Swale BOROUGH COUNCIL

Annual Monitoring Report 2009/2010

Planning Services

1 Executive Summary

This is the Executive Summary for Swale Borough Council's Annual Monitoring Report for the year April 2009 to March 2010.

This reporting year has been a very mixed year for the borough and the impact of the recession upon our communities is noticeable. The main affect of the economic downturn has been upon employment development and the number of jobs within the borough. When compared with last year, a significant floorspace completion of over 100,000sqm, the negative net floorspace of employment use this year shows the marked affect on Swale's economy.

The dramatic change in employment growth has not been mirrored in housing growth, indeed housing completions have been amongst the highest recorded since 2006 and significantly higher than last year. This has lead to a comfortable supply of housing for the next five years and for many years after.

The main headlines this monitoring year are;

- Decline in the number of affordable dwellings being built, this has been especially disappointing after such a successful year last year;
- Large numbers of housing completions above last year and the annualised target;
- Ample housing supply for not only the next five years but until 2024;
- Large amount of changes of use from employment to other uses, coupled with the reduction in new builds for B class uses has resulted in the dramatic result of a negative net growth in employment floorspace.

1 Executive Summary

2 Introduction

Annual Monitoring Report 2009 - 2010

This is the Council's sixth Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and covers the monitoring period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010. The AMR gives details of what has been happening within the borough and some predictions for the future. The report also compares trends against the policies and targets we have set ourselves. The AMR monitors the policies and proposals of the adopted development plan for the time period.

The development plan for the monitoring period consists of the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008 and the Regional Spatial Strategy: The South East Plan (adopted May 2009).

Although the monitoring period in this report goes up to March 2010, post AMR notes have been added where necessary - particularly regarding significant changes to the development plan.

The approved Local Development Scheme August 2007 is currently subject to review by the Government Office for the South East. For the purposes of this AMR, the 2007 approved scheme represents the benchmark.

This report is intended to meet the requirements of Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and has been prepared with reference to Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the 'Local Development Framework Monitoring' 2005 good practice and the update document 'Local Development Framework - Core Output Indicators 2/2008'.

Structure of this AMR

The main body of the Annual Monitoring Report is set out by themes of indicators on housing, employment and environmental national core indicator sets.

There are three chapters

Chapter 1 - Sets out the portrait of the Borough including issues and challenges facing the borough to be addressed in the development plan

Chapter 2 - Is made up of three topics; Homes and Communities, Employment and Environment and Climate Change. Each topic section provides an analysis of the performance, during the time period, towards targets, core and contextual indicators.

Chapter 3 - Provides details of the progress made on implementing the Local Development Scheme and highlights and actions required.

The report concludes with a section on the actions arising from this years' outcomes and any recommendations for next year.

2 Introduction

3 Portrait of Swale

A Portrait of the Borough of Swale

This section outlines the context for the policies and proposals contained in the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008. The Swale Borough Local Plan provides a portrait of the Borough as follows

Portrait of Swale

Swale Borough is a bridging point between North and East Kent. It derives its name from the Swale, a narrow channel of tidal water separating the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland. It is a place of diverse businesses, communities, and environments, covering an area of 364 square kilometres, with a population of 125,000 people in its three main towns and extensive rural areas. It is the fourth largest district authority in Kent. The Borough is in a strategic location, both within the Government's largest growth area - The Thames Gateway (see Map 1) - and close to mainland Europe. It is set for major changes.

The Borough's largest town - Sittingbourne - is the main population centre and the focus for jobs and services. Its present day distinctiveness derives from its location on the London-Dover Road (A2), as a coaching stop, and as a result of its location at the head of Milton Creek. Served by sailing barges, the Creek provided a focus for industries such as brick and paper making to be established in the late 18th Century.

Faversham, at the eastern end of the Borough, is a small market town, at the centre of a rich farming hinterland, but its real success derived from its location on a navigable inlet of the Swale, which enabled agricultural and other trade to thrive from medieval times. In particular, it became an important centre for the production of gunpowder and bricks. Today, Faversham is, perhaps, best known for its continued links with brewing, whilst this, and the town's industrial heritage have produced its present day distinctiveness with its outstanding range and quality of historic buildings.

Sheerness is the main town on the Isle of Sheppey, and owes its origins, and much of its distinctiveness, to the industries, past and present that have established there. Notable is the former naval dockyard, which resulted in much of the town's development taking place in the early 19th century, associated with the major expansion (by John Rennie) of the dockyard. The dockyard has since been converted to a deep water commercial port, and major industries such as steel making and pharmaceuticals have become established at Blue Town and Queenborough. The HM Prison at Eastchurch is also an important and major employer. In more recent years, the village of Minster has seen significant residential development, making it now the largest settlement on Sheppey. The Island's coast became a popular destination for visitors from London in the post-war period, with caravans and chalets a feature within the landscape. Sheerness and the North-Sheppey coast continue to cater for many summer trippers that results in a significant increase in the summer-time population on the island.

The Borough nevertheless is predominantly rural, with a network of larger villages, smaller villages, and hamlets, often of outstanding charm and character. Agriculture continues to shape the nature and character of the countryside and Swale remains associated with a long history of fruit production. Agriculture shapes much of the diversity of the Borough's environmental resources too, including internationally important estuarine and coastal habits in the North Kent Marshes, the central mainland plain of orchards and arable land, the wooded clay outcrop of The Blean, and the southern woodlands and dry chalk valleys of the North Downs dip-slope.

3 Portrait of Swale

The Borough's maritime influence is a product of its 111 km long coast - the longest of any Kent district. It includes the soft clay cliffs of Sheppey, its coastal marshes and mud, its inlets and creeks, the latter providing the basis of industries, such as barge building, and in modern times, tourism and leisure.

Transport has shaped the Borough, with the North Kent railway, the A2 and the M2, crossing the Borough west to east. North/south routes are less developed, often derived from ancient drove tracks, with just two main roads - the A249 trunk road, and the A251. In particular, the A251, which provides the only direct road link between Faversham and Ashford, including access to emergency hospital services for the eastern part of Swale, is inadequate and increasingly unreliable. The situation is likely to worsen as traffic levels grow as a consequence of Ashford's growth area status. The remaining roads comprise a complex network of rural lanes running over the North Downs.

Issues to be addressed by this Local Plan

Economic concerns: Despite emerging successes at the Kent Science Park, the Borough's economy remains slow to diversify, both in the urban and rural areas.

At each of the Borough's main urban areas, there have been high levels of housing growth that have not been accompanied by new employment development. This has contributed toward unsustainable levels of commuting; this is especially so for the Isle of Sheppey, whilst at Faversham, it has additionally brought problems of the loss of land for employment and a change in character of areas like the creekside.

New infrastructure has been slow in unlocking the economic potential of the area, especially within Thames Gateway.

Sittingbourne needs to achieve a 'step-change' in its attraction as a shopping destination to meet the needs of its growing population and consolidate its position relative to other centres. At the smaller town centres of Sheerness and Faversham, and in the rural settlements, local services are vulnerable to erosion or loss.

Changes proposed to domestic rail services as a result of the opening of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link have implications both for services through the Borough, and the ability of Swale to fully play its part in the Thames Gateway.

Social concerns: The proportion of the Borough's older population is rising, creating demands that will need to be planned for. The provision of affordable housing is falling well short of need.

There is a prosperity gap between Swale and the southeast region with wage levels remaining lower than regional and national averages. There is also a potential mismatch of skills available locally compared with economic aspirations.

New housing development has not always been accompanied with the necessary community facilities to meet the needs of the population.

When indicators of social, economic, and environmental deprivation are examined, there are wide disparities between communities in parts of the Isle of Sheppey, Davington in Faversham and Milton Regis, Murston and Kemsley when compared with the more prosperous wards in the southern mainland of the Borough. Allied to this, there is a need for Family Centres in

Sheerness and Faversham, Community Enterprise Hubs, Neighbourhood Support Centres and Community Learning Centres. There is also a need for further Secondary and Further Education provision at Sittingbourne.

Environmental Concerns: Much of the land around the principal towns is environmentally designated and valued. There are slender countryside gaps that separate Sittingbourne from nearby villages, whilst the risk of flooding impacts upon communities and development potential. Ensuring that the Borough fulfils its role in Thames Gateway, and by responding to and taking advantage of development pressures and opportunities, may present tensions concerning the environment that must be addressed if growth is to be accompanied with an improved quality of life.

Global warming will increase the risk of flooding in the Borough, and more needs to be done to encourage energy conservation and other sustainable design and build techniques in new development. There is steady, but slow, progress in improving the sustainable design and build of new developments, whilst high quality design should not be the prerogative of 'special' locations.

There is traffic congestion in the A2 corridor, in Sittingbourne town centre, on roads leading to and including the A249 off the Isle of Sheppey, and on rural roads, producing costs to human health, the environment and the economy.

There is dereliction and poor environmental quality in parts of the Borough needing to be tackled, notably, Milton Creek, Queenborough/Rushenden, Sheerness, and Blue Town, whilst the character of the countryside is under threat by development and changes in the agricultural and forestry economies."

3 Portrait of Swale

4 Homes and Communities

Housing Summary

- This has been a turbulent year in policy terms with the revocation and then reinstatement of the SEP in the Development Plan, causing confusion over housing targets for authorities and the recession affecting house prices and significantly affecting unemployment and therefore repossession rates.
- Despite the economic downturn the Borough has experienced a year of significant housing completions, over and above those of last year, which will stand the area in good stead if future harder years.
- Unfortunately the success of affordable housing provision from last year has not been repeated. The Council will need to work hard with developers and house builders to ensure future years have higher amounts of affordable dwelling provision, subject to schemes viability.

Core Indicators

In December 2009 the council published its 2008/09 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which has been developed by a SHLAA Partnership consisting of developers, agents, RSL's and other external parties. The outcomes are included within the Core Indicators below.

H1 - Plan period and housing targets

For this monitoring period the only housing target was that of the Regional Spatial Strategy - The South East Plan. This set a target of 10,800 homes in the period 2006 - 2026.

Post AMR Note - On the 6th July 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government revoked Regional Spatial Strategies and their housing targets. However on the 10th November 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued a statement on the outcome of a judicial review, which reinstated the South East Plan but that the Governments stated intention to remove it through the Localism Bill (expected December 2010) should remain a material consideration. Therefore the housing targets for the next monitoring year will rely on the Local Plan target of 9,100 up to 2016 and the emerging Core Strategy.

H2(a) - Net additional dwellings in previous years

The number of net completions in the period 2006-2009 is 1970 dwellings (excluding this years completions). (Source: KPOG Housing Information Audit 2009/10)

H2(b) - Net additional dwellings - this year

4 Homes and Communities

The number of net completions for this monitoring year (April 09 - March 10) is 709 dwellings.(Source: KPOG Housing Information Audit 2009/10)

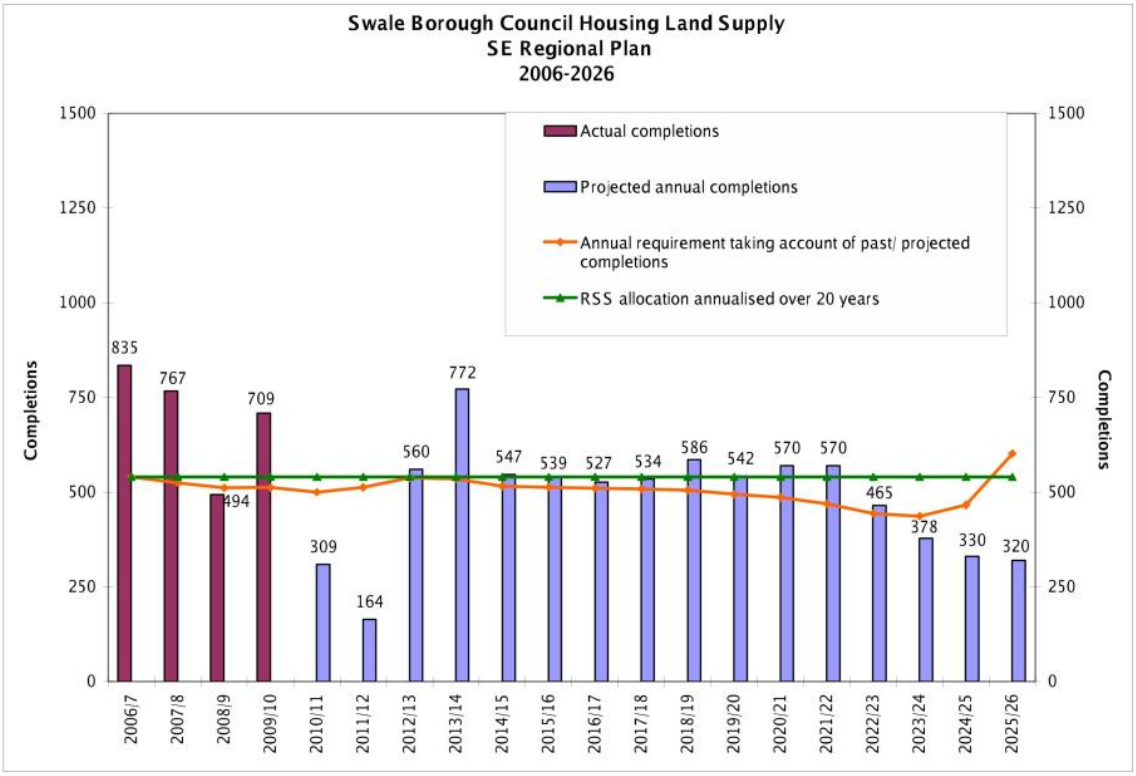
H2(c) Net additional dwellings - future years

Total dwellings in plan period	1/4/2010 - 31/3/2026	**8830**
Total site area (hectares)	(i) Site Area	**204.3 ha (43.2 dph)**
South East Plan annualised target of 10,800 dwellings	(ii) Annualised plan target applying to each of the 5 years	**540 per annum**

Table 4.1

This year's completions have been significantly higher than the annualised target of 540 dwellings per annum.

Below is the Housing trajectory for this monitoring year (Source:KPOG Housing Information Audit 2009/10)



Picture 4.1

It is worth noting that the housing trajectory does not include sites identified in the 2008/09 SHLAA or windfall provision.

The trajectory shows an overall shortfall of 282 dwellings off the total 10,800 required by the SEP. However housing targets are likely to change with the change to regional planning and the emerging Core Strategy, in any event any shortfall will be dealt with by the Core Strategy and its allocations.

The average per annum housing completions (this year) are show at 470 dwellings. Yet completions this year have been well above the annualised housing target set by the SEP. This is primarily down to a large number of dwellings, on a couple of housing estates being mothballed at eaves level in the year 08/09. The assumption was that this would continue, however this has not be the case and many of these dwelling were completed this monitoring year.

The significant completions this year and in the previous years provide a comfortable supply of dwellings which ensures if next years completions are low, due to the economic downturn, there remains significant levels of supply and no greenfield sites will need releasing. The previous success in completions can therefore comfortably compensate for the economic downturn or a drop in completions for the next two years, as shown in the trajectory.

4 Homes and Communities

The five year supply of housing is demonstrated by the annual dwelling requirement (orange line) always being below the annualised SEP target, showing that extra dwelling provision is not required for the next five years. As previously explained the annual dwelling requirement only falls below the housing target at 2024/25 and this shortfall will be adequately addressed by the Core Strategy.

H2(d) - Managed delivery target

The managed delivery target is made up of the completions since 2006 - 2010 and the projected trajectory of completions. The completions 06-10 total 2805 dwellings and the projected total 7713 dwellings, therefore the managed delivery target totals 10,518 dwellings.

H3 - New and converted dwellings on Previously Developed Land

There has been a total of 345 new or converted dwellings on Previously Developed Land; this equates to 48.1% on Brownfield Land. (Source: SBC Housing Land Supply Monitoring 2010)

H4 - Net additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers

There have been 11 planning applications for Gypsy and Traveller pitches this monitoring year. Seven pitches have been granted temporary permission equalling 15 caravans and 4 pitches have been granted permanent permission with a total of 6 caravans. (Source: SBC Monitoring of Planning Permissions)

H5 - Gross affordable housing completions

Tenure	Number of dwellings
Social rent with subsidy	71
Intermediate without subsidy	12
Shared Ownership	98
Total	181

Table 4.2 Affordable Housing completions

This is a net increase from last monitoring year, however in terms of percentage of affordable housing of all new housing there has been a decrease. Affordable housing completions this year make up 25.5% of all new dwellings (08-09 it was 28%) this is below the 30% target the Borough is seeking to achieve. (Source: SBC Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix 2010)

H6 - Housing Quality - Building for Life Assessments

The council does not have the means to monitor this indicator for this years monitoring period.

Contextual Indicators

These contextual indicators show whether the council is achieving or heading towards meeting its objectives in housing policies. The policy target for the contextual indicators is;

Strategic Policy IV Housing: Meeting annualised housing requirement and provide at least 30% of new housing completions as affordable.

Dwelling types by permission

Dwelling Size	Dwelling types by permission	Dwelling types by completions
1 Bed	55	138
2 Bed	151	254
3 Bed	108	253
4 Bed	62	69
5 Bed	2	17
Total	**378**	**731**

Table 4.3

Progress with housing allocations

Below is the progress on strategic allocations within the Local Plan (source: SBC Monitoring 2009-10)

- East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne - Revised development brief approved, no progress on dwelling construction
- Thistle Hill, Minster - Revised development brief approved for an additional 800 dwellings above that in the Local Plan allocation
- Iwade - A revised development brief has been approved as has an application for 98 dwellings approved to the east of Iwade. A further application awaits decision for some 327 dwellings to the south west
- Sittingbourne Town Centre & Milton Creek - Masterplan adopted, no progress on dwelling construction
- Queenborough & Rushenden - Masterplan due for adoption late 2010, no progress on dwelling construction
- Stones Farm, Sittingbourne - Development brief for 600 dwellings due for public consultation October 2010

- Land at Seager Road - Application awaiting decision for 35 dwellings
- There has been no progression on any of the other outstanding Local Plan strategic allocations

Gypsies & Travellers: public and private sites

The caravan count for July 2009 showed a total of 142 caravans in the borough, the majority being private caravans. There were no caravans on non-tolerated roadside encampments. (Source: http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/caravancountjan2010)

A Managed Encampment has been in place since 2008 which has dramatically reduced the number of roadside encampments reported throughout the year.

A proposed public site and potentially suitable private sites underwent public consultation in March 2010. Progress on these sites will be reported in future years AMR.

Section 106 contributions

There are considerably less Section 106 contributions than last year with only around £550,000 collected for education, social services, community infrastructure and town centre improvements. It is anticipated next year will see an improvement as several developments will meet their dwelling threshold for contributions.

5 Employment

Employment Core Indicators

BD1 – Additional employment floorspace by type

Use class B1 (a), B1 (b), B1(c), B2 and B8

Use Class	New Build (net)	C.O.U. gain (net)	Conversions gain (net)	Demolitions	Total Additional Floorspace sqm
B1(a)	964	-1824	-20	0	-880
B1 (b)	0	0	0	1063	-1063
B1 (c)	38	-571	462	0	-71
B2	84	258	373	0	715
B8	200	-608	1255	0	847
All					**-452**

Table 5.1 Core Indicator BD1(SQM)

(Source: SBC Monitoring 2009-10)

BD2 – Employment floorspace on Previously Developed Land

A total of 100% of new net employment floorspace has been on Previously Developed Land. The floorspace figures on PDL for new builds and changes of use but excluding demolitions is as follows;

Use Class

B1 (a) = -880sqm

B1 (b) = 0sqm

B1 (c) = -71sqm

B1 (mix) = 0sqm

B2 = 715sqm

B8 = 847sqm

Total = 611sqm

5 Employment

BD3 – Employment land available (in hectares)

For Use class B1 (a), B1 (b), B1(c), B2 and B8

In Hectares	B1(a)	B1(b)	B1(c)	B2	B8	Total
Allocations	12.7	4.9	13.5	31.7	4.9	67.7
Extant permissions	22.1	1.0	37.8	47.3	71.0	179.2
Total land available	34.8	5.9	51.3	79.0	75.9	**246.8**

Table 5.2 Core Indicator BD3

The total hectares available for employment (Use class B1 (a), B1 (b), B1(c), B2 and B8) is 246.8ha.

BD4 - Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses' (sq m)

Town centre uses are defined as follows;

A1 Shops - Shops, retail warehouses, hairdressers, undertakers, travel and ticket agencies, post offices (but not sorting offices), pet shops, sandwich bars, showrooms, domestic hire shops, dry cleaners, funeral directors and Internet cafés.

A2 Financial and professional services - Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) including estate and employment agencies and betting offices.

A3 Restaurants and cafés - For the sale of food and drink for consumption on the premises - restaurants, snack bars and cafés.

A4 Drinking establishments - Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs).

A5 Hot food take aways - For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.

B1 Business - Offices (other than those that fall within A2),

D1 Non-residential institutions - Clinics, health centres, crèches, day nurseries, day centres, schools, art galleries (other than for sale or hire), museums, libraries, halls, places of worship, church halls, law court. Non residential education and training centres.

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1(A)	D2
Gain	899	906	725	677	20	964	1372

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1(A)	D2
Loss	507	240	383	92	82	1844	0
Net	392	666	342	585	-62	-880	1372

Table 5.3 Total in Local Authority Area (including within Town Centres)

	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	B1(A)	D2
Gain	0	126	725	0	0	0	0
Loss	410	240	0	0	0	960	0
Net	-410	-114	725	0	0	-960	0

Table 5.4 Within Town Centres

Contextual Indicators

The policy targets for employment indicators are

Strategic Policy I Sustainable Development: To reduce the growth and length of journeys to work

Strategic Policy III Economy: Meeting annualised Structure Plan employment floorspace

Strategic Policy VI Infrastructure: Delivery of key projects within the plan period

Policy B3 Maintaining and Enhancing Vitality and Viability of Town Centres: Maintain or increase range of use provision within the three town centres with emphasis upon retail floorspace

These contextual indicators provide a general baseline which test whether plans, policies or programmes are achieving the objectives set for employment and the economy.

Total number of employee jobs

The total number of employee jobs within Swale for 2008 is 42,800, data for 2009 is not yet available at sub-regional or local authority level. This is a decrease in total jobs of 1400 from last year.

Job Density

The NOMIS 2008 data shows job density has decreased from last year to 0.57 jobs to working age population, this is to be expected with the significant increase in unemployment caused by the recession.

Unemployment

There is currently severe unemployment in the borough a major change from last year when it appeared many of the industries based in Swale would not be as hard hit as other areas in the recession. Economically inactive residents wanting a job has risen by over 2000 residents in the last year to a total of nearly 7000. There are around 3000 residents claiming job seekers

5 Employment

allowance with the majority of these in the 24-49 age bracket. Of those made unemployed between May 08 - May 09 over 30% of the unemployed workforce are from elementary occupations in; agriculture, construction and processing, administrative/personal service, cleaning, security and sales.

Progress on major and strategic employment allocations in the Swale Borough Local Plan

Employment Site	B1(a)	B1 (b)	B1 (c)	B2	B8	Total
Oare Gravel Works	1.50	1.50	3.00	0	0	6.00
Queenborough	1.15	0	0	0.80	0.80	2.75
Milton Creek	1.12	0	0	0.90	1.10	3.12
Iwade	0	0	0.90	0	0	0.90
Ridham and Kemsley	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Hall Farm	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Meads	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neatscourt	2.80	2.80	5.60	12.40	0.40	24.00
Land at Westminster	1.23	0	0	1.23	1.23	3.69
St Michael's Rd	0.40	0	0	0	0	0.40
Western Link	1.18	0	2.37	0.55	0.20	4.30
Standard House	0.20	0	0	0	0	0.20
Faversham Creek	0.10	0	0	0	0	0.10
Selling Road	0.60	0.60	0.60	0	0	1.80
East of Faversham	0.22	0	0.44	0.67	0.67	2.00
Duke of Kent	0.23	0	0.23	0.45	0.45	1.36
Whiteway Road	0	0	0	14.10	0	14.10
Land at Graveney Road	1.71	0	0	0.62	0	2.33
Eurocentre Whitstable Road	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridge Road	0.16	0	0.34	0	0	0.50
Bell Centre	0.10	0	0	0	0	0.10
Total	**12.70**	**4.90**	**13.48**	**31.72**	**4.85**	**67.65**

Table 5.5 Employment Site Progress in Hectares (Ha)

Progress with Infrastructure proposals

The third section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road which bridges Milton Creek began construction this monitoring year. Funding and final route for the last stage linking the A2 has yet to be agreed. All other infrastructure proposals are included within the Transport Strategy and are monitored through that process.

Migrant workforce

Since 2002/03, there has been a marked growth in the number of migrant workers in the KCC Area, higher than the growth experienced nationally.

	2007-08	2008-09
Kent	13,520	11,010
Swale	1,170	1,140

Table 5.6 Migrant workforce

Source: Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Swale has a higher proportion of migrant workers from the EU Accession States than the UK average a total of 82.5%. Swale has the fifth highest number of migrant workers out of all Kent local authorities, in total migrant workers account for 1.2% of Swale's working age population.

Travelling to work and Occupations

Over 50% of residents travel to work by car, nearly 7% by train and 10% by walking. The average distance travelled to get to work is 17.46km Swale has the highest number of people travelling between 10km and 20km with 28%. In Swale, 14% travelled 60km and over, the most of all of the five local authorities in the East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This large percentage of out commuting can be examined in more detail if work destinations are known.

From	To								
	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Swale	Thanet	Rest of Kent	South-East	London	East of England
Canterbury	41,574	2,491	863	2,120	1,794	4,293	531	2,659	299
Dover	3,384	32,551	3,521	356	1,415	1,959	333	789	203
Shepway	1,448	2,701	29,182	200	249	5,612	496	1,371	140
Swale	2,768	305	189	36,196	201	10,044	505	4,724	319
Thanet	3,673	4,218	435	449	36,812	1,388	332	1,293	197
Rest of Kent	2,467	1,032	2,403	5,926	357				

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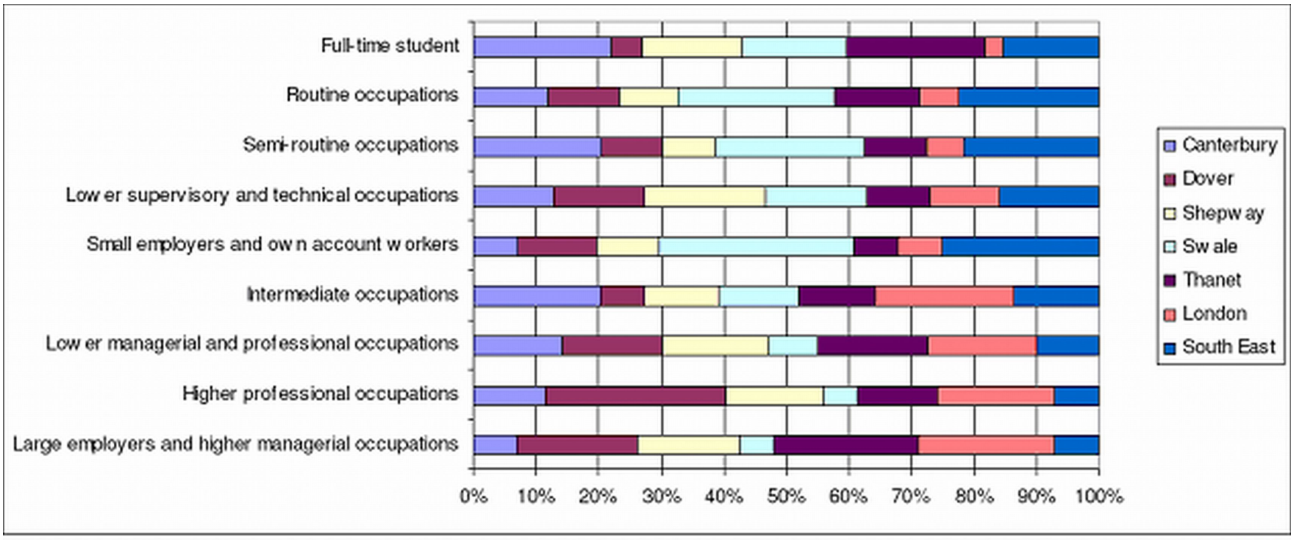
From	To								
	Canterbury	Dover	Shepway	Swale	Thanet	Rest of Kent	South-East	London	East of England
South East	210	412	423	202	69				
London	310	241	118	353	147				
East of England	81	175	55	150	68				

Table 5.7 Travel-to-work

(Source: East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009)

The figures show that Swale has the most residents commuting to London (4,724) However over 36, 000 residents work as well as live in Swale and 10,000 commute to other areas in Kent. Swale has relatively few residents commuting to Dover, Shepway, Thanet or out of Kent to the East/South East of England. There is still, by comparison, a large percentage of out commuting within the borough.

Relationship between occupation and travel



Source ONS census 2001

Figure 5.1 Travel to work

This shows that the highest percentage of residents who live and work within the borough are employed as: Small employers and own account workers, Routine occupations and Semi-routine occupations.

It also indicates that those residents employed as: Lower managerial and professional occupations, Higher professional occupations and Large employers and higher managerial occupations; are travelling outside the borough to other authorities and London to work. This indicates that job opportunities within these sectors are currently missing from the Swale job/employment offer.

Qualifications

Swale has low levels of literacy, numeracy and education below the county and regional averages. However this has improved with increases in over 10,000 in all levels NVQ4,NVQ3, NVQ2, NVQ1 and above between 2000 - 2008. In 2006, over 14% of working age people within the Borough had no qualifications, compared with less than 10% across the South East, and the proportion with qualifications at NVQ4 and above was a third lower than elsewhere in the region.

Across the country as a whole, the proportion of jobs requiring higher qualifications is likely to increase, and there is a higher proportion of employment in knowledge-intensive occupations in the South East than in most of the rest of the country. Poor qualifications levels will act as a limit on the ability of local people to access these new employment opportunities. Swale's poor skills profile relates to historic employer demand, which given the Borough's traditional sector strengths, has not tended to require the higher skills levels that are increasingly in demand nationally. The interrelationship between low skills levels and employer demand is characterised as a 'low skills equilibrium': jobs that require poor skills provide little incentive to gain new ones, and the presence of a relatively low skilled workforce deters higher-value investors.

There is some evidence that the Borough's skills profile is improving. Among the current workforce, the proportion qualified to at least NVQ2 increased by over 9 percent between 2001/2 and 2005/6, ahead of the Kent average.

School attainment has also improved significantly: between 2003 and 2007, the percentage of students achieving GCSE passes at grades A*-C in Swale schools increased by 27%, compared with a Kent average of 16% and a national average of 15%. However, the borough's average attainment figures still lag behind those for Kent and England as a whole. With this continued improvement, and the prospects of investment in the new Minster Academy and in the wider reorganisation of education on the Isle of Sheppey, the outlook for long-term improvement in the Borough's skills profile appear stronger.

Qualifications	Swale (numbers)	Swale (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
NVQ4 and above	15,000	19.3	31.5	29.0
NVQ3 and above	30,800	39.6	50.8	47.0
NVQ2 and above	45,700	58.7	68.9	65.2
NVQ1 and above	60,100	77.3	83.4	78.9
Other qualifications	6,000	7.8	7.7	8.7

5 Employment

Qualifications	Swale (numbers)	Swale (%)	South East (%)	Great Britain (%)
No qualifications	11,600	15.0	8.9	12.4

Table 5.8 Qualifications

6 Environment and Climate Change

Environment and climate change summary

Overall there has been very little, if any, change in environmental indicators with the quality and quantity of natural and built assets remaining stable. Whilst there has been no change in habitat this year there has also, disappointingly, been no advances in renewable energy generation permissions. In March 2010 the council produced its Sustainable Design and Construction Developer Guidance which will encourage the use of renewable energies on new developments. It is anticipated this will improve performance against the Environment Core and Contextual Indicators which will be reported in future years AMR.

Core Indicators

E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on flooding and water quality grounds

For this monitoring year there have been no planning permissions granted contrary to Environment Agency advice on either flooding or water quality grounds.

E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance

There have been no loses in Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation or any other local sites.

E3: Renewable energy generation

There has been no change in renewable energy generation since last monitoring year. (Source: Climate Change Officer)

There have been no renewable energy developments / installations granted planning permission for this monitoring year which meet the criteria of Core Indicator E3.

CO2 emissions per capita are (latest DECC figures released Oct 2010) – total 13t per capita, 8.2t from industry, 2.2t from domestic and 2.6t from road transport (Source: Climate Change Officer)

Contextual Indicators

The objectives and policy targets for environment and climate change are:

Policy E6 The Countryside: No loss of greenfield land, not allocated by the Local Plan (or acceptable against the Local Plan) permitted to development.

Policy E9 Protecting the Quality and Character of the Borough's Landscape: No loss of greenfield land, not allocated by the Local Plan (or acceptable against the policy)

6 Environment and Climate Change

Policy E12 Sites of Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Value: No net loss of designated wildlife sites to development

Policy E14 Development involving Listed Buildings: No net loss of listed buildings and reduction in buildings on the 'at risk register'

Policy E15 Development Affecting a Conservation Area: Increase in number of conservation areas with appraisals

Policy IN26 Renewable Energy: Increasing yearly proportion of new housing completions incorporating renewable energy schemes and conservation measures.

Policy H2 Providing for New Housing: 30% of new dwellings provided on previously developed land and the majority of housing completions to be between 30-50 dwellings per hectare

This indicators provide the background and context of the borough environmental state and the progress being made to address climate change.

Change in areas designated for their intrinsic local landscape value

There has been no change in Special Landscape Areas or Areas of High Landscape Value; current provision remains at 16,292 hectares (39% of the borough)

Amount of greenfield development not allocated within the Local Plan

There has been a total of 18 dwellings over three sites completed on Greenfield Land not previously allocated within the Local Plan. There has also been a total of 2281sqm of employment completions, 29sqm B1a, 290sqm B1c, 457sqm B2 and 1255sqm B8 use class.

Change in the number of listed buildings, buildings at risk, scheduled ancient monuments and historical assets.

The number of listed buildings remains approximately 1866. There have been no changes to buildings at risk, scheduled ancient monuments and historical assets.

Change in the number and % of the borough designated as a Conservation Area or Registered Historic Parks and Gardens

There has been no change in Conservation Area or Registered Historic Parks and Gardens.

Change in the number of Conservation Area appraisals completed

There have been no appraisals this monitoring year, however three are underway and expected to reported in next years AMR.

Specific renewable energy schemes

There are no schemes this monitoring year.

7 Progress on the Local Development Scheme

Local Development Scheme Implementation

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The Local Development Scheme is the timetable for preparing planning policies and highlights when key stages and consultations will take place. This is then used to measure the council's performance on producing policies and projects.

The current LDS was approved in August 2007; a revised LDS was submitted to Government for approval in April 2010. The revised LDS includes changes to the time-line for both the Core Strategy and Faversham Creek DPD's as well as additional SPD's. Progress on the revised LDS will be reported on in next years AMR.

This year progress on meeting key milestones and policies has been successful. It is anticipated that next year will be significantly affected by the economic downturn and the cuts to Government and council budgets.

Progress on Policy Documents

The progress on Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and other projects is as follows;

<u>Core Strategy Development Plan Document</u>

This is the principle planning policy document for the council and work formally started in 2008. The Core Strategy is in pre-production evidence base stage with the following pieces of evidence completed this year

Employment Land Review - completed April 2010

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 08/09 - completed December 2009 (SHLAA 09/10 underway)

Strategic Floodrisk Assessment - completed October 2009

Strategic Housing Market Assessment - completed June 2009

The following pieces of evidence base have been started;

Urban Extension Capacity Study - due to be completed June 2010

Health Impact Assessment - due to be completed October 2010

Water Cycle Study - due to be completed November 2010

Sustainability Appraisal - due to be completed November 2010

Retail Assessment - due to be completed December 2010

Work has already begun on the Core Strategy document, most importantly in setting the vision for the borough. Public consultation on the Vision for the Core Strategy was launched in April 2010 and progress will be reported in next years AMR.

7 Progress on the Local Development Scheme

Insert table with CS programme

Faversham Creek Development Plan Document

This document will set out detailed guidance for regeneration of Faversham Creekside. The project started in 2008, however during 2009 significant issues over the potential dredging of the creek emerged which has delayed progress. This issue is likely to require further discussion with key stakeholders, including environmental groups and it is anticipated this will continue to delay the DPD.

Milton Creek and Sittingbourne Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document

This project intends to provide a masterplan and detailed guidance on the regeneration of Sittingbourne and Milton Creek, including a revived town centre. The SPD is due to be adopted late 2010.

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

This document provides guidances on the Section 106 requirements for development and the expectations the council has for developers contribution to affordable housing, open space and community infrastructure. The SPD underwent public consultation in February 2009 and was subsequently adopted by the council in November 2009.

Queenborough and Rushenden Supplementary Planning Document

This project is intended to provide a masterplan and detailed guidance for proposals within the Queenborough and Rushenden Area Action Plan within the Swale Borough Local Plan 2008. As reported in previous AMR's the delay in the undertaking of an Appropriate Assessment (AA) has delayed this project. The Appropriate Assessment underwent public consultation in July 2009. Members resolved to adopt the masterplan (subject to an agreed AA) in October 2009 and formal adoption is expected in November 2010.

Documents and Programmes started this year

There have been a number of Supplementary Planning Documents and projects started in this monitoring year which are detailed in the revised LDS submitted to Government.

Landscape Character and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

The Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, which reviews Swale's Landscape Character Assessment of 2005 and incorporates within it biodiversity opportunities for the borough also provides a framework for Development Management decisions on matters of landscape character. This study was undertaken in early 2010 and agreed for public consultation in March 2010. Public consultation is currently scheduled for October 2010.

Conservation Area Appraisal Supplementary Planning Documents

Work has begun on conservation area appraisals at Sittingbourne, Sheerness Dockyard and Queenborough which will become SPD's. Conservation area designation is a positive step towards encouraging heritage-led regeneration and high quality development. Public consultation on the SPD's is currently scheduled for late 2010.

Stones Farm Supplementary Planning Document

The Swale Borough Local Plan allocates land at Stones Farm for approximately 600 dwellings and 15ha of public open space . The purpose of this document is to set out design principles for the housing allocation, open space, clarifies the development's relationship with the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. Work as begun on the development brief and public consultation is scheduled for October 2010.

Actions Arising

- Adoption of a revised LDS will be crucial for setting a realistic and up-to-date timetable for the two most important policy projects; Core Strategy and Faversham Creek AAP
- Next year's monitoring will capture whether the Core Strategy evidence base is still on track
- 2010 - 2011 is likely to be a key monitoring year for assessing the progress of policy documents, projects and implementation.

7 Progress on the Local Development Scheme

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions on this monitoring year

The future of monitoring reports, or certainly there format is uncertain with the overall Government approach to reduce the need and frequency of reporting to central bodies. This has recently been demonstrated by the revocation of the national indicator set. Future guidance is expected on the format and content of future AMR's which is expected in 2011.

Outcomes this year

Despite the recession the Borough has maintained significant levels of housing completions with main major housing estates beginning work on site again after stopping construction last year. Housing completions have been almost at the level of construction in per-economic downturn.

However progress on economic recovery and employment development has been negative in net growth. Furthermore development in the climate change and environmental sectors has been extremely limited.

Future actions

The most important action required is the adoption of an up-to-date LDS to ensure the Core Strategy and Faversham Creek DPD's remain on track and relevant SPD's are added to the work programme.

It is hoped that housing completions will remain significant, although a reduction has been also anticipated in the trajectory. The Council will promote the development of employment floorspace and through its Local Plan allocations it is hoped the negative net growth experienced this year will not be repeated.

- Significant progress is needed on improving affordable housing levels which will require negotiation with house builders and S106 agreements
- Improvement in renewable energy development is needed and will be achieved via the developer guidance and anticipated climate change study.
- Evidence base of the Core Strategy requires completion

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

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If you would like further hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request.

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