access to existing services?		21	
A mixture of both?	18	5	

To meet the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers Swale will be looking to identify suitable sites, Are you aware of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose?

Why do we need to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers when we can't even meet the needs of the more deserving - disabled and hardworking people?

Real Gypsies were no real problem in the past but current travellers have caused many problems, they are their own worst enemy.

No more!

Yes, but small sites only x 3

Small sites only - they must meet planning regulations like everyone else.

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
By creating small Council owned sites	8	1	
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites	22	2	2

By using developer contributions for affordable housing	4	2	2
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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The term affordable housing means:

- That rentals are below the market value
- That people can share the ownership of a property with a Social Landlord (Housing Association)
- Emergency Accommodation

We know that the amount of affordable housing we need to provide exceeds the housing quota we have to build, therefore we need to set ambitious but achievable target of the amount of new homes we build being affordable. We think 35% is an achievable target.

Related Comments

Surely affordable housing means that which can be afforded by those on an average wage.

Social Housing and Affordable Homes should go to local people – those who have been on the waiting lists. Not Londoners, etc.

The plans should identify a satisfying housing requirement for the aged and infirm x 2

Surely affordable housing should be available in town centres to avoid increasing traffic problems?

Putting them in towns will increase the traffic in towns!

Do you agree with our target?

YES 18	NO 9	DON'T KNOW 3
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If you don't agree please tell us what target you think we should be aiming for

It should be a higher percentage (50%) But that isn't profitable for the developer!

50%

There should be more social housing but who is going to build them x 2

35% is too low – it does not relate to the social demographic nature of Swale – poor skills – poor employment opportunities.

20%

Do you think the Borough provides a wide enough choice of housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
34	9	6

If not, what do you feel is missing and where?

Housing for both families and older people – and they should be inspected regularly to ensure they are presentable and fit for purpose.
There needs to be more social housing – its not always local people who get housed first. Rented accommodation isn't secure.
The price is prohibitive.
More housing – more schools.
Give first time buyers a better opportunity to get on the property ladder.
Provide help with the deposits on rented accommodation.
Lack of appropriate housing – issues with parking, waste disposal and bins on estates.
Especially Schools, GP Surgeries, Dentists!
When building estates the infrastructure should go in first instead of making new residents wait until the estate is complete.
Bapchurch, School Lane – The new barn had planning permission that had a requirement where the land at the front was landscaped so that no farm machinery should be in sight - this has never happened – Why?
It is this sort of behaviour is why the locals don't trust the Parish and Borough Councils.
Sometimes it is the mix of people that cause the issues in an area.
Choice of garden size x 2
Swale has an excellent variety of housing.
Private and other plans should include single story homes.

TRANSPORT

With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints that there is a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use.

What do you think the proposals for transport in Swale should be to ensure a sustainable approach can be achieved?

More trains with fast non-stop routes.
Need a more regular train service in Teynham
Use the train to go to Canterbury (have to change at Faversham and make a stops here as no-one get on or off)
The High Speed train have greatly reduced the trains to Victoria and Cannon Street where many Kent people work – they don't work in North London!
Stop the rail companies robbing us x 5

Buses.

Existing public transport infrastructure offers further opportunities e.g. link bus routes with commuter train timings.

*Generally public transport is good with good roads and initiatives like Free Kids bus scheme. But the train fares are astronomical!
 Upgrade train stations – including bridge as a priority. Undercover bike store needed. Rural bus services are hopeless – great improvement required.
 The bus service to Sittingbourne is bad but Maidstone is better.
Rodmersham bus times 10am - 12pm - 2pm no services on Sunday or Bank Hols and Post Bus once in the morning and evening. But the 61 buses in the valley can't get to Rodmersham.
 Better buses in the rural areas.
 I don't have a car so I need good public transport.
 Public transport is inadequate in rural areas so everyone uses a car so more development will mean more cars.
 Improve bus services between villages and towns x 10
 Cycle Tracks x 2
 Footpaths have been lost in road widening. These paths were used for walking and cycling into town as the roads were too dangerous to cycle on.
 All these people now are forced to catch a bus or use their car.*

Would you be prepared to accept more growth, if infrastructure needs could be met, which otherwise could not be brought forward?

YES 13	NO 4	DON'T KNOW 2
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Should we apply different restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage?

YES 18	NO 4	DON'T KNOW 3
-----------	---------	-----------------

Related Comments

The questions are disingenuous! A decent infrastructure is necessary before larger scale housing and economic development takes place. Why should we accept increased growth in order to attract investment in infrastructure? x 2

LEARNING AND SKILLS

We know that the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the National and Regional average. In addition we also have a shortage of graduate employment opportunities and no Further Education Provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

What can we do to improve access to Further Education in the Borough?
When I sought help from Connections and Jobcentre – re college courses they didn't want to know – couldn't fund it either.
Remove 11+ to encourage better approach to education. Create FE College on the Paper Mills site.
FE facilities needed for youngsters and adults in the borough.
What happened to the KSP Resource Centre? We don't want courses in Excel, Word or Power point!
The best idea would be improve the local education for secondary school children and build on that.
Encourage apprenticeships and FE College in area or provide better access by public transport to existing FE provision x 4
Encourage companies that employ graduates to Swale and then open FE colleges.
Provide old fashioned apprenticeships.
Turn KSP in a FE college or university x 5
It is essential that a prestigious HE establishment links with the KSP and promotes educational development within Swale.

What more could be done to improve the opportunities locally for training and skills development?

There should additional Higher and FE sites in the borough – Canterbury is too far.
Should allow young people who have families to attend college for more than 16 hours a week without losing benefits.
Bring more development of universities into the area. Put more monies into the existing schools. Not having to travel so far would encourage better attendance.

Related Comments

No Science at the KSP, no links to universities – It's a front – a pension fund developing housing - should have consulted with residents.
Carillion provide skills training for the borough and it's excellent.
The benefits system also needs altering as you get offered three jobs – you either take one or you lose your benefits – the system is wrong.

RETAIL

Like many towns Sittingbourne is struggling to survive. We recognise Sittingbourne as the retail heart of the Borough and we are bringing forward proposals to address this via a master plan and a planning application is expected later in the year.

However, we recognise that there are other local shopping centres situated elsewhere in the borough.

Related comments

To get the items we need, we have become too reliant on the car.
Can't get farming clothes (female).

*The PO in Sittingbourne is disgusting – very long queues x 4
Not fair – Could have local produce.*

Do you use your local shops?

Frequently	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never
22	18	3	

What do you like about your local shops?

Local produce.

Butchers in Doddington is fantastic I do a big shop there once a month.

The High Street has some attractive buildings, the town should restore these and improve the shop fronts x 3

Difficult to use local shops as most of them have closed. I would love to have local shops and would use them.

Mainly friendly, helpful staff.

Very good friendly, personal service.

Village Shops excellent friendly service.

Always support your local shops otherwise they close – they are convenient and LESS TRAVELLING.

I go to Faversham or Canterbury for clothes.

I go to Canterbury and Sittingbourne for clothes and music.

Teynham - the co-op is very busy as it sells most things and the PO is also busy.

Fishmonger x 3

Which ones do you use most?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	3	5		1
Supermarket	5	7	1	1
Post Office	1	5	5	1
Bakers		1	2	1
Butchers		3	2	1
Greengrocers	1	1		1
Newsagent	3	1		1
Farmer's Market		1	1	1
Farm Shops		23	2	1
Other				

Is there anything you feel we should be doing to support the local economies?

There is only one pedestrian crossing in Teynham on the London road, more are required for safety and local businesses.

I tend to shop in Morrison's in Canterbury and clothes in the Medway towns.

Teynham - insufficient parking for shoppers so cars park across the pavement of a very fast and busy road, which is dangerous for all.

The buses are more frequent to Maidstone than Sittingbourne so we do our shopping there outside the borough.

Lock of pedestrian crossing – near Homebase, if you walk from the town centre – must make it more accessible to pedestrians.

Too many takeaways that cause rubbish on local roads and in villages.

Clean the streets in Sittingbourne and encourage more shops into the town.

Forget the retail ‘bridge’

If you could sort out the shopping centre in Sittingbourne everything will fall into place.

Stop external retail park. It’s killing the High Street - Corporations killing local retailers.

Need more support and finance for other businesses to be set up.

Lower business rates. On a point scoring basis (i.e. like a credit evaluation)

Think about initiatives that keep the community alive.

They’re responsive, but needs greater support from the village.

If you can encourage local shops then you minimise the traffic journeys into town.

Is there anything that you feel is overprovided in your local shopping area?

Charity Shops

Empty shops!

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Like all authorities, we must confront the challenges of climate change. Swale has the additional issue of having low lying land subject to flooding .Swale is in the front line of climate change, this means more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten communities and wildlife. We may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites which flood or new land. Which do you think we should choose?

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop wind farms?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
9	7	

If yes, where do you think we should site them?

The Estuaries are rich with wildlife – we don’t want to lose them. How about the Science Park?

Off- shore is the best site as this won’t take up land space and will have wind unrestricted by trees and buildings.

In the Creek

In the sea.

Thames Estuary.

Not sure what is appropriate.

On the land between Sittingbourne and Sheppey x 6

Around the Montgomery.

*Why are we wasting money on wind farms – they can't deliver the power consistently we need power stations – nuclear ones.
Inefficient and expensive – use nuclear power x 2
No – Use Hydro & Solar power more. Encourage more domestic solar power.*

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop Combined Heat and Power systems?

YES 8	NO 1	DON'T KNOW
----------	---------	------------

If yes, where do you think we should site them

*On an existing site, although be considerate of wildlife and the environment.
These should be coastal and linked in with the wind farms.
Don't understand the term 'combined heat and power'.*

If it meant paying more for a new home should the Council require developers to build more eco-friendly homes?

YES 10	NO 1	DON'T KNOW
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If you answered no to the question above, how do you think we should adapt to the effects of climate change?

*I don't believe that alternative sources of energy will make any difference a case of shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.
Every new house must have large water butts fitted to the downpipes to conserve water.
Eco – friendly Show houses should be built with information on the many benefits.
Planning permission should dictate that all new houses are fitted with water butts and solar panels.
Avoid GM. Get a balance.
Balance them all – not impossible – just hard work.*

We know that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in us having to make choices about future land uses. How do you feel we should prioritise the demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of landscape character?

*Character, Wildlife and Food last.
Land and wildlife and food third.
Wildlife / Food / Character.
We need more protection for wildlife habitats and conservation of landscape character.*

ISLE OF SHEPPEY

We expect the Port of Sheerness to bring forward major expansion plans. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island's economic and historic assets, how can we unlock its potential? (Please tell us on a post it note)

If growth is focussed on Western Sheppey where there are transport links and services, what can be done to assist communities on the Eastern end of the Island?

Improve the lower road link to Leysdown. This road cannot handle the traffic generated by the new housing developments on the east side x 2

What more could Sheppey do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island?

Have more seaside type of shops & better shops instead of Pound Shops, Second Hand Shops and Banks.

Clean up the town and keep it clean. Fine people if they make it dirty.

Some of the Island's holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Should this be allowed even if it results in sub-standard accommodation or housing in areas that flood?

YES	NO 2	DON'T KNOW
-----	---------	------------

Do you feel there is sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard on the Island?

YES 2	NO	DON'T KNOW
----------	----	------------

What could be done to improve the environment and appearance of holiday sites on the Island?

Maybe the council ensure that they are properly maintained.

More wardens needed giving on the spot fines for littering, chewing gum, breathing, etc.

The prison is one of the Island's major employers, if the need arises should it be allowed to expand its site?

YES	NO 2	DON'T KNOW
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Related comments;-

The prisons are big enough x 3

3 prisons are enough.

FAVERSHAM

Faversham is a small and compact market town not identified for significant growth. Any new homes and jobs in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community. It is likely that some modest growth will be required.

Please put a pin on the map below to show us where you think growth could be achieved

MAP

What more could Faversham do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the area?

I don't agree with Swale's retail policy as it's really messing up Faversham.

What types of jobs should be provided to reduce the amount of commuting out of the town?

The importance of the town's heritage is well known, should this remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. Do you think this will inhibit future development?

RURAL AREAS

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores, packing houses)?

Please give us your views about this

Green Street - a consultation, costing £5000, has delivered no improvements. If there is no land to build more housing, the allowances need to be found for pubs and PO's etc.

No more poly tunnels – existing ones should be removed!

I feel this is a very important problem that cannot be addressed by tweaking the planning regulations.

I wouldn't support houses on green field sites.

Local shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive, should we?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Find alternative uses for these buildings?	27	6	1
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?	12	13	4

Would you support the development of more housing to meet local needs, in particular affordable housing?

Related Comments

*The question doesn't make sense: you can't assume that more houses will produce more local consumers.
Don't need to have more rural homes, instead take away the buying power of supermarkets like Tesco then these other local services would get supported.*

YES 14	NO 19	DON'T KNOW 3
-----------	----------	-----------------

If you do, where should they be sited?

*Make use of brown field site like Vigo Farm in Lynsted.
Build on the edge of villages.
Rural businesses should have rural rates not town rates
Brownfield sites only.
To meet local needs ONLY and in brown field sites.
Redevelop derelict sites x 2
Rural communities should be protected from invasive developments – i.e. restricted to existing industrial sites.
Light production/development support of countryside use*

We need to do more to support the rural economy. What business uses are appropriate/inappropriate to site in the countryside and where should they be sited?

*Industry should stay in town. Improve IT infrastructure to help rural businesses.
The bus service here in Rodmersham is appalling, Sittingbourne is dead most people go out of the borough to Gillingham, Whitstable, Broadstairs and Bluewater.
Living in a village is good except for the very poor public transport service which means a car to survive that is until you are old and can't afford to own a car or drive. Then what happens?
We should find way of supporting shops, PO's and pubs.
Why aren't supermarkets taking local produce instead of imported food x 4
Find creative ways of supporting these things. Not an either or – Pub is the Hub scheme*

Should parts of the countryside enjoy greater protection from development than other areas? If you feel they do please tell us why and which ones

*The Government needs to encourage population growth in the NW and the SW of the UK as the SE is becoming saturated with people and development.
Keeping space between villages stops towns merging into the surrounding villages.
Essentially, the countryside needs to be protected as a resource for the future
x 2*

*Any housing development in villages should be restricted to 6 – 12 houses.
Other development on brown field site – Greenfield sites must be protected x
3
This is where the countryside itself is the economic engine x 2*

How do we encourage tourists to visit the rural areas?

*In rural areas newcomers need to be encouraged to use the local facilities and amenities and not just commute.
Better transport links to help the villages to survive. Encourage tourists by making villages viable and interesting.
Better public transport and improve roads.
Create a Bredgar website to promote this area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB) also featuring our lovely houses and church.
Promoting the towns – good signposting – maps, info, etc.
Get rid of the stink and encourage tourism to the whole borough.*

CULTURE

We have been undertaking a lot of market research to identify how people use their leisure time and what sports, leisure and cultural facilities they are involved in.

What cultural facilities do you expect to have?

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	12		5
Cinema		1	10
Sports Centre	1	1	8
Football pitch	2		4
Local park	6		4
Formal park	4		4
Access to nature	4		1
Museums			4
Theatre		1	9
Library	2	1	7
Swimming pool		1	10
Art Gallery			3
Restaurants	1	2	7
Café	4	1	5
Pubs	9	1	4
Music Venue	1		4
Studio space			2
Recording/rehearsal space			2
Other			

Is there anything else you want to tell us about leisure and culture provision in the borough?

An affordable public Golf Course for all ages.

Bredgar Church

Let's make the town event more dynamic – "Sittingbourne Spectacular" is a total misnomer! Please involve PR and marketing people to make this an event to look forward to x 2

Swale Borough Council needs to pay attention to vastly improving the litter issues around town. People buying into making our town smart/a positive approach.

SITTINGBOURNE RESULTS

PROSPERITY

In Swale we will need to provide:

- **18,000 jobs**
- **Provide new sites for employment**

What sort of economy do you want to see in Swale in the future and what changes do you think will be needed to achieve this

Mix of manufacture & Service trade but sustainable – open a birthing centre. Swale BC are not good at communicating their plans to the public (have experience of other authorities)

Move the Industrial/Retail to the other side of the M2.

It was better in the 1950s – local shops, friendlier people, easy to get a job x 2

Apprentices for jobs plus employment is wrong – there should be the USA system of take one or three jobs or lose your benefit.

Jobs for local British people first.

Morrisons promised local jobs before it was built but many shop staff are Polish or Russian.

Jobs should be for local people – but in saying that at least migrant workers do work – some local people C.B.A.

Need more jobs.

Local businesses need more assistance from local Chamber of Commerce and local Business Links.

Should be British jobs for British people BUT ALSO a reform of the welfare system to get people back into the work ethic.

Do you agree that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need?

YES 74	NO 1	DON'T KNOW
-----------	---------	------------

In order to be fit for the future we may need to widen our base into the knowledge economy. In order to meet future demand should development for employment take place at?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Kent Science park	34	14	2
Existing Employment Areas	51	4	
New sites in urban areas	18	9	1
Greenfield sites	8	24	1

Our market research to date indicates that any new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent Faversham. Do you agree with this assumption?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
32	12	7

If you don't agree where else should they be sited?

Why not on Sheppey?

The Science Park has tons of empty buildings – either reuse or rebuild – no need to extend but need to utilise what is already there.

Utilise the Brownfield sites not Greenfield.

KSP is already there (use it) Put new motorway entrance there.

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

In Swale we have to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of Kent Thames Gateway growth area. We have made good progress in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

Do you think we should build these remaining homes?

Comments

Too many new houses with limited GP and school, we need the infrastructure. The infrastructure need to be developed before any more houses are built, e.g. needs schools, water, police.

Don't agree with the home building we haven't got enough water, sufficient roads + general infrastructure.

New schools are needed especially a Secondary x 2

More houses – larger schools or more schools.

Housing is being built – What about GPs/schools and public transport for elderly – Post Bus is now being stopped ?! x 2

New houses will be unviable unless we have the right infrastructure to support it – (e.g. Schools, shops, public transport, health care facilities)

Keep building new housing estate but no schools.

Any new development needs to be aware of flooding and also we don't have sufficient water now with hose pipe bans, etc.

Wherever there is new housing development there needs to be local community halls to facilitate weddings, clubs, activities, etc.

Schools and amenities should be in place before houses are built.

Some of the new developments will be flooded as they are built on flood plain in this area.

We need more schools to support the number of houses that are being built.

I have no problem with additional housing as long as the roads/transport is dealt with adequately.

Too many house+ far too many people here now – I shall be leaving asap even though I was born here

In Kemsley, all the children's play areas are being lost to new housing and power lines leaving them nowhere to play.

Where are the parks & open spaces? You need a car to access open spaces!

Murston – New build area – no play areas as planned – it's very difficult here.

Wylro Court is closing, upsetting many people and taking away people's support systems, all for a future development

The Council needs to promote & make some people aware of what services/benefits are obtainable to them (esp. the elderly)

You have to pay for a brown bin (£30 a year) this does not encourage paper recycling.

Some house need to on main drains but it's too expensive for local people pay. X3

Murston – Entrance to new housing estate off Oak Road is ridiculous/dangerous.

Access to Swale BC's Masterplan is either at the peripheral Council Offices or by the internet that many don't have access to.

Council Tax – Pensioners shouldn't have to pay as the state pension is so low – Everyone else should pay full rates.

Benefit system favours those who know how to work the system. More people should be made to work & only have children when they can afford them.

No to new communities in the countryside – extend each village with a few houses so not to destroy the feeling of the area.

Rather than building new houses cap the numbers moving into the area.

Don't build housing in rural areas.

The Borden area doesn't need anymore housing. It should remain an area with green fields.

Local Cllr for Upton area is hard to get hold of – needs training on how to engage with the locals. The local Cllrs need to be obtainable to the electorate.

SAFETY – People delivering leaflets must push them through the letterbox and bins brought back to the house otherwise absent residents are in danger of being burgled.

Some of the new housing developments don't have enough garden space nor green spaces within the community areas.

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
In the deprived urban communities?	57	5	1
On green field sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable housing with access to existing services?	10	10	
A mixture of both?	49	1	1

To meet the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers Swale will be looking to identify suitable sites, Are you aware of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose?

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

Why should we provide sites for them? – Put posts up to stop them ruining our area.

Scotland – plenty of room there.

We should all pay our council tax not special rates for some.

Don't provide for them. We pay taxes - they don't!

Brownfield sites should be used far away from other buildings

Is there any compensation for siting Gypsy? Traveller sites on my land or compensation if they are sited v. close to my house or land? x 6

If they choose to be housed, do we still need a site? They need to be of an acceptable standard with access to local resources.

The sites need play areas for the children and youngsters (1 day a week we have activity workers)

Some of the established Gypsy sites needs refurbishing and making more useful or new better sites created.

The reason that we became part of a community was so that our children could go to school and get a good education and be part of a community.

As the new generation are up and coming – there needs to be better sites for my children to use and be part of a community. We had a portacabin that was used by the community worker could carry out administration and where we could meet but it has now gone x 6

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
By creating small Council owned sites	30	9	
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites	24	10	1
By using developer contributions for affordable housing	4	9	2

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The term affordable housing means:

- That rentals are below the market value
- That people can share the ownership of a property with a Social Landlord (Housing Association)
- Emergency Accommodation

We know that the amount of affordable housing we need to provide exceeds the housing quota we have to build, therefore we need to set ambitious but achievable target of the amount of new homes we build being affordable. We think 35% is an achievable target.

Comments

People who are working but are struggling don't qualify for affordable housing. More affordable housing should be available - esp. 1&2 bedroom houses! As the town goes down economically more cheap housing is required. 40%-50%? But no more hostels in Park Road please we have had more than our fair share.

Why build so many 3 - 4 bedroom houses when we need some smaller ones? Need more Council Housing for young people – private accommodation is expensive and poor quality.

Kemsley Fields – The play areas put in the new housing estates are residents only. How does that fit into S106 guidelines?

Priorities for social housing are unfair – the waiting system is wrong.

Need to fit up old and abandoned houses that aren't used, these could accommodate people and no need to build new.

Swale BC and Swale Housing need to communicate with each other for the benefit of their customers.

Swale Housing – Need to get existing housing up to a decent standards before developing more (I've waited over 20 years for a new kitchen and a bathroom with disabled access)

More social housing as young people can't afford to buy.

Unfortunately ever Developer who wants to build housing has to accommodate, 'Housing Association' residents in the planning, which can be a bad thing for those who wish buy.

Do you agree with our target?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
40	34	8

If you don't agree please tell us what target you think we should be aiming for

*50% - 70% People can't get afford to get a foot on the ladder x 2
Swale Housing should review how housing is offered to those on its waiting list, especially those who aren't homeless but waiting in privately rented accommodation. A time limit should be imposed and those in. 95% should be the target, - houses are expensive here but wages are low.
50%
The current climate means more young people need to rent properties. More social housing is needed – not less! Probably 40% +
Provide more Council housing. More points for those in work rather than those who are unemployed and those whose rent gets paid by social services.*

Do you think the Borough provides a wide enough choice of housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
16	31	7

If not, what do you feel is missing and where?

*More social housing needed – especially bungalows.
In private housing (v. expensive) a month in advance = deposit – there used to be a deposit rental scheme but this is no longer in operation.
Provide stable long term rental mixed in with other houses.
Single people on low incomes get no support therefore they are better off on benefit. This is wrong.
New housing built near railway line is having problems - poor quality damp problems. Isn't really fair – housing built on mud flats.
Make use of the derelict dilapidated building in Sittingbourne.
1 and 2 bedroom houses.
Brownfield and factory sites – build there.
Prioritise new affordable housing for local people.
Housing for local young people needed
Suitable housing for local people so that they can stay within their local support networks, plus social housing and affordable housing.
Build more social housing for one parent families. Cater more for needs in terms of bedrooms.
The new populations of the new developments need a functioning infrastructure of schools health services, roads, and amenities.*

If consideration isn't taken it will have a knock on effect on existing communities.

There needs to be more social housing. I have to be in limbo as the landlord is selling the house underneath me.

TRANSPORT

With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints that there is a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use.

What do you think the proposals for transport in Swale should be to ensure a sustainable approach can be achieved?

This is an appallingly worded question!

If they want you to use shops in Sittingbourne then they should provide more free parking.

More cheap parking x 9

Roads, Trains, Buses, all need fixing and made to be more usable – then there wouldn't be such a need to build more

I would use the bus if it was low cost and regular times, if this was possible!

Need to put a new exit on the M2 so that people don't have to come off at Sittingbourne before anything else.

Would you be prepared to accept more growth, if infrastructure needs could be met, which otherwise could not be brought forward?

YES 23	NO 5	DON'T KNOW
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Should we apply different restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage?

YES 24	NO 4	DON'T KNOW 1
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Cheaper Trains.

Trains are too expensive to use on and off peak! Roads should be resurfaced as they are quite bad too.

Encourage more people to use trains. More trains – cheaper as well.

Will the new high speed train make much difference? - Are there going to be more trains or just more expensive ones?

Make cheaper fares allow children and pensioners free travel. Like London. Ditto.

Transport Police should be on Sheerness trains x 2

Need a new Railway Station and need proper lifts installed in the existing one. The replacement Disabled access to Sittingbourne Railway Station is totally unworkable.

As a pensioner – the Train service is good but v. expensive, the bus service should be free.

The transport system in Sittingbourne is very poor. Trains finish running too early – surely in this day and age it needs to be relevant and accommodating. The island is often seen as a poor relation when it comes to transport services and police.

Buses to Kemsley finish at 6-30pm due to vandalism

The early last bus to Kemsley is really inconvenient and means long walks in the dark and on Sundays.

More Buses in Industrial areas (Eurolink) .

More buses especially in rural areas – Late evening buses in all of Sittingbourne!

Buses – no direct routes from Sittingbourne to other towns

A much improved bus service would help the situation x 2

The bus services are inconsistent and some places are easy to access while others require you to go into Maidstone to get connections to other towns.

The Transport system is a joke – the buses are so infrequent – If you don't have a car, you are isolated.

There is a need for Community Transport in both urban and rural areas – Could even be run by trained volunteers.

Definitely need to improve bus services, esp in rural areas - more buses and in the evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays

Better public transport for events like the Hop Festival in Faversham as many cannot get there otherwise.

The existing bus service is being reduced - the bus passes are still being sorted out. If you don't run a car and a pensioner – what do you do?

There needs to be more little Hopper Buses around town for pensioners and those without cars.

Buses are needed between Newham to Faversham six days a week – they only go to Sittingbourne.

Keep free bus passes for the over 60s x 3

Why are older people's bus passes means tested? It's a definite worry for many people.

Free Over 60s bus passes should stay. Older people who can't get out they both become physically and mentally ill and that costs the NHS.

Free bus travel for pensioners is a good thing as they can get out and spend but they can't always drive. Keep this initiative!

Better bus shelters with seats as you have to wait for so long.

Keeping the footpaths clear for pedestrians

Much more bicycle friendly.

Cycle paths would encourage more people to use their bikes.

Streets need to be kept clean and free of rubbish in Kemsley - Grovehurst.

Generally in Sittingbourne the new Master plan doesn't take account of parking esp. for disabled – when people who are able park in spaces for disabled it isn't enforced.

Supermarkets don't police their parent & toddler and disabled parking spaces. Get the Town Centre sorted first – there is no parking and it's difficult to get a free space and it's difficult to drive about the town.

Local Public Transport diabolical – no parking for residents and people who move around the area – especially schools.

Motorway system doesn't work. – A circular tram system may help with the car problem plus use a more sustainable form of transport.

Again, speeding traffic in Milton Regis and Sittingbourne.

Milton Regis – Speeding traffic on the High Street, and parking anarchy with no regard to road markings or any policing to deter it.

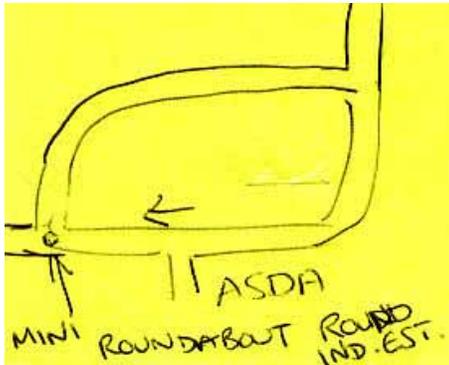
The road infrastructure into and around town needs to be sorted out to attract people into the town.

Can't understand the new & proposed road systems including where exactly the new road off the M2 is going to go.

Northern Link road needs to be completed.

Need to create sufficient road structures to support new housing.

A problem with a 'no right turn' out of Asda – causes a traffic queue



The closing of St Michaels Road will be a real problem for residents and business - this needs redesigning.

LEARNING AND SKILLS

We know that the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the National and Regional average. In addition we also have a shortage of graduate employment opportunities and no Further Education Provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

What can we do to improve access to Further Education in the Borough?

More opportunities for jobs

Encourage local companies to employ apprentices and train them.

We need more apprenticeships in skills that we will need in the future.

Improve teaching at primary level. No child should leave school without the 3 R's.

*Create training at school and colleges during the day & evening.
Better schemes to encourage school leavers to stay in education.
Encourage more companies in more shops = more jobs (High Street –Ghost town)
More work experience and taster opportunities for 15/16 year olds.
More local training opportunities for young people locally so they don't have to spend an hour travelling to Canterbury.
I got a job in Dartford – it's very difficult to get to but Dad helps.
Bring branches of local universities into the area. Include a new FE building in new town centre development. Encourage apprenticeships in local businesses.
Why was Swale Training Centre closed? It provided training in construction and service industries. Politics wins over reality.
There used to be a training organisation in Sittingbourne but there sure isn't one now.
I am an unemployed scaffolder at the moment – but going College at Trinity to get a C7G in Painting & Decorating.*

What more could be done to improve the opportunities locally for training and skills development?

*More affordable courses available to improve self - accessible to non workers and workers – financial support needed.
Put more on in primary and secondary schools.
College of Further Education.
I agree that we need a college.
Yes, involve charities who want to train. I proposed a scheme that was turned down.
Have to go to college in Sheppey, child has to go to school in Sittingbourne – we need a college in Sittingbourne. We need more schools there are a shortage of places.
Local children should go to school locally, not in Maidstone or the island – expensive in bus passes and time.
Gresham Manor and Milton Court – excellent schools
Too limited training facilities in the area if people studied here they would shop here too, this would improve profits and thus keep the shops open.
It doesn't help local people that often skills/training is costly (even on benefits) or not easily accessible – or get to if some haven't got transport.
Local languages have to be spoken in other countries before you can obtain work, this needs to be a given for migrant workers in this country.
More work based learning – funding for training.
Sort out a programme of things that interest youngsters – taster sessions of activities.
Sittingbourne needs a College of Further Education!*

RETAIL

Like many towns Sittingbourne is struggling to survive. We recognise Sittingbourne as the retail heart of the Borough and we are bringing forward proposals to address this via a master plan and a planning application is expected later in the year.

However, we recognise that there are other local shopping centres situated elsewhere in the borough.

Comments

We agree that we would like to see a greater variety of shops x 4

Not enough choice – difficult for men’s clothes.

Let’s return to a variety of shops in the High Street.

Not enough choice for older people – department store needed.

Shops are closing as the rents are too high. Something needs to be done to encourage more businesses and shops.

The parking charges put me off using Sittingbourne town centre.

Never mind making a new shopping centre, the town centre shops need to be encouraged /developed into a better and more pleasant shopping experience.

More or bigger car parks in Sittingbourne and more spaces for disabled drivers please.

Don’t want to lose Somerfields - rather have this than TESCOs. If TESCOs is out of town this is OK if it comes here where will all the cars go?

If the Master plan is not put into action soon it won’t be worthwhile doing it as everyone is disheartened and are abandoning the town centre retail area.

The town Centre needs cleaning up p its v. dirty and needs attention.

I like shopping.

Do you use your local shops?

Frequently	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never
98	13	40	

What do you like about your local shops?

Have to go out of town to buy clothes and shoes. Open up Woolworths as a £ Shop. We try to use our local shops x 3

We would be happy to use local shop IF there was a better selection.

Can’t get what I need – have to go to Medway

Quite handy, nearby, convenient.

Borden has no local shop

I like individual shops X2

We go to Chatham and Sittingbourne as it’s good.

Which ones do you use most?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	3	46	9	-
Supermarket	27	44	2	-
Post Office	1	13	11	4

Bakers	4	3	10	4
Butchers	-	11	5	8
Greengrocers	2	7	10	8
Newsagent	10	11	1	7
Farmer's Market	3	14	11	8
Farm Shops	7	8	14	7
Other Bike shops X3 Toy Shops X3				

Is there anything you feel we should be doing to support the local economies?

Hold regular farmer's market.

TESCO have the monopoly here plus control the Council. The Council have no concern for Asda.

Encourage shops like Primark, large superstores that sell clothes/household goods like Sheppey Tesco.

Keep the shops open - lower rates and rent x 3

Need a good BMX shop, the nearest is on Sheppey or Milton.

Encourage a wider range of choice - nowhere locally to buy things for the home, such as utensils, linens, etc.

Cheap shops!

There aren't enough or good variety shops in Sittingbourne. Both the Market and the High Street are dying and we haven't even got a 'out of town' retail park to blame!

What about a Sunday market or Farmer's Market in the High Street as this would increase footfall and shops could open too.

TESCO has drained the High Street – The Council needs to encourage local and individual shops into it.

If we lose any more shops in the High Street there won't be any point going there. If you can't drive, you are stuck.

ASDA!

Why are there no Farmer's Markets in Sittingbourne – not even a French Market! This is the Garden of England!

Tescos don't care about local people and their local shops x 5

Need more shops not Gadgets and Gifts, Too many shops closing – Council needs to encourage more retailers here.

Need big retailers Next and M&S to attract shoppers x 4

Need a big name – Debenhams.

It'll be good to have a Primark like in Chatham x 4

The closure of P.O.'s and lack of bus services means that many pensioners are quite isolated.

Reduce parking charges or make free parking. Car parking should be free outside of centre.

Support local food producers thro' a Farmer's Market x 3

Should change the market day to a Saturday in the town centre x 3

Without any major retailer the town centre will die as residents will go to all the other towns and retail parks for their needs.

*Give reduced rates to enable retailers to compete!! Not just charity shops!! x
6*

*Locals want the shops to stay in the High Street. The Council must encourage
this.*

Keep the High Street open with individual shops.

We need more shops – not charity shops.

*Lots of good shops have closed – you have to go online or out of town to get
things now.*

Attract individual shops – don't close the High Street.

Primark – decent clothes shop.

Is there anything that you feel is overprovided in your local shopping area?

No more charity shops.

Charity shops.

*Gangs of children, some young as 9, chasing about, swearing in the main
shopping area, Where are the police or community wardens?*

Nail bars & tanning shops! – always a sign of a poor economy.

Charity shops and Estate Agents.

Estate Agents

Too many take-away outlets locally

Too many take-away outlets in Milton

Takeaways!!

Charity shops, pubs, takeaways, Not enough clothes shops.

Need decent men's clothes shop

Too many clothes shops.

Cafes in Sittingbourne

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Like all authorities, we must confront the challenges of climate change. Swale has the additional issue of having low lying land subject to flooding .Swale is in the front line of climate change, this means more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten communities and wildlife. We may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites which flood or new land.

Which do you think we should choose?

Develop brown field sites properly and the risks of flooding are reduced.

Brown field sites.

Marshland

Estuary – if it doesn't affect the birds x 2

We should choose Greenfield sites.

Good & bad in Wind Farms – clean energy but blight the view

What about solar panels on public buildings – it is a sunny part of the world?

Don't change the wheely bin system.

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop wind farms?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
89	32	4

If yes, where do you think we should site them?

Thames Estuary

On the Swale Marshes

On Sheppey - but not so it spoils the view.

At sea or on land!

Brownfield sites

We have the London Array already - that is sufficient contribution.

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop Combined Heat and Power systems?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
66	5	3

If yes, where do you think we should site them?

In the existing Industrial Areas.

Around the Rubbish Tip.

Out of Town.

At the paper mill – what is the progress with the new incinerator?

As long as it isn't Nuclear Power!

If it meant paying more for a new home should the Council require developers to build more eco-friendly homes?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
66	16	2

If you answered no to the question above, how do you think we should adapt to the effects of climate change?

Should be built into homes as the norm, not as an add-on.

How much more would we be charged for an Eco friendly home?

Absolutely essential that all construction of new buildings incorporates positive energy and environmental measures - currently there are no stringent laws governing this.

We know that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in us having to make choices about future land uses. How do you feel we should prioritise the demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of landscape character?

All can work together only if planners ask the public what they want.

Conservation, Wildlife, Food Production (most comes from outside the area)

It should be part of the planning permission that the houses are more environmentally friendly.

ISLE OF SHEPPEY

We expect the Port of Sheerness to bring forward major expansion plans. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island's economic and historic assets, how can we unlock its potential?

If growth is focussed on Western Sheppey where there are transport links and services, what can be done to assist communities on the Eastern end of the Island?

Definitely a Marina for Sailing Boats!!

What more could Sheppey do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island?

A Marina for pleasure boats - not enough use is made of the potential of the river look at the Medway at Rochester.

*More need to made of the history of the area – Tourist Info & Marketing
Provide sea fishing opportunities for local young people.*

More need to made of the history of the area – Aviation, Henry V111, Nelson, etc. Develop a marina and more sailing facilities.

Some of the Island's holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Should this be allowed even if it results in sub-standard accommodation or housing in areas that flood?

YES 4	NO 3	DON'T KNOW
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Do you feel there is sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard on the Island?

YES	NO 1	DON'T KNOW 4
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What could be done to improve the environment and appearance of holiday sites on the Island?

The prison is one of the Island's major employers, if the need arises should it be allowed to expand its site?

YES 8	NO	DON'T KNOW
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FAVERSHAM

Faversham is a small and compact market town not identified for significant growth. Any new homes and jobs in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community. It is likely that some modest growth will be required.

Comments

No decent priced clothing shops since Woolworths closed down.

Why is the council not funding the festival? It attracts hundreds of visitors who spend money here.

Make sure that the shops stay like Whitstable's – useful to the local people not all TESCO.

Try and keep the charm of the old parts of the town without losing jobs.

No local useful shops – 2 £ Shops and restaurants and no practical shops.

I shop in Sittingbourne or Canterbury for clothes.

Rentals are too high to encourage more decent shops/essential shops otherwise the town centre will die.

The Community Hall is v. expensive and precludes use by many pensioners.

Please put a pin on the map below to show us where you think growth could be achieved

MAP

What more could Faversham do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the area?

Put more quality clothing and food shops in the town as £ Shops, charity shops and restaurants are not an attraction.

Offering customer service facilities should be encouraged in shops.

What types of jobs should be provided to reduce the amount of commuting out of the town?

The importance of the town's heritage is well known, should this remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. Do you think this will inhibit future development?

Faversham Creek – the new buildings aren't in keeping – Also access to the side of the creek is now private!!

The mooring on the creek has become silted up and needs dredging.

RURAL AREAS

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores, packing houses)?

Please give us your views about this

Yes – just make them blend in – low rise, muted colours

At Bredgar we get a terrible smell from the fields – can't open doors or windows.

The PACT meeting aren't very well attended as people don't feel they are heard. There needs to be better feedback communicated.

If they build too much in the countryside then it wouldn't be rural anymore.

Local shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive, should we?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Find alternative uses for these buildings?	31	2	
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?	26	4	1

Would you support the development of more housing to meet local needs, in particular affordable housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
25	15	2

If you do, where should they be sited?

Protect the countryside and woodland. This is why we live here.

Extend exist communities and utilise defunct businesses and sites

We need to do more to support the rural economy. What business uses are appropriate/inappropriate to site in the countryside and where should they be sited?

Pretty well anything that will bring work – buildings need to be sympathetic to the landscape.

Should parts of the countryside enjoy greater protection from development than other areas? If you feel they do please tell us why and which ones

Ancient woodlands, marshes and SSI places must be protected.

We need to protect the countryside before there is none left, the plant life provide us with oxygen.

Too much building on rural land – redevelop brown field site x 2

Lots of old buildings should be knocked down and build houses there rather than on green belt x 3

How do we encourage tourists to visit the rural areas?

Build a countryside resort for people to come and enjoy the place.

Have car parking spaces near circular rural walks as most footpaths are inaccessible to town folk.

Promotion of conservation areas.

CULTURE

We have been undertaking a lot of market research to identify how people use their leisure time and what sports, leisure and cultural facilities they are involved in.

Comment

Not enough culture in this area – want to be able to socialise with interesting people.

What cultural facilities do you expect to have?

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	21	14	19
Cinema	8	23	38
Sports Centre	4	7	14
Football pitch	6	3	11
Local park	28	6	20
Formal park	5	6	15
Access to nature	10	10	13
Museums	4	12	14
Theatre	6	5	16
Library	11	4	19
Swimming pool	4	11	21
Art Gallery	2	4	6
Restaurants	6	5	8
Café	8	7	15
Pubs	6	5	9
Music Venue	7	9	21
Studio space	1	6	6
Recording/rehearsal space	1	8	4
Other			

Is there anything else you want to tell us about leisure and culture provision in the borough?

*We need more recreational sites of all varieties. Sittingbourne is dying!
More community spaces and facilities for local people that are affordable and NOT profit driven.*

Young people need a skateboard park, sea fishing trips and sailing opportunities.

*More activities for young males to get less aggro on the streets x 2
More for young people e.g. bowling alley, paint ball centre.*

*Amusements aimed at kids, toy grabbers/penny slots.
For youngsters - Arts Activities, Cooking classes, Singing, Dancing and dressing up. Sports like Basketball, Football, Kung fu, Gymnastics, Trampoline. Boxing,
There is no night entertainment in Sittingbourne for teenagers - we need music venues and a cinema.
There is nothing for young people to do here.
The skate park near Asda is closed, why? Where do we go now?
The skate park was one you had to pay to use, it should have been supported by Swale BC as it used by young people x 4
Some of the new housing has been built on areas where we chilled – where do we go now? x 3
Skate Park
There needs to be more country space esp. for young people. Why build Wickes? It could have been an area for activities that would keep people off the streets.
Bowling Alley, Casino.
Bowling Alley
A motorbike track in Sittingbourne
More activities for children – they closed the light railway and that was a really good educational attraction
Sittingbourne and Kemsley Light Railway – well liked attraction
There is a sense of isolation – arts and culture will bring people together
Cinema required and restaurants other than Indian and Chinese
The new Pirate Ship in Swallows swimming pool can be hazardous due to the water spray making underfoot surfaces slippery
Make the theatre more like the Marlow – more variety on offer x 3
Local maps displayed in towns.
What's happening about Court Hall in Milton Regis? x 2
Marston – Access to the 3 lakes should be allowed – there are problems with the Gypsy /Travellers not letting locals use this area.
Sittingbourne needs an Information Centre*

ISLE OF SHEPPEY RESULTS

PROSPERITY

In Swale we will need to provide:

- **18,000 jobs**
- **Provide new sites for employment**

What sort of economy do you want to see in Swale in the future and what changes do you think will be needed to achieve this?

- *There isn't a match of skills needed and jobs on the island. Often graduate or graduate equivalent jobs are not filled by those on the island as they don't have the skills.*
- *Prosperity needs transport, housing and education.*

- *Change the attitude towards planning*

Do you agree that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need?

YES 32	NO	DON'T KNOW 2
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In order to be fit for the future we may need to widen our base into the knowledge economy. In order to meet future demand should development for employment take place at?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Kent Science park	12		
Existing Employment Areas	17		
New sites in urban areas	12	3	
Greenfield sites	2	10	

Our market research to date indicates that any new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent Faversham. Do you agree with this assumption?

YES 2	NO 13	DON'T KNOW 5
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If you don't agree where else should they be sited? (Please tell us on a post it note)

- *Sheerness x 3*
- *When local paper mill closed what was good is that the new Morrisons Distribution Centre took on a lot of the staff – very good for the community*
- *Will the increase in housing mean more people and less jobs?*
- *Will the increase in building mean more of the infrastructure will be carried out first? (Iwade is a good example)*
- *I moved on the Island in 1971 and it has declined since then, the Island on the whole has got dirtier. The Island has been forgotte - will it never get better?*

- *There needs to be more jobs for local people – stop bringing in the Polish and Londoners – give local people a chance x 3*
- *Neats Court*
- *The development of Neats Court is causing problems for local people – lorries constantly coming and going from 7a.m. to late at night, also working on Sundays*
- *There are jobs in the area if you have a work ethic – I had no problem getting employment even though what I do isn't what I want to do*
- *Neats Court Marshes (Queenborough) x 2*
- *New offices in Sheerness and Sheppey*

HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

In Swale we have to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of Kent Thames Gateway growth area. We have made good progress in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

General Comments:

- *I have lived on the Island for 18 months – you can see that because of the new infrastructure (roads/roundabouts etc) that the area will grow*
- *The executive homes as well as affordable homes will help to boost the economy especially if there are jobs as well*
- *Best thing is the Sheppey hospital however the main hospital is in Medway and you could be dead before you get there*
- *Better permanent hospital facilities (after 8p.m.)*
- *Over the past three years the Council Tax has gone up three fold but there have been no improvements – as the tax went up the chalets were given up and this leads to shabbier run down areas*
- *The council tax for the chalets is too expensive for the facilities – the chalets pay more than the caravans thus the increase has led to some people leaving the sites and these are being run down*
- *Upgrading the streets – better pavements, better roads, improve shop fronts*
- *Make sure that the facilities are here before the housing (activities, Doctors, Schools etc)*
- *There's not much to do here, we need things for older people so that they can get out and about and it gives them someone to talk to especially in winter*
- *Since the local Council's gone to Sittingbourne none of the money and prosperity comes onto the Island*
- *Drop in Centre at the hospital is really good*

- *The Island residents should be informed about the designs and plans for new buildings – lack of information and misinformation leads to negativity and the Council gets ‘slagged off’*
- *Housing scoring system should be given to local people first and they should be awarded higher score for being local*
- *Less flats – we need less unwanted anti social groups on the social*
- *No more houses built on Sheppey x 2*
- *More officers on the beat would help with safer streets – especially young people with big dangerous dogs*
- *Public need to be educated to be more respectful of streets and community*
- *Too much fly tipping, need more council officers and PCSO’s around to tackle anti social behaviour. We also need a better scheme for disposing of large household waste*
- *We need an Island Council to ensure monies are spent here and not in Sittingbourne and Faversham*
- *Too much housing being built, not able to sell them x 4*
- *Too much housing being built, not enough amenities for the increased number of new residents*
- *The smell from the fields near Minster and East Church has been much worse this year, something needs to be done by Environmental Services*
- *The Council are dumping housing and more people on an Island that can’t take it, we don’t have enough facilities and amenities and infrastructure to cope with demand. In the past all the good things have been knocked down or destroyed by the Council and made worse.*
- *In Eastchurch there are too many houses and caravans, the roads can’t cope with the volume of traffic and there are no pavements, it is very dangerous*
- *Too many houses being built yet there are loads for sale in the area, particularly in Minster – what’s the point?*
- *People who are born and live on the Island want to be buried here but there are no places left. I want to book a place but can’t – need something done to accommodate local people’s wishes – they don’t want to end up in Bobbing as it is difficult for family to visit*
- *Need to create better infrastructure before any more houses are built i.e. schools, bigger hospital and permanent policing.*

Do you think we should build these remaining homes?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
In the deprived urban communities?	61	9	
On greenfield sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable		50	

housing with access to existing services?			
A mixture of both?	12	1	1

To meet the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers Swale will be looking to identify suitable sites, Are you aware of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose?

- *If the Gypsies and Travellers start paying rent and rates then they can be part of this – if they get land why can't I?*
- *By the side of the old Sheppey bridge*
- *Concerned about the rubbish they leave behind – the Romanies are respectable and respectful people it's the Gypsies who cause problems. Also re land taking and setting up home and business without permission, everyone deserves a place to live but need to respect it.*

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

- *Not much land around to buy, could they rent unused land from the Council?*

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
By creating small Council owned sites	6	7	
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites	6	8	
By using developer contributions for affordable housing	5	6	

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The term affordable housing means:

- **That rentals are below the market value**
- **That people can share the ownership of a property with a Social Landlord (Housing Association)**
- **Emergency Accommodation**

We know that the amount of affordable housing we need to provide exceeds the housing quota we have to build, therefore we need to set ambitious but achievable target of the amount of new homes we build being affordable. We think 35% is an achievable target.

Do you agree with our target?

YES 10	NO 66	DON'T KNOW 2
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If you don't agree please tell us what target you think we should be aiming for

- *Need more affordable housing x 2*
- *60%*
- *25%*
- *Too high a target, 25% is more realistic*
- *50%*
- *No more building of houses and make them affordable for local people and first time buyers. The first time buyers system you have is silly and unaffordable*

Do you think the Borough provides a wide enough choice of housing?

YES 23	NO 43	DON'T KNOW 1
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If not, what do you feel is missing and where?

- *Need to build more council houses only targeting people with money in private rented sector have to have £1,650 deposit in the private sector – can't get council housing.*
- *Council not working for the people – selling off council housing when people need that housing. Is the weighing on council lists favoured towards working or non-working?*
- *Stop building so many houses on the Island*
- *Affordable houses would be nice, renting is very expensive and some estate agents expect non-refundable deposits*
- *In the past those in council accommodation and other affordable housing had to pay no more than 27% of net income, now have to pay 74% of net income on the house and tax*
- *A single lady lives in a Council house and would like a smaller one or be allowed to have a lodger*
- *Need to design the houses to fit in with the style of local houses, but also need to take account of flood plains*
- *I love Sheppey*
- *Not a lot of choice, need more affordable housing that is really affordable*
- *Need more houses to rent but not in the private sector*
- *It is difficult to get affordable housing because of the deposit you have to find – I have a job (but reduced hours), I am homeless and have been on the housing list for years but this is no help*

- *We have been on the housing list for 15 years but haven't got anything yet, we have to rent privately*
- *Housing need more properties for people with disabilities x 2*
- *Young woman has a housing problem, she has to have her mother, disabled brother and sister and dog living with her and her child all in a two bedroom house – her brother has mental disabilities and has violent outbursts – why won't anyone help us with our housing problem? At 23 she shares a bed with her Mum and her brother who has special needs sleeps on the floor, her sister shares a room with her one year old son – apparently my mother doesn't have enough points for her to be given accommodation*
- *The new housing allocation system is unfair and needs changing back*
- *Some of the housing development looks as though it has come to a standstill – have they run into financial problems?*
- *A lot of scope for housing development but we need the commercial aspect first*
- *Had a chalet for 20 years – would buy here but because of the lack of a hospital we couldn't live here permanently (it's something you need as you get older)*
- *Don't want them to keep building as they haven't got the infrastructure now, so what will happen in the future, we already have power cuts*
- *Too many houses and not enough amenities*
- *Too much housing, too many Londoners coming down – this Island has gone down since the 60's*
- *The Island needs a better hospital, more doctors surgeries, more shops, more facilities and better roads and transport before housing goes in*
- *Stop building new houses for incomers – not supporting infrastructure to support new development*
- *Don't agree with people being charged a contribution to the schools when you build a house*

TRANSPORT

With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints that there is a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use.

What do you think the proposals for transport in Swale should be to ensure a sustainable approach can be achieved?

- *Better bus service*
- *Better train connection at Sittingbourne to London – not 4 minutes change*
- *Now got an OAP bus pass but have to use it after 9.30 when the service becomes more unreliable*
- *The bridge has made a great difference to getting on to the Island both to work and as a tourist x 3*

- *More job opportunities on the Island for women*
- *Steel Works/Docks laying off so men need to go off the Island – and if you don't have a car that is very difficult*
- *The infrastructure of the whole Island has been left to go to rack and ruin – this all needs upgrading*
- *There are a lot of unadopted roads in the area, these cause problems – why don't the Council do something especially when residents on the same tax band as those with normal roads?*
- *Better transport – more public transport in neighbourhoods as well as generally on the Island*
- *Transport should be improved, there is no bus service after 6p.m. from town to Minster*
- *Not much of a bus service up in Minster – only one bus in the morning to get to Sittingbourne*
- *If you want to get off the Island you need to get down to the main road the Island to then get a bus, but there is no park and ride and buses are very expensive – we have one bus every other day!*
- *There are many older people and disabled people living on the Island, the bus transport is not good, there should be a bus that goes around the estates*
- *The bus pass is very expensive because you can't go out of the district for free*
- *The old bridge needs repairing it sometimes gets stuck when it is lifted*
- *Problems with trains – there needs to be more carriages and better quality rolling stock and carriages*
- *The taxis do well here because of lack of buses*
- *Not enough bus stops in Queenborough*
- *Need a better bus service from Minster to Queenborough*
- *Cheap, reliable transport that covers some of the rural/Eastern end of the Island*
- *We need infrastructure before housing development*
- *Traffic needs slowing on Marine Parade – road signs not seen because of masts*
- *Needs a lot of road resurfacing doing on the estates and on the main roads*
- *Road infrastructure needs addressing before more housing is built*
- *Unless you have a car in Minster you are isolated and you need to be able to walk to bus stops – need more community buses*
- *Buses have no space for buggies and wheelchairs, are expensive and infrequent*
- *Improve the bus services and get buses to run to time*
- *Minster – I have to use my car as the public transport is so poor – only 1 bus per hour and unreliable and there is no service on Sundays or Bank Holidays*
- *We need a proper public transport system on the Island x 3*
- *Need a better bus service on the Island – overpriced and limited*
- *Need a decent, reliable bus service on the Island*

- *You can't rely on buses to get you to a place on time/if they turn up at all. There are a lack of bus shelters*
- *Taxi's do well here - £7 from Sheerness to Minster*
- *The buses stop running at 6.30p.m., this means it is difficult to get back from work or go to leisure activities*
- *More buses and cheaper fares*
- *More frequent bus service that runs later into the evening and is disabled friendly*
- *What is the use of holding these forums, nothing will be done, nobody is interested in improving things*
- *Ward's Hill: buses are hourly, there is nothing on Sundays and Bank Holidays; this is a real problem in the summer with holiday makers packing the buses; very difficult to get to hospital appointments*
- *Improve the public transport on the Island; very difficult with a pushchair or wheelchair on the buses*
- *On trains you have to go over a footbridge with a pushchair which is extremely difficult; can't use the disabled ramp and no assistance is given*
- *Re-open Tram line (track already here) between Queenborough and Sheerness (like the one in Croydon)*
- *What happened to free buses on market days?*
- *The transport links especially at the Eastern end of the Island are very poor*
- *Cannot understand why parts of Swale have no buses on Sundays and none after 7p.m. at night. We are not all drivers and cannot afford cabs. This is the 21st century after all x 3*
- *Buses are too expensive*
- *Top end of Minster doesn't have a bus on Sundays and the last bus is 6p.m. – this stops you going out later. There is an expectation that we all drive*
- *Speed humps needed for Southsea Avenue, Minster – it's used as a rat run, nearly been hit by cars speeding several times*
- *Transport needs to be improved – can't get a job unless you've got a car*
- *We need a circular train system around the M25 – then you could park and go round 5 stops at a time – regular trains*
- *Last bus to East of Island is 6p.m. – this is no good if you've got a job either on or off the Island*
- *Stop parking in dangerous places – parking on pavement near Village Hall in Leysdown, need fines etc*

Would you be prepared to accept more growth, if infrastructure needs could be met, which otherwise could not be brought forward?

YES 15	NO 3	DON'T KNOW 2
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Should we apply different restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage?

If you apply different restrictions it will give transport providers an excuse not to provide transport

YES 11	NO 9	DON'T KNOW 2
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General Comments:

We need more cycle paths

Are Over 60's bus passes being discontinued? X 3

We need free over 60's bus passes, these are going to be cut by Government

Why does the Island get less spend from the public purse than Sittingbourne and Faversham?

LEARNING AND SKILLS

We know that the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the National and Regional average. In addition we also have a shortage of graduate employment opportunities and no Further Education Provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

What can we do to improve access to Further Education in the Borough?

- *More money needs to be spent on schools, colleges and housing (X2)*
- *More money needs to be spent on Sheppey rather than in Sittingbourne, especially on roads, streets, schools and colleges.*
- *More colleges*
- *Improve the schools on the Island*
- *We require an FE college in Sittingbourne – lobby KCC and the Government*

What more could be done to improve the opportunities locally for training and skills development?

- *The new two tier system is causing problems – not least the size and quality of the build*
- *Provide more local opportunities, have had to apply to go to Canterbury College to do electronics*
- *There should be an initiative for employers to take on apprentices*
- *I am 18 years old and I have had to sign on as there are no jobs and the available training doesn't 'grab me' – I have been volunteering for one year at New Road Community Centre*
- *Cheney School is a problem with the increase in size of three year groups but no increase in the building size – how is this going to work?*

- *My son missed three years of schooling as the education system on the Island can't cope/deal with Autism and ADHD. There are a lot of young people suffering from ADHD on the Island*
- *The education system on this Island is very poor. There is a need for 'special schools' here – have to go to one 40 miles away on a daily basis*
- *Education and aspiration in the home*
- *Lack of good teachers in Island schools, they won't come to work on the Island*
- *More sustainable projects that encourage long term support into work*
- *Links to surrounding colleges and universities – relevant and vibrant courses that encourage a diverse range of skills*
- *For people to get better skills and prospects they need to be able to get from all areas of the Island – get public transport sorted out*
- *LSC – always through the Colleges who teach in a certain way and not the way in which it is needed – it's now not the lead and it should be*
- *There needs to be shops/work and employment to make the Island a better place*
- *Not many job opportunities especially for the young- we are becoming an Island of unemployed!*

RETAIL

Like many towns Sittingbourne is struggling to survive. We recognise Sittingbourne as the retail heart of the Borough and we are bringing forward proposals to address this via a master plan and a planning application is expected later in the year.

However, we recognise that there are other local shopping centres situated elsewhere in the borough.

Do you use your local shops?

Frequently 88	Sometimes 2	Hardly Ever	Never
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What do you like about your local shops?

- *Need another supermarket here – Morrisons/Sainsburys x 2*
- *Helpful and friendly x 5*
- *Access to shops difficult. Would like to see more choice and bigger shops in Sheerness*
- *They are human, you get to know them. The local shops are part of the community, our history and our life*
- *They are local and more used by older age group*

Which ones do you use most?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank	22	69		1
Supermarket	24	70		
Post Office	1	77	1	
Bakers	1	45	1	3
Butchers	1	36	2	2
Greengrocers	2	35		
Newsagent	5	66		1
Farmer's Market	1	4	1	1
Farm Shops	2	46		1
Other Hairdressers Corner shop				

Is there anything you feel we should be doing to support the local economies?

- *No good regular High Street shops in Sheerness – Need a Primark or the like for locals to attract others – one landmark store will mean that other outlets are used.*
- *Need a better hospital in Swale Maidstone/Medway too far away and too far for families to visit. (X11)*
- *Better hospital.*
- *A number of shops are closing down because of rates increase*
- *We need an Argos, Wilkinsons and Primark – they provide good quality at good prices. There are empty shops or possible development sites – even the old Woolworths site*
- *I go shopping in Sittingbourne Asda and Blue Water. The Tesco on the Island is too expensive*
- *Need a local hospital for my problem – I have to go to East Grinstead*
- *We need more supermarkets on the Island*
- *Reduce rates – help owners to survive*
- *We need a Primark on the Woolworth's site x 4*
- *We go off the Island to shop, bigger shops in Sheerness High Street would attract more local people and visitors to shop in the smaller shops x 4*
- *Give Tesco's some competition like Asda or Sainsburys x 5*
- *The little shops make the Town not Tesco's*
- *The town centre shops and roads need upgrading, pedestrianise the High Street and encourage local people and others to use the shops*
- *Mostly go off the Island for commodities except for food (Tescos) and pet shop and occasionally cake shop*
- *Tescos really dreadful*
- *Shops in the High Street are closing down often because of Tescos*
- *There needs to be a better variety of little local shops with low rates for traders*
- *The Council is doing a good job*

- *Tescos has emptied our local shops, we need smaller shops*
- *Shop fronts need doing up. Increase the use of the shops. Pedestrianise Sheerness High Street and make it more 'posh'*
- *Sheerness used to be good for shopping; now it has no shoe shop, no men's shops, no furniture shop, no wallpaper shop. Tesco has been allowed to take over*
- *I live in Warden, where are the shops on the Eastern End of the Island, especially the larger shops?*
- *The shops in Sheerness do not have much choice or a lot of stock therefore I have to shop off the Island*
- *I would like a Poundland in Sheerness on the old Woolworth's site (Age 7)*
- *I shop in New Look or go to Blue Water – need more fashion shops in Sheerness*
- *We need more shops in Sheerness*
- *Need to concentrate on revitalising our Town in Sheerness – perhaps a farmer's market*
- *Car boot sale fills the gaps, butchers vans, veg stalls, cheap and affordable commodities x 3*
- *Keep the car boot sale – it's really good for the local producers and sellers and employs local people x 4*
- *Sheerness shopping area is run down – there needs to be better shops, but many need more people with disposable income to bring in the money and spend it there*
- *Provide more shops in Sheerness*
- *Need to attract more tourists and holiday makers*
- *Council has given running of market to a cooperative which has led to reduced rents – now need the clients back, need to keep existing tourists and shoppers to attract more*
- *Boot sale in Leysdown brings additional benefits, it draws people from both on and off the Island who often stay and go to the beaches, buy ice creams and food and go to the local pubs etc and it also employs 8/9 local people x 3*
- *There's not a shop on this Island that I'd use – I go to Maidstone or Chatham to do my shopping*
- *Local amenities are being used more by local people over the last 5 years*
- *Should really make more of the tourism potential of this Island – we get a lot of sunshine. More should be done to improve Leysdown, make it more upmarket*
- *More should be made of the: sunshine, beaches, history, heritage and wildlife on this Island*
- *Need to increase the variety of shops available, including young people's clothes shops especially young males under 30*
- *More shops and outlets; Argos etc, all we have is Tescos – other shops boarded up*

Is there anything that you feel is overprovided in your local shopping area?

- *Bookmakers*

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Like all authorities, we must confront the challenges of climate change. Swale has the additional issue of having low lying land subject to flooding .Swale is in the front line of climate change, this means more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten communities and wildlife. We may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites which flood or new land. Which do you think we should choose?

- *Council unhelpful and unsympathetic when you want to develop wind turbines – no advice available.*
- *There is a danger that we will take away the existing flood plains*

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop wind farms?

YES 44	NO 13	DON'T KNOW
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If yes, where do you think we should site them?

On the sea shore

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop Combined Heat and Power systems?

YES 6	NO 2	DON'T KNOW
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If yes, where do you think we should site them? (Please tell us on a post it note)

- *Harty Way*

If it meant paying more for a new home should the Council require developers to build more eco-friendly homes?

YES 3	NO 3	DON'T KNOW
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If you answered no to the question above, how do you think we should adapt to the effects of climate change? (Please tell us on a post it note)

- *Clean canal at Queenborough – in a dreadful state, do something about it! (X3)*
- *I don't think people will be able to afford them*

We know that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in us having to make choices about future land uses. How do you feel we should prioritise the demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of landscape character?

- *Needs more planting – especially trees x 2*
- *Use everything that we produce*
- *Encourage people to grow in back gardens*
- *Keep all of it, we mustn't lose it*
- *Charging for taking household goods means that there is going to be more fly tipping*
- *Get rid of the annual smell from the fields*

GENERAL COMMENTS

- *Local people need educating recycling (who, what, where and how) x 2*
- *Need cleaner streets all over the Island*
- *Near the fire station there is a problem with the pavements, this needs sorting out as people trip up*
- *There is a lack of brown bags for garden waste – you have to order them and there is a waiting list*
- *Need a regular monthly collection of large household items – needs to be cheap or free*
- *More community clean ups – helps to promote tidiness and respect*
- *Sea is getting higher and we get more sea over the garden wall. I agree with the new airport if they put in the reed beds to stem the water*

ISLE OF SHEPPEY

We expect the Port of Sheerness to bring forward major expansion plans. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island's economic and historic assets, how can we unlock its potential?

- *Need funding for those with historic or heritage buildings*
- *Promote the heritage of the buildings*
- *Give them the freedom to plan it – let them do their own planning*
- *Please bring back the ferry to Southend, either for pedestrians and/or cars*
- *We had a lovely dockyard church – must do more to hang on to the history and make more of it*

If growth is focussed on Western Sheppey where there are transport links and services, what can be done to assist communities on the Eastern end of the Island?

- *Better buses going around the estates, more regularly and running later in the day*
- *An improved road system and infrastructure*
- *Put in a decent road*

- *Local hospital needs more amenities such as a maternity unit and car parking x 3*
- *Better transport links*
- *We need more infrastructure on the Eastern end of the Island – more affordable homes on the Island*
- *We are building too much housing on the Island – losing our open spaces in order to make money*
- *People who live on the Eastern end of the Island have to go too far to get to shops*
- *There isn't a lot here – we need a main attraction x 3*

What more could Sheppey do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island?

- *Stop spending all the money in Sittingbourne and spend some on the island.*
- *Reduced rates for stall holders in Sheerness market has really helped the traders – just need to attract more shoppers and tourists*
- *I have a caravan here and don't want it to change as it is very family orientated and helps to keep all ages together x 4*
- *Put more investment into Leysdown to increase tourism, need to provide more activities for tourists*
- *It is very traditional here, this is a good place to get away from all the stresses of London*
- *It would be good to develop the sea front – a nice hotel/café. There is a super beach in Leysdown, so much more could be made of it*
- *A passenger ferry*
- *Allow smoking in pubs*
- *Focus on the tourism and culture potential*
- *Develop more activities for families x 2*
- *Riding school on the outskirts of Sheerness*
- *Provide more things to bring people into Sheerness*
- *Nearby Whitstable has been improved over the last few years – there is definite scope for Leysdown to be developed in the same way*
- *If Leysdown was upgraded (nothing that would preclude every day people), but make it more cleaner, safer, moving with the times*
- *There needs to be an effort made to promote the history and heritage of the Island – they do elsewhere*
- *Should promote the history of Blue Town and the environmental flora and fauna*
- *Should make more of the heritage, information never seems to go back far enough. The Island is on a par with Cornwall with ancient/saxon story meant to be here*
- *Need to put more thought into attracting tourists; more affordable activities, parks, play areas – not just amusements*
- *Leysdown is all arcades now, it used to be better.*
- *Both residents and tourists needs more activities for young people*
- *Better beaches and facilities near them and the cleanliness of them*

Some of the Island’s holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Should this be allowed even if it results in sub-standard accommodation or housing in areas that flood?

*Whole of the Island, apart from Minster, is in a flood plain
Always has happened, especially near youth club
Caravans and chalets being used all year leads to sub standard accommodation and shanty towns – no services to match, look at the Villas at Leysdown to see what will happen, keep them to 8 months of the year
Chalet rates are too high x 2
Sometimes the smell of the fertiliser spray is too much
Smell on the Island near Leysdown has been appalling x 3
There have been break ins in the chalets – 2 over summer*

YES 16	NO 32	DON'T KNOW
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Do you feel there is sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard on the Island?

YES 1	NO 24	DON'T KNOW
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What could be done to improve the environment and appearance of holiday sites on the Island?

- *Put in a decent road.*
- *Re-build them. Do away with the 1950s army camps*
- *Make better use of the beaches, museums, history of this Island especially the dockyards*
- *In Minster there needs to be something done about the ‘muck’ used on the fields – it fills our houses for days*
- *There needs to be more made of the history and tourism opportunities on the Island x 5 (like on the Isle of Wight)*
- *Provide a fun fair*

The prison is one of the Island’s major employers, if the need arises should it be allowed to expand its site?

YES 11	NO 11	DON'T KNOW
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General Comments

- *Need a new MP for the Island, the current one doesn’t do much but talks a lot x 3*

- *Why does the Island get less spend from the public purse than Sittingbourne and Faversham?*
- *Why does the Island get less spend from the public purse than Sittingbourne and Faversham?*
- *Since Minster joined Sheerness then joined Swale – all the facilities have declined (buses, hospitals, leisure facilities etc)*

FAVERSHAM

Faversham is a small and compact market town not identified for significant growth. Any new homes and jobs in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community. It is likely that some modest growth will be required.

Please put a pin on the map below to show us where you think growth could be achieved

MAP

What more could Faversham do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the area?

What types of jobs should be provided to reduce the amount of commuting out of the town?

The importance of the town’s heritage is well known, should this remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. Do you think this will inhibit future development?

RURAL AREAS

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores, packing houses)?

Please give us your views about this

Local shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive, should we

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Find alternative uses for these buildings?	4		
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?	5	2	

- *Local shops, post offices need supporting*

Would you support the development of more housing to meet local needs, in particular affordable housing?

YES 2	NO 6	DON'T KNOW
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If you do, where should they be sited?

We need to do more to support the rural economy. What business uses are appropriate/inappropriate to site in the countryside and where should they be sited?

Should parts of the countryside enjoy greater protection from development than other areas? If you feel they do please tell us why and which ones

How do we encourage tourists to visit the rural areas?

General Comments

- *When building housing estates in rural areas they need green spaces and a park facility for children and young people*

CULTURE

We have been undertaking a lot of market research to identify how people use their leisure time and what sports, leisure and cultural facilities they are involved in.

What cultural facilities do you expect to have?

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space	21	11	
Cinema	27	18	2
Sports Centre	10	10	
Football pitch	12	6	
Local park	25	7	
Formal park	4	6	
Access to nature	7	5	
Museums	4	7	1
Theatre	9	8	1
Library	6	5	
Swimming pool	12	6	1
Art Gallery	6	6	
Restaurants	6	7	
Café	14	4	1
Pubs	2	5	

Music Venue	9	12	
Studio space	6	4	
Recording/rehearsal space	6	4	1
<p>Other</p> <p>Outdoor swimming pool x 5</p> <p>We should have diving boards in the swimming pool because all we have is one big pool and a baby pool. It will keep the kids x 2</p> <p>Dance Studio</p> <p>Gym</p> <p>Scouts</p> <p>Football Club – with smaller goals</p>			

Is there anything else you want to tell us about leisure and culture provision in the borough?

- *My children do a lot at the leisure centre and with Sheerness East football team.*
- *Blue Town Heritage Centre – put on a current film once a month*
- *Sittingbourne cinema has closed down, no cinema on the Island or close by*
- *More should be achieved regarding history of the Island – Manor at Minster for a start, Manor of Queenborough, Shurland Manor – who knows if Dickens visited Island?*
- *Increase culture and tourism to bring more tourists to the Island and make it a place to ‘come to’*
- *Do more to help people with listed buildings, we need to preserve and they are good for tourism*
- *Sheerness beach area – no ice cream vendor – this is bad. Loos are disgraceful*
- *What’s happening on New Road field? Put up a fence but what else?*
- *Nothing much to do on the Island, got libraries but no activities*
- *Yacht Club – car park near pub is under used, needs resurfacing and removal of steps. There is a problem with some cars with boats, they push boats into Marine Parade to get to the ramp but when they forget to put their masts down we lost telephone and electricity supplies*
- *Need more public toilets on the sea front in Minster and Sheerness*
- *Why doesn’t Swale Borough Council take up the Government Initiative to allow under 16’s and over 60’s to swim for free – many other local council’s do x 2*
- *Nothing for young people to do on the Island*
- *Youth clubs/youth activities to stop them hanging around on the streets x 7*
- *More cycle paths are needed on the Island*
- *Shouldn’t the exercise/Tai Chi classes in Minster (New Road Community Centre) be part funded by Local Authority Leisure Services or Local PCT/Health? Lots of activities going on in Sheerness but elderly/disabled can’t get to them*

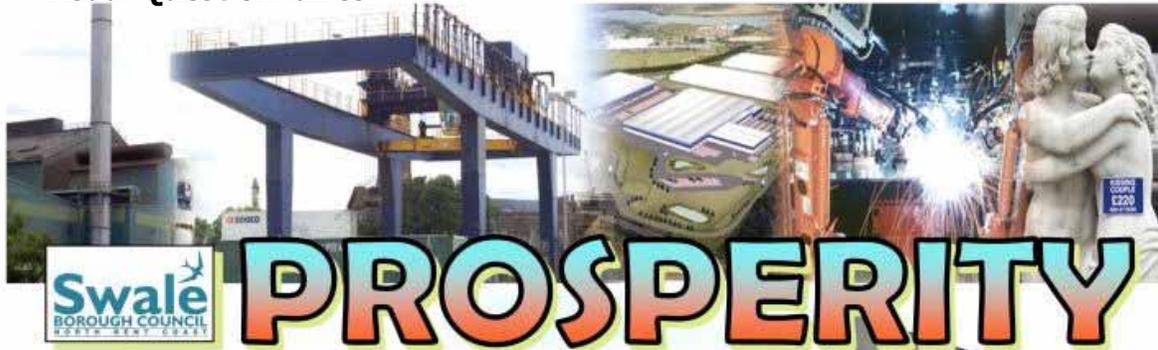
- *Policing on the Island isn't good. Police Station not staffed on the Island. During holiday time this is a real problem. Lots of stabbings/murder – nearest police station is Sittingbourne. Island police station should be staffed over the summer period*
- *Drop in Centre at the hospital is really good*
- *In the past the Council have not followed up with help as they said they would – disabled lady who now doesn't vote as elected members and officers take no notice*
- *At New Road Community Centre Age Concern have been running activities for 6 weeks, there has been a good take up, but what happens now?*
- *There needs to be more community centres that have both the facilities and activities for all that are long running not just for 6 weeks – brings the community together and informs all*
- *New Road Community Centre – the youth club has 30/40 attending. No buses to take young people to and from other Youth Centres on the Island and they wouldn't want to go elsewhere. Have you got a budget to pay for anti social behaviour activity, policing, clean ups once this has been shut down for the young people? Youth Centre runs on Monday and Wednesday, Arts and Crafts activities on Thursdays – approximately 100 different young people attending. Youth Club threatened with closure due to lack of funding.*
- *No where for young people to go*
- *No many seats on the coastal path and on some of the memorial seats there are flowers which make you feel uncertain about sitting on the seats*
- *Community facilities for older people and young people x 2*
- *The town needs the roads doing, so that activities, better shopping (lower rates) can be achieved*
- *More things for young people that are affordable; judo, horse riding, fencing*
- *Activities and places for the under 13's*
- *No cinema in Sittingbourne – we need one*
- *What's happening with the church scaffolding in Blue Town?*
- *Improve the swimming pool – no flumes anymore*
- *More facilities at the beaches and on the coastal walk*
- *More parks*
- *Jet ski area (windsurfers)*
- *Need to have some facilities; toilets, drinking water, nice shops for food and ices – nothing much on coastal path*
- *Need a bandstand and café – like in Broadstairs x 2*
- *More things for young people aged 10-18; skating rink, roller skating*
- *Need a Gay Pride festival – it would generate lots of income for the area*
- *In the past this town (Sheerness) had a theatre, bandstand, pier and paddle boats; the Council has knocked it all down and there's nothing here for local people and visitors*
- *We should have diving boards in the swimming pool because all we have is one big pool and a baby pool. It would keep the kids quiet.*

- *There is nothing for the younger and older people to do.*
- *The sea wall is a disgrace.*
- *Weekly entertainment events – singing, music (affordable entertainment)*
- *Better facilities for younger people, more play activities which are safe and fun*

APPENDIX 2 VISUAL QUESTIONNAIRES



Visual Questionnaires



In Swale we will need to provide:

- 18,000 jobs
- Provide new sites for employment

What sort of economy do you want to see in Swale in the future and what changes do you think will be needed to achieve this?

Please tell us on a post-it note

Do you agree that the Borough should diversify its economy to meet future need?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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In order to be fit for the future we may need to widen our base into the knowledge economy. In order to meet future demand should development for employment take place at?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Kent Science park			
Existing Employment Areas			
New sites in urban areas			
Greenfield sites			

Our market research to date indicates that any new office developments should be sited in Sittingbourne and to a lesser extent Faversham. Do you agree with this assumption?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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If you don't agree where else should they be sited?





HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

In Swale we have to build 10,800 homes over the next 10 years to meet future demand for housing. Of these 10,100 will be provided in the Sittingbourne and Sheppey areas which form part of Kent Thames Gateway growth area. We have made good progress in identifying sites for these dwellings through existing plans; and over 2000 homes have already been built since 2006. As a result, we only need to identify sufficient fresh sites for 1200 houses to enable us to meet our target to 2026.

Do you think we should build these remaining homes?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
In the deprived urban communities?			
On greenfield sites on the edge of towns, provided that we could achieve greater numbers of affordable housing with access to existing services?			
A mixture of both?			

To meet the current needs of Gypsies and Travellers Swale will be looking to identify suitable sites, Are you aware of any sites that would be suitable for this purpose?



Please tell us on a post-it note

How can we ensure that sites are provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers?

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
By creating small Council owned sites			
By encouraging Gypsies and Travellers to provide their own small family sites			
By using developer contributions for affordable housing			



The term affordable housing means:

- That rentals are below the market value
- That people can share the ownership of a property with a Social Landlord (Housing Association)
- Emergency Accommodation

We know that the amount of affordable housing we need to provide exceeds the housing quota we have to build, therefore we need to set ambitious but achievable target of the amount of new homes we build being affordable. We think 35% is an achievable target.

Do you agree with our target?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
------------	-----------	-------------------

If you don't agree please tell us what target you think we should be aiming for



Do you think the Borough provides a wide enough choice of housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
------------	-----------	-------------------

If not, what do you feel is missing and where?





TRANSPORT

With the need to accommodate growth in the future, it is acknowledged that due to environmental and sustainability constraints that there is a need to maximise the potential for alternative forms of transport and to reduce the reliance on private car use.

What do you think the proposals for transport in Swale should be to ensure a sustainable approach can be achieved?

Please tell us on a post-it note

Would you be prepared to accept more growth, if infrastructure needs could be met, which otherwise could not be brought forward?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
------------	-----------	-------------------

Should we apply different restrictions on new developments in rural areas in recognition that there may be a greater reliance on car usage?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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LEARNING AND SKILLS

We know that the Borough has a poor skills profile with the achievement of qualifications being lower than the National and Regional average. In addition we also have a shortage of graduate employment opportunities and no Further Education Provision in the Borough. These factors create a barrier to diversifying the economy.

What can we do to improve access to Further Education in the Borough?

Please tell us on a post-it note



What more could be done to improve the opportunities locally for training and skills development?

Please tell us on a post-it note



Like many towns Sittingbourne is struggling to survive. We recognise Sittingbourne as the retail heart of the Borough and we are bringing forward proposals to address this via a master plan and a planning application is expected later in the year.

However, we recognise that there are other local shopping centres situated elsewhere in the borough.

Do you use your local shops?

Frequently	Sometimes	Hardly Ever	Never
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What do you like about your local shops?



Which ones do you use most?

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Never
Bank				
Supermarket				
Post Office				
Bakers				
Butchers				
Greengrocers				
Newsagent				
Farmer's Market				
Farm Shops				
Other				

Is there anything you feel we should be doing to support the local economies?



Is there anything that you feel is overprovided in your local shopping area?





ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Like all authorities, we must confront the challenges of climate change. Swale has the additional issue of having low lying land subject to flooding. Swale is in the front line of climate change, this means more flooding, higher summer temperatures and extreme storms and drought which will threaten communities and wildlife. We may be faced with having to make choices between developing brown field sites which flood or new land.

Which do you think we should choose?

Please tell us on a post-it note

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop wind farms?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
-----	----	------------

If yes, where do you think we should site them?

Please tell us on a post-it note

As part of our sustainable energy strategy should Swale develop Combined Heat and Power systems?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
-----	----	------------

If yes, where do you think we should site them?

Please tell us on a post-it note

If it meant paying more for a new home should the Council require developers to build more eco-friendly homes?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
-----	----	------------

If you answered no to the question above, how do you think we should adapt to the effects of climate change?

Please tell us on a post-it note

We know that climate change will have adverse affects on the natural environment. This will result in us having to make choices about future land uses. How do you feel we should prioritise the demands of food production, wildlife habitats and the conservation of landscape character?

Please tell us on a post-it note



We expect the Port of Sheerness to bring forward major expansion plans. The Port of Sheerness is one of the Island's economic and historic assets, how can we unlock its potential?

Please tell us on a post-it note

If growth is focussed on Western Sheppey where there are transport links and services, what can be done to assist communities on the Eastern end of the Island?

Please tell us on a post-it note

What more could Sheppey do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the Island?

Please tell us on a post-it note

Some of the Island's holiday accommodation is now being used more permanently to meet housing demand. Should this be allowed even if it results in sub-standard accommodation or housing in areas that flood?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
------------	-----------	-------------------

Do you feel there is sufficient affordable housing of a decent standard on the Island?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
------------	-----------	-------------------

What could be done to improve the environment and appearance of holiday sites on the Island?



Please tell us on a post-it note

The prison is one of the Island's major employers, if the need arises should it be allowed to expand its site?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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FAVERSHAM

What more could Faversham do to attract and increase the number of tourists visiting the area?

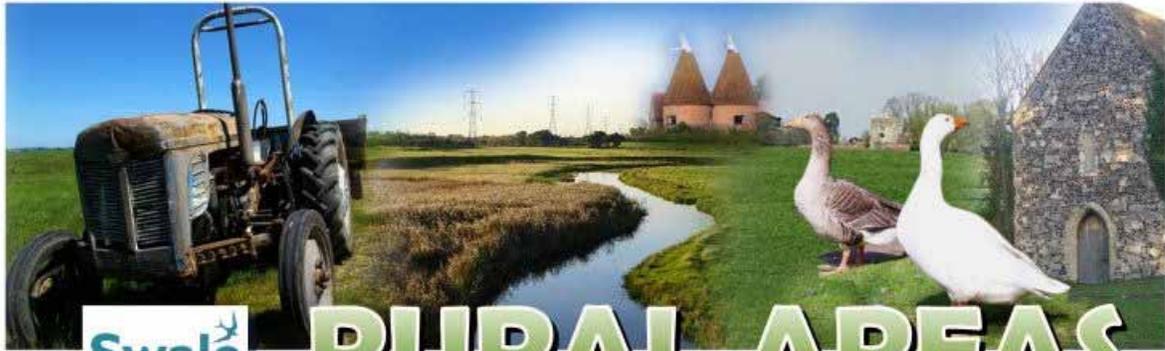


What types of jobs should be provided to reduce the amount of commuting out of the town?



The importance of the town's heritage is well known, should this remain an over-riding priority when considering the development of new homes and jobs. Do you think this will inhibit future development?





RURAL AREAS

Given the challenges of food security, climate change and the need to produce more local food should the Council have a more flexible approach to agriculture even if this means changes to your landscape (e.g. poly tunnels, cold stores, packing houses)?

Please give us your views about this

Please tell us on a post-it note

Local shops, post offices and pubs are struggling to survive, should we

	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
Find alternative uses for these buildings?			
Encourage more rural housing to support these services?			

Would you support the development of more housing to meet local needs, in particular affordable housing?

YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
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If you do, where should they be sited?



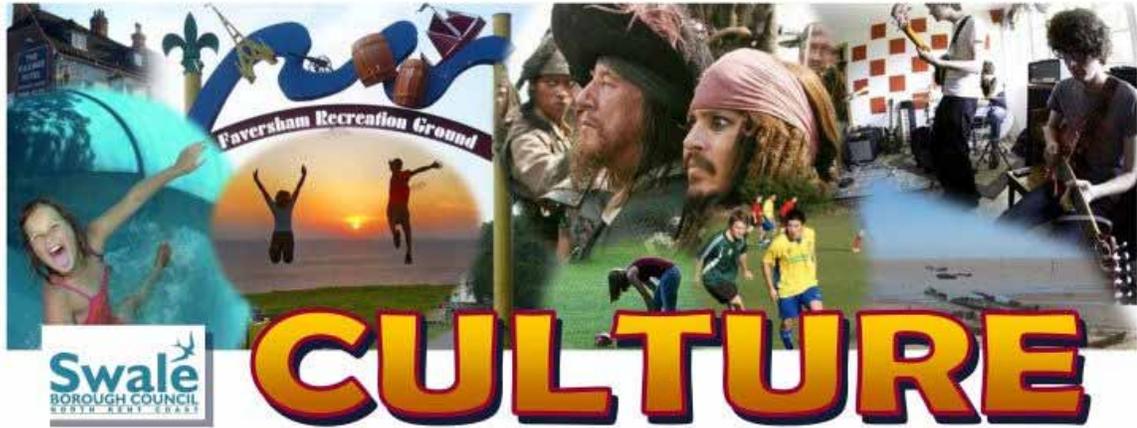
We need to do more to support the rural economy. What business uses are appropriate / inappropriate to site in the countryside and where should they be sited?

Should parts of the countryside enjoy greater protection from development than other areas? If you feel they do please tell us why and which ones

How do we encourage tourists to visit the rural areas?

Please tell us on a post-it note





We have been undertaking a lot of market research to identify how people use their leisure time and what sports, leisure and cultural facilities they are involved in.

What cultural facilities do you expect to have?

	In your neighbourhood incl. community centre/ village hall	In your Town	In Sittingbourne
Open space			
Cinema			
Sports Centre			
Football pitch			
Local park			
Formal park			
Access to nature			
Museums			
Theatre			
Library			
Swimming pool			
Art Gallery			
Restaurants			
Café			
Pubs			
Music Venue			
Studio space			
Recording/			
Other			

Is there anything else you want to tell us about leisure and culture provision in the borough?



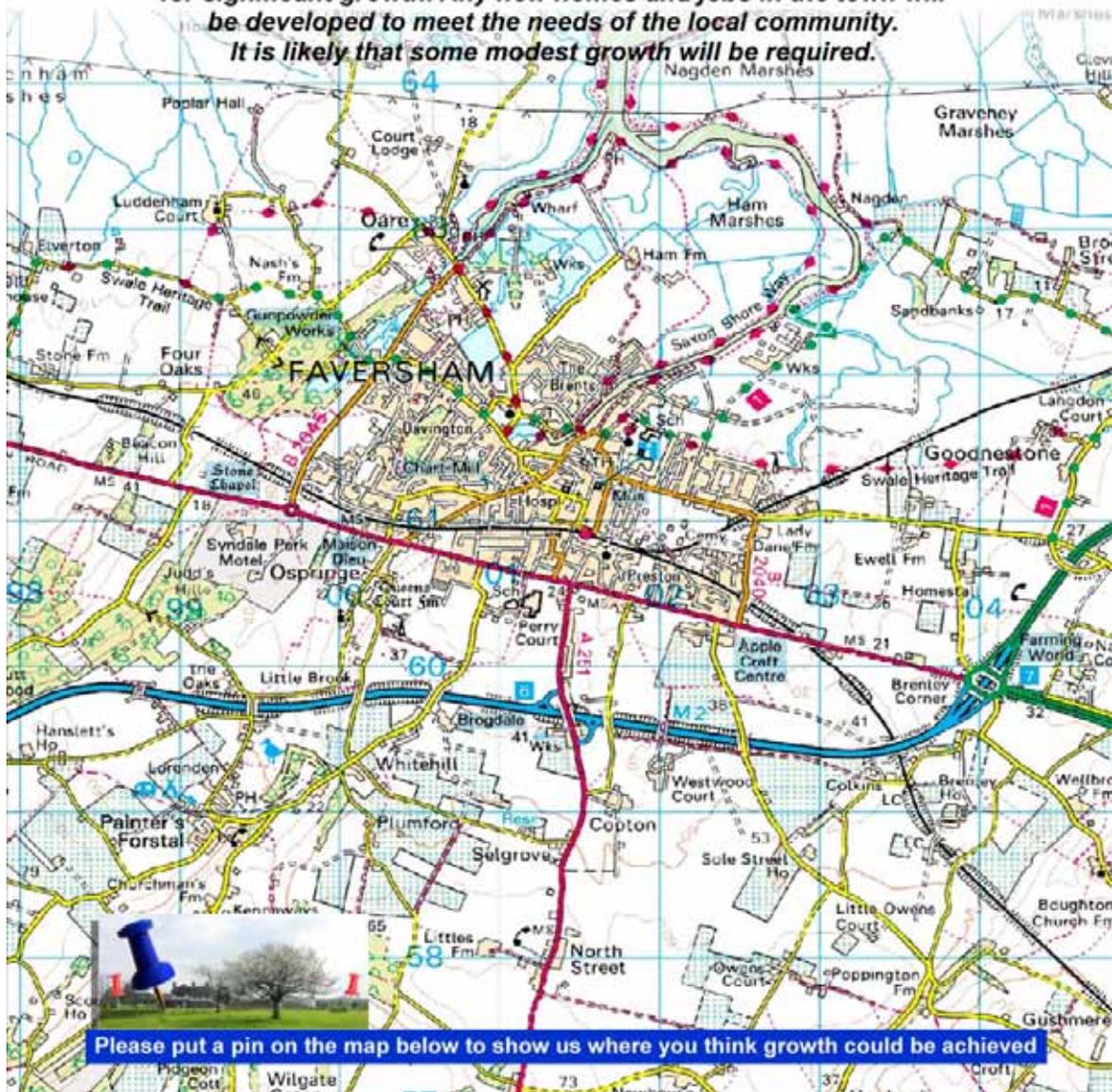
Please tell us on a post-it note





FAVERSHAM

Faversham is a small and compact market town not identified for significant growth. Any new homes and jobs in the town will be developed to meet the needs of the local community. It is likely that some modest growth will be required.





If we had to expand Sittingbourne to provide new housing a
and employment where should it be sited?

