

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

November 2022



CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	2
A PROFILE OF SWANLEY	6
VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN	13
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SWANLEY	16
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	20
CONSERVATION DESIGN AND HERITAGE	32
HOUSING	44
THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT	62
TRANSPORT	75

INTRODUCTION

The Localism Act of 2011 introduced for local communities the option of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan in England. A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a way for local people in an area to get together and lead on shaping how their neighbourhood will develop. It is a document written by a town or parish council, or in urban areas a Neighbourhood Forum, to guide future development, regeneration, and conservation of a particular area. This plan is about how the land and buildings of Swanley will be used and developed and it contains planning policies and proposals for improving the area.

A Neighbourhood Development Plan (hereafter called a Neighbourhood Plan) is a legal planning document and needs to use a range of formal and technical terms, but as far as possible we have tried to use plain English and footnotes where further explanation is required.

There are a number of stages to successfully completing the process of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan, these are:

- Designation of the plan area
- Designation of the Qualifying Body
- Engaging with the community
- Writing the plan
- Consulting with the community
- Submitting the plan to the local authority for further consultation
- The plan is inspected by an independent planning examiner
- A local referendum is held to decide whether the plan should be adopted (more than 50% of those voting in the referendum must vote 'yes' in order to bring the plan into force).

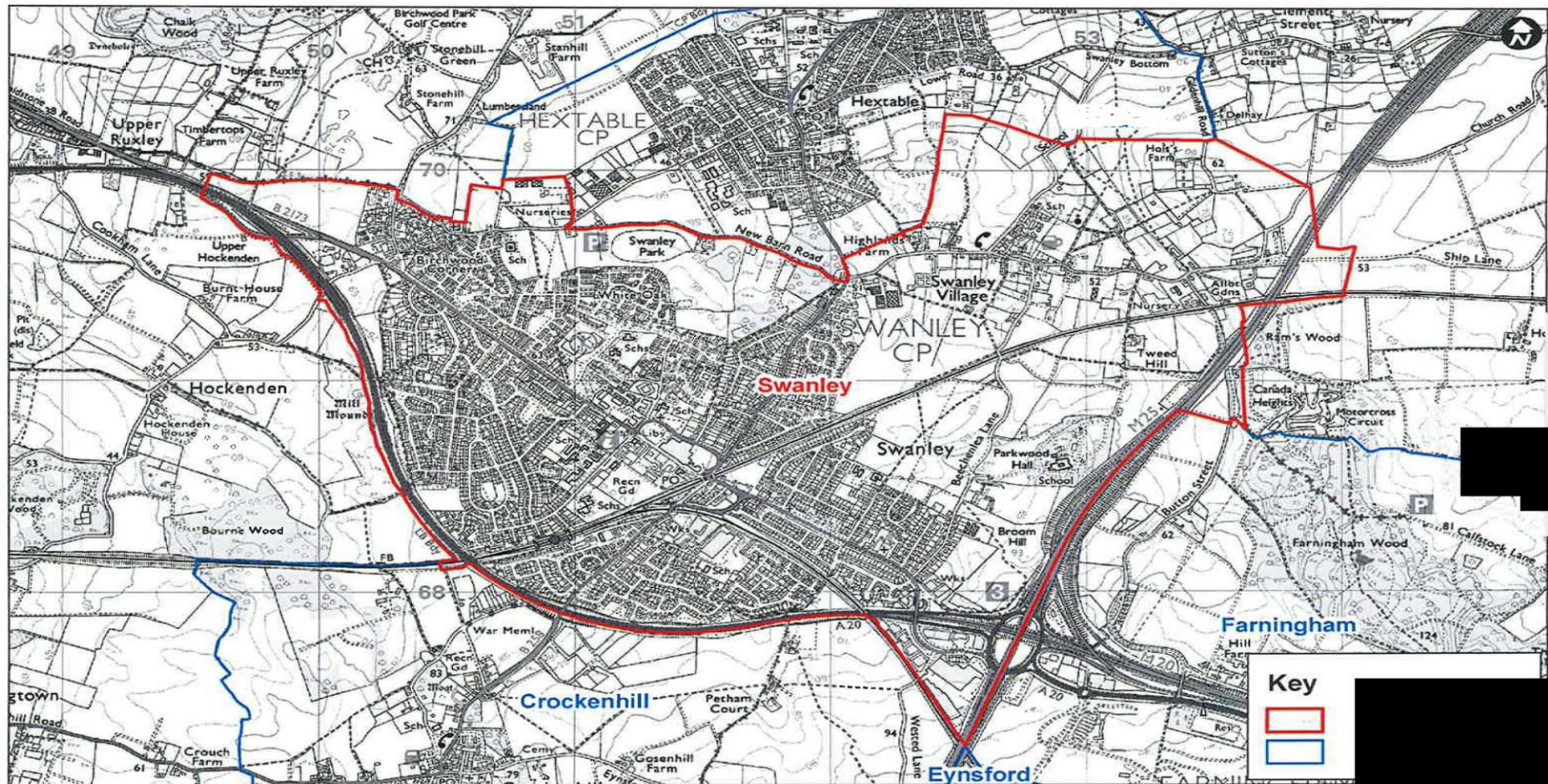
When a Neighbourhood Plan has been 'adopted', or 'made', the policies within the plan must be addressed by anyone making a planning application and when planning applications and appeals are considered and decided by the local planning authority.

Setting up the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan

In 2014 a formal application to designate the whole of Swanley Parish including Swanley Village was made to Sevenoaks District Council (see map) which was formally agreed to cover the whole of the area shown on Map 1.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

MAP 1 - THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA



SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL

For some time, no progress was made, but the area began to come under development pressure and Sevenoaks District were in the process of reviewing their Local Plan which resulted in a revisiting of the idea in 2018.

As a result, a workshop was held with town councillors to explore the idea and what a Neighbourhood Plan could do for the Town. It was agreed to progress the idea and a public event was held on 22nd March 2018 to ask residents their views about a Neighbourhood Plan and what it could include. From attendees at this event a volunteer Steering Group was brought together to take the process forward.

Over the course of 2018 and 2019 the group conducted an extensive survey of residents about the future of Swanley parish (see Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement) covering all aspects of planning and development and set up working groups to take forward the development of the detail.

- Working and Employment
- Community Health Education and Leisure
- Heritage and Conservation
- Housing
- Transport

How the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan fits into the planning system

Neighbourhood Plans are policy-based land use plans that need to be in general conformity with the Local Plan. In this case, the Local Plan is prepared by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC).

Neighbourhood Plans are produced by community forum groups or Parish or Town councils. For Swanley, the Neighbourhood Plan has been produced by a Steering Group of residents and Swanley Town councillors with an agreed Terms of Reference to work on the Neighbourhood Plan. This has ensured that residents and local groups were in the driving seat of producing policy based on local knowledge and views.

To do this a dialogue between Swanley Town Council (STC) and Sevenoaks Council has been necessary to ensure that the policies and proposals in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan conform to national and local policy, as required by the Neighbourhood Plan regulations.

The development of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan has taken place during a period of great uncertainty in relation to Local Plan policy making by Sevenoaks Council. The current Local Plan for Sevenoaks comprises its Core Strategy (adopted in February 2011) and an Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted in February 2015).

Sevenoaks decided to review these Local Plan documents and the emerging Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Local Plan was submitted for examination in April 2019. Following the completion of examination hearings, the Inspector concluded that the Duty to Co-operate had not been complied with and the plan should not be adopted.

After an unsuccessful high court challenge of this decision by SDC, it is now preparing an updated evidence base to inform a revised Regulation 18 version of the Plan. The Local Development Scheme (which sets out the timescale for collecting evidence and then preparing the Local Plan) was agreed by SDC in July 2022. This proposes two regulation 18 consultations¹ in the autumns of 2022 and 2023 with a submission version for an Independent Inspector to conduct an examination of the Plan, is now proposed for summer and autumn 2024. On 15 November 2022, Sevenoaks District Council agreed to withdraw the Proposed Submission Version of its Local Plan (Reg.19, December 2019) and started its Regulation 18 consultations on a new version of the Local Plan up to 2040.

The Sevenoaks Local Plan must consider the needs of the whole of the district and accommodate their duty to cooperate with local authorities and other service providers on issues like housing development, transport, and health provision.

As far as possible Swanley Town Council as the Qualifying Body responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan has taken a flexible and positive approach to the development of the Sevenoaks Local Plan's emerging policies and their supporting evidence as the Neighbourhood Plan has developed. The Neighbourhood Plan policies have been discussed with Sevenoaks Council as part of the process. In order not to delay the production of the Neighbourhood Plan the current SDC Local Plans of 2011 and 2015 and the emerging Local Plan of 2018/9 have been used as current district wide policy for producing the Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ The purpose of this stage is **to engage with local residents and relevant organisations to identify how planning policy can be used positively to help address key issues within the local authority area.**

A PROFILE OF SWANLEY

History of Swanley

The area of Swanley Town as we now know it did not exist at all prior to the coming of the railway in the 1860's. Swanley Village however is much older and has been recorded down the years as Swanleg in 1203, Swanleye in 1309, Swanlee in 1573, Swanley in 1593 and now Swanley Village.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a nursery and market garden community had grown up around Hextable and produce had been sent to London by horse and cart. With the coming of the railway the market garden industry expanded, and the settlement grew quickly and took the name Swanley Junction. The horticultural produce was exported to London by train and horse manure imported for use on the fields.

In the early years of the town the local workforce consisted of railway and horticultural workers although there were professional people living in the Villas in and around Birchwood Park Avenue who commuted to London. With the advent of the railways there was a gradual shift towards a commuter workforce and today this is predominately the case with 45% travelling to work by car and 25% using the train. If the town is to thrive as both a place to live and work, to avoid long commutes, then a greater variety of local work opportunities with higher income opportunities will be needed.

On 2 June 1862 the Sevenoaks Railway Companies line was opened where it joined the London, Chatham & Dover Railway Companies line and a station was opened on 1 July 1862 which enabled passengers to change lines and was therefore named Sevenoaks Junction. The station was subsequently renamed Swanley Junction, on 1 January 1871, following complaints from people who thought they had alighted at Sevenoaks Town. The station could have been called Birchwood Junction as the local farm here was called Birchwood Farm and what is now known as Swanley Lane was at that time called Birchwood Street, however the railway company decided to call it Swanley Junction after the name of the nearby Village. In April 1939 the station was moved to its current site and renamed Swanley after a disastrous crash in 1937.

The Town Centre

The original small Town Centre was based on the shops in the High Street and Station Road. Swanley developed into a larger Town Centre after the Second World War and shifted west to its current location. The shops known as Swanley Square were built during the late 1960's. Much of the architecture of this period was lacking in distinctiveness. It was described by local historian Horace Balls as "completely lacking in character". Currently the Town Centre is run down and in need of rejuvenation as recently noted in a Town Centre Strategy (April 2022) commissioned by SDC.

Work started on the new ASDA super store in the mid 1970's and opened its doors in 1980. It is built upon the site of the old Kettlewell Hospital. Sadly, almost all the Victorian Villas along Birchwood Park Avenue were also lost to the development. There was considerable opposition to the

development on the grounds of traffic congestion, the effect it would have on the existing shops, and many thought it should be located on the periphery of the town.

Traffic congestion has indeed transpired to be a real problem in the town and there has been a loss of smaller retail outlets, in common with many towns in England.

A detailed profile of the town can be found – “Swanley A Profile” in the *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*”

Swanley Today

Swanley is a town and civil parish in the Sevenoaks District of Kent. It is the second largest of the five towns in the district and situated in the Metropolitan Green Belt area. Swanley is twinned with the French town Verrieres-le-Buisson a commune in the southern suburbs of Paris, 13.3 km from its centre.

The town is located approximately 15 miles southeast of central London adjacent to the London Borough of Bromley which is part of Greater London. It is within the M25 motorway periphery. The population at the 2011 census was 16,226.

The local council is Swanley Town Council. The town is also administered by Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council. It is part of the Sevenoaks parliamentary constituency. As of 2022, Laura Trott, Conservative, is the constituency MP.

Swanley has a town centre defined in the SDC emerging Local Plan of 2018 which provides the existing population of the Town with employment retail and leisure opportunities, including its busy market which takes place on a Wednesday most weeks of the year and has recently begun to operate on a Sunday.

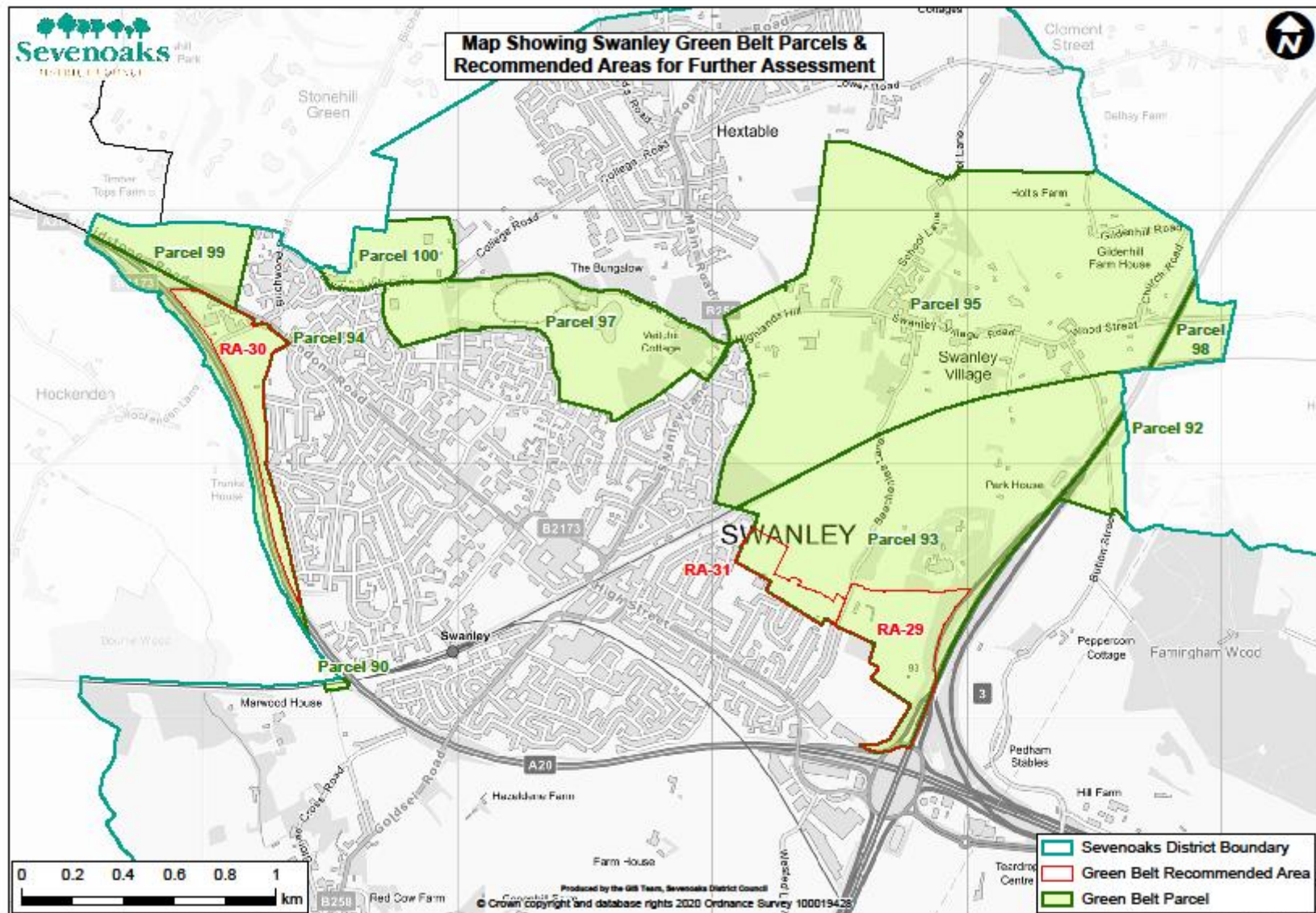
Swanley Village is the other settlement in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area. It is situated a mile and a half north-east of the modern town of Swanley. The M25 motorway is 350m to the east of the village and the railway line between London and east Kent runs just to the south, the nearest station being at Swanley. The village is set in agricultural land amongst a variety of farms, and has a school, church, and two public houses. In recent years the building of thirty new houses on the former industrial site in School Lane has increased the proportion of residential properties in the village.



Swanley's location and accessibility to London means that the countryside around Swanley Town and including Swanley Village is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt.

Sevenoaks District overall has 93% of its land designated as Green Belt – a total of 34,400 hectares. This figure has not changed since 2011 (MHCLG Area of designated Green Belt land by local planning authority as at 31 March 2012). The full extent of this is shown in the map below showing the land covered by Green Belt designation and the location of Swanley which is completely wrapped around by Green Belt.

In 2017 Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) undertook an assessment of the Green Belt in the District, which had not taken place prior to the adoption of the Current Core strategy in 2011 when the housing needs projections identified many fewer homes than are projected to be accommodated and planned for in the emerging new Local Plan for Sevenoaks District of December 2018.



SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

The following data tables summarise the key characteristics of the population of the Parish which is dominated by its two settlements – Swanley Town and Swanley Village.

The data is shown disaggregated into the three main electoral wards covering the area – Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village, Swanley St Mary's, and Swanley White Oak.

POPULATION TOTALS AND GENDER 2011 CENSUS			
Ward	Total Population (No)	Females	Males
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	6,170	3,150	3,020
Swanley St Mary's	4,670	2,410	2,260
Swanley White Oak	6,400	3,400	3,000

POPULATION BY AGE 2011 census			
Ward	0-15 years	16-64 years	65+ years
Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village	1,300	3,750	1,230

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

POPULATION BY AGE 2011 census			
Ward	0-15 years	16-64 years	65+ years
Swanley St Marys	900	2,860	760
Swanley White Oak	600	3,820	1,310

Swanley's location next to major roads and its direct rail connections to London have made it increasingly attractive as a place to develop new homes to meet both local needs and those across the district and beyond. There has been increasing interest from developers in opportunities in the Neighbourhood Plan area which are currently considered against a largely out of date Local Plan.

A VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Neighbourhood plan questionnaire, which was conducted in 2018 was the basis on which the Neighbourhood Plan formulated both its Vision and Objectives.

The wording for the NP vision was initially drafted by the NP Steering Group who then included it in the Questionnaire Survey for Residents.

80% of respondents agreed with it and it was adopted as the Vision for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan:

Swanley will accommodate change up to 2037 that retains and improves its environment and semi-rural setting and benefits and sustains its community - its people, its facilities, and its heritage"

Based on the detailed questions that were asked in the survey the Steering Group moved on to develop more detailed objectives. The Group also felt that if Swanley Town were to be developed in a sustainable way, then the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) could also be used to inform the development of the policies and proposals in the plan so that they could be aligned with a global view of what was needed to support sustainable development. This approach is now endorsed in the NPPF of July 2021 (para 7) As a result, the following objectives for the NP and their relevant UNSDG were agreed by the Steering Group.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES	
Objectives	UN Sustainable Development Goal
To provide housing that meets the needs of local people and that is supported by infrastructure that will provide for residents' health, recreation, education and connections to the Sevenoaks District and beyond.	Goal 3 - Good health and well being Goal -4 Quality Education Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable development in Swanley that is appropriate to its location, character, history and built form.	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable the upgrade and refurbishment of buildings and land in Swanley to use all resources in a sustainable way to reduce waste	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
To enable where appropriate the generation of affordable and clean energy from development	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable development in Swanley that creates minimal negative impacts	Goal 3 - Good health and Well being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To provide spaces and support for employment that are relevant to and accommodate the needs of businesses, investors and entrepreneurs.	Goal 1 - No poverty Goal 2 - Zero Hunger Goal 4 – Quality Education Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth Goal 9 - Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable improvements to the Town Centre, public realm and open spaces of Swanley that respect and reinforce their character and prevent the loss of trees and biodiversity	Goal 3 - Good health and Well being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 15 - Life on land Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES	
Objectives	UN Sustainable Development Goal
Wherever appropriate, to protect the heritage, wildlife and Green Belt of Swanley and their contribution to the health and well-being of its residents.	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 15 - Life on land Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To reduce the impact of development on the town in terms of traffic volumes and type, congestion, air pollution and the safety of all road users.	Goal 3 - Good health and well being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable personal mobility and active travel within Swanley and to the wider Sevenoaks district and beyond	Goal 3 Good health and well being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To propose specific projects to improve the community infrastructure of Swanley e.g. <i>New or safer roads and other transport facilities</i> <i>Flood defences</i> <i>Schools and other educational facilities</i> <i>Medical facilities</i> <i>Sporting, recreation and leisure facilities</i> <i>Open spaces</i>	Goal 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SWANLEY

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF July 2021) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development:

“At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive, and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure*
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and*
- an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.”*

NPPF July 2021

Planning Policy Background for Sustainable Development in Swanley.

For Swanley, achieving sustainable development presents challenges since there is so little developable land that does not fall within the Green Belt, which is protected by the NPPF of July 2021 (para 147). This is part of the reason that SDC have struggled to update their Local Plan.

The current Local plans – the Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and emerging Local Plan of 2018 do have commitments to securing sustainable development across the district from an economic, environmental and social perspective. This district wide policy has resulted in allocations for development of housing and employment sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area and these allocations are included in the Neighbourhood Plan. There has been more development coming forward in the Neighbourhood plan area that

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

does not form part of these allocations and it is the intention of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan that both allocated sites and non-allocated sites can be guided by this neighbourhood Plan.

Where there are opportunities for development – of allocated sites that are contained in the Local Plan, for small brownfield and underused sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area, the intention is that if the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan are applied, they will ensure that sustainable development can be achieved, and the vision of the Neighbourhood Plan can be realised.

The overarching strategy is therefore to ensure that:

- The defined town centre is improved and made fit for modern consumers and businesses
- The character of Swanley as a semi-rural and suburban town is protected
- Swanley Village is maintained as a separate settlement given its density of heritage assets and architectural interest
- There should be no development on Green Belt land to prevent its enlargement as a settlement

This strategy has been overwhelmingly supported by residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In the 2018 questionnaire survey 81% of respondents strongly agreed that there should be no development of Green Belt or open spaces in Swanley, 40% strongly agreed there was a need for new shops in the Town Centre and 55% thought more employment and business space was needed.

The views of residents in relation to the Green Belt are also supported by a Green Belt Assessment undertaken by Ove Arup for SDC in 2017. This showed that Green Belt parcels in Swanley performed very well against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt. The Green Belt land around Swanley was identified as five parcels and designated 93, 94, 95, 97 and 99. All parcels performed “Strong” in the assessment with the exception of parcel 94 which performed “moderate”. Green Belt sites included in the assessment that are relevant to the neighbourhood plan area are shown below:

Green Belt Assessment 2017 – Swanley Sites						
Parcel No.	Area (Ha)	NPPF Purpose Assessment Swanley				Overall Summary
		Purpose 1 – To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas	Purpose 2 – To prevent neighbouring towns from merging	Purpose 3 – Assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment	Purpose 4 – To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns	

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Green Belt Assessment 2017 – Swanley Sites							
93	98.7	YES	3+	3	4	0	Strong
94	21.3	YES	3+	3	2	0	Moderate
95	239.6	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong
97	61.8	YES	3+	5	3	0	Strong
99	12.3	YES	3+	3	5	0	Strong

The Assessment recommendations state “While it is clear that the majority of the Green Belt in Sevenoaks is performing an important role in terms of the NPPF purposes, a number of areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration”.

These are shown in the table below:

Category	Recommended Area	Approximate size (ha)	Recommendation Category	Green Belt Parcel
3	RA-29	15	3	93
3	RA-30	12	3	94
3	RA-31	5	3	93

In Swanley three sites were recommend for further assessment – one to the north east of the town and two to the south east which are at the extremities of the built up area shown on the map below:

However current SDC policy is to protect all such sites currently – a policy supported in this Neighbourhood Plan and extended to particularly protect the Recommended Areas relevant to Swanley identified for further assessment in the Ove Arup study since they would extend the urban area if Swanley and encroach the adjacent settlement of Hextable.

Adjacent parishes at Crockenhill and Hextable are concerned about merging with Swanley as a result of de designation of Green Belt. Residents from both parishes attended consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan to specifically express this concern and both parishes are considering either their own Neighbourhood Plan or Priority Statements to address this issue.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

To achieve the Neighbourhood Plan vision the following policies are proposed in relation to sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

NP Policy SwSD1 – Green Belt

Developments on Green Belt Land as defined by Sevenoaks Council are not supported. Developments on previously developed brown field sites on Green Belt land are supported

NP Policy SwSD2 – Swanley Town Centre

Development proposals that result in a net loss of retail and other service-related spaces (use class E) classes on sites in Swanley Town Centre (see Town Centre Map), other than those which are permitted development will not be supported.

NP Policy SwSD3 – Preventing the merging of Swanley Village with Swanley Town

Development proposals which result in the physical or visual merging of Swanley Village with Swanley Town will not be supported.

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Community Infrastructure of Swanley, its schools, health and community facilities, open spaces, outdoor sports and growing population have a major impact on the health and well-being of its population.

The Objectives of the neighbourhood plan relevant to the planning of Community Infrastructure are shown below:

Vision <i>Swanley will accommodate change up to 2037 that retains and improves its environment and semi-rural setting and benefits and sustains its community - its people, its facilities and its heritage</i>	
Objectives	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
To enable improvements to the Town Centre, public realm and open spaces of Swanley that respect and reinforce their character and prevent the loss of trees and biodiversity.	<i>Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-Being.</i> <i>Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities.</i> <i>Goal 15 – Life on Land.</i>

Planning Policy background for Community Infrastructure in Swanley

The current Sevenoaks Local Plan documents are the Core Strategy of 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan of 2015

Account has been taken in developing policies towards Community Infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Plan of both the current Local Plan documents (the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan) and the emerging Local Plan of 2018.

The policies and allocations of the Local Plan 2018 version are based on evidence related to Community Infrastructure comprising:

- Infrastructure Development Plan March 2019
- Open Space Sports and Recreation Study 2009
- Open Space Study – an indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities Assessment 2009 (plus appendices)

Health Facilities

Swanley is currently served by two surgeries, the Oaks and Cedars. It is also the case that currently Swanley residents use GP surgeries outside the Neighbourhood plan area in Farningham and West Kingsdown.

The Dartford, Gravesham, and Swanley Clinical Commissioning Group have identified that the Oaks and Cedars Surgeries serving the town are currently over capacity and, that combined, they currently use approximately 1,200 square metres of floor space. They state that this will need to double to over 2,400 square metres of floor space. New NHS models of care require local populations to have access to outpatient services to prevent ill health and reduce readmission to acute hospitals. If these new services are to reach out to people in surrounding areas including, Hextable, Crockenhill, West Kingsdown and Farningham, it is essential that a new Health and Wellbeing Centre will be required to meet the population growth brought about by new development both in the town and surrounding areas.

Based on consultation for the Neighbourhood Plan, residents of Swanley support the rationale that it would be beneficial to have these services and provisions found at and delivered from a central source – a “one stop shop”. The results of our Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire revealed that, for health infrastructure, 56% considered that this was either a concern or big concern at the moment, with 44% considering it was not a concern.

There is some urgency to reshape primary care provision in that both local GP surgeries are working over capacity and are impacted by the proposed town centre redevelopment (Planning application reference 17/02279/FUL). There is also the need to respond to the demands of a growing and ageing population. Statistics show that Swanley has areas of severe social deprivation and in particular health-based statistics indicate above average levels of obesity and chronic diseases.

We have some areas of severe social deprivation in Swanley. This leads to complex health needs for those populations with high demand for primary health care and many chronic illness related conditions. It also emphasises the need for improvement in personal health and wellbeing which can be encouraged by access to good medical care and health education which should run in tandem with a healthy and clean environment.

As part of the development of the Neighbourhood plan, an assessment has been made of the total number of new homes that have received planning approval to date or allocated via the current and emerging Local Plan of SDC (see Chapter 8 Housing). This assessment shows a total of 1,148 homes are planned for Swanley. The UK 2011 Census data indicates an average of 2.4 people per household and, using this figure, a minimum of 2,755 extra people need to be catered for at the end of the plan period.

Attempts to incorporate a new Health and Wellbeing Centre in the new approved Town Centre development failed due to a lack of space that could be made available by the developers. Access to the Oaks and Cedars is likely to be impeded during the Town Centre construction process, in particular access for emergency vehicles. The development is complex and the build period is lengthy during which period the surgeries will

be subjected to considerable invasive site noise and dust problems. It appeared essential that a new location be identified for the Centre, otherwise the town will not be sustainable for all existing and future residents.

During production of the Neighbourhood Plan the new health provision required in Swanley was considered to be so important that a site assessment was undertaken to consider a designation of a site for the Health Centre in a central location at Bartholomew Way Park (see AECOM Site Assessments in *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*)

The loss of this space as an open space was considered secondary for the need for a central location. In the event Sevenoaks Council as the Local planning authority and owner of the site rejected this option so a designation is not included in this plan. In the event four potential site options were considered for a new Health and Wellbeing Hub by The Clinical Commissioning Group and the Oaks and Cedars surgeries and work will progress on this. In the meantime the Neighbourhood Plan policy is proposed to ensure that a new Centre is located in the defined Town Centre.

The Policy also supports the views of the Partners in the Oaks and Cedars surgeries, who place great importance on there being somewhere for people to meet, talk and take refreshment as part of the Health and Wellbeing Centre. Many people will come to a GP surgery who are often reluctant to visit other government agency buildings and this more acceptable access will help to reduce social isolation.

This background underlines the need for a new Health and Wellbeing Hub in a central location with the additional social and meeting space proposed by the current doctor's surgeries. This will ensure that the town can accommodate existing and new residents with a facility that is up to date and in line with current good primary care practice.

Air Quality

Poor air quality is a major issue in Swanley with its proximity close to both the M20 and M25 strategic networks; the A20 by-pass and the B2173 through Swanley. The latest Air Quality Management Report from Sevenoaks District Council is dated 2019, with the measured figures for 2018. Based on this report air pollution at Jessamine Terrace and London Road is of particular concern and may understate the problem as a result of the small number and location of Air Quality Diffusion Tubes which do not cover the residential areas to the south of the town close to the A20.

The Transport chapter outlines policies and proposals related to the impact of development on air quality which is regarded as an important factor in achieving the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan related to health,

Open Spaces

The NP questionnaire indicates that open and green spaces are greatly valued by the residents of Swanley with 90% stating that this was a positive feature of the community.

As a result, the NP Steering Group conducted its own survey and assessment of the open spaces in Swanley. This included a detailed assessment of the features of the spaces and their overall quality as well as size. The map below shows the open spaces in Swanley included in this assessment based on the types of space and areas in hectares. These are summarised below (For the detailed assessment of each site refer to the Swanley Open Space Study document). As this is the most up to date assessment of their type and location it differs from those identified by policies in the Sevenoaks Emerging Local Plan 2018 as a result the policy for protection in this plan uses this map to protect them.

Parks and Gardens

For Parks and Gardens, the Sevenoaks District Council Open Space Study OS002 dated June 2018 recommends 0.8 Hectare (ha) of area per 1,000 population. The current population for the three wards of Swanley is 17,240 according to the Office of National Statistics 2018 midyear estimates. The summary schedule below shows a total of 14.64 hectares for Swanley which meets current requirements but shows a deficit of 1.93 hectares due to forecast population increases to 2037. However, there is a further 5.12 hectares attached to Swanley park designated as semi-natural green space, map reference number 9. The Housing section of the NP indicates potential new housing development for the new plan period amounting to 1,148 homes, which, at an average 2.4 people per household, could result in an increase in population of 2,755, giving a shortfall of 2.20 hectares. Swanley Park does not meet the requirement of being within 15 minutes walking distance for all parts of Swanley and for some parts is not very accessible. There is also no park and gardens (as opposed to Amenity Space) provision to the south west of the railway line.

Amenity Green Space

For Amenity Green space the Sevenoaks District Council Open Space Study OS002 recommends 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population which for a current population of 17,240 shows a requirement for 10.34 hectares. The summary schedule shows a current total of 9.45 hectares and therefore a deficit of 0.89 hectares. This numerical deficit has been brought about by the decision to build on the Amenity green spaces at White Oak, map reference 13 and Alder Way, map reference 10 totalling 1.13 hectares). The Open Space Study in the [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base](#) has a full description of all sites on the Map below) It has to be acknowledged that Alder Way is close to Swanley Park and adjacent to the semi-natural green space site, map reference 9. This deficit underlines the view of the Neighbourhood Plan Group that all new housing developments will require Amenity Green Space at the recommended level of 0.6 hectares per 1,000 occupants.

Children and Young People's Facilities

The summary at the end of the schedule below indicates that we have a shortage of facilities for children and young people. A lot of these facilities have been lost from some of our amenity green spaces over time and this loss needs to be made good wherever possible. It is important that all new developments provide these facilities if young families are to make Swanley their home.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

The outdoor sports facilities in Swanley are generally associated with the schools, which are very secure areas and not generally available for public use. The exception being the Glebe Swanley Village, map reference 61, which is available for use by St Paul's school and the general public courtesy of the Church of England, Rochester Diocese. The main outdoor sports facility is the recreation ground in Swanley, map reference 42, which has two full size football pitches, outdoor tennis and netball courts and skateboarding park. Swanley has a very successful Rugby Football team which needs a permanent home with changing facilities. They have been playing at site map reference 9 recently.

Natural and Semi Natural Space

The summary at the end of the schedule below indicates that Swanley has a deficit of natural and semi natural open space. It has to be remembered that this is difficult to achieve in a town location. There is a large area of woodland between Swanley Park and the gardens of the houses in Haven Close and Swanley Lane. A footpath separates the woodland from the gardens and runs between Five Wents and the town centre. The woodland is privately owned, however, there is an unofficial well-established footpath, used for almost 40 years, through from Woodger's Grove to Swanley Park. It would be beneficial if this could be made an official footpath and cycle route to Swanley park. The woodland is an important natural space for wildlife.

Allotments

There is one allotment in Swanley Town adjacent to Swanley Park, map reference 19, and two allotments in Swanley Village, map references 34 and 35. Swanley Town Council owns an allotment in the parish of Crockenhill at Petham Court, accessed via a bridge over the A20 By-pass. All allotments are well used and maintained.

Cemeteries

There is one cemetery in Swanley Town at St Mary's Church which is now full. There is a cemetery in Swanley Village at St Paul's Church which has very limited burial space still available. There is a definite need for a new Cemetery in the town. A location has been identified in the parish of Crockenhill on land owned by Swanley Town Council. The Town Council owns other parcels of land within the town that could be considered suitable locations.

Below is a summary of the spaces in Swanley set against the Fields in Trust recommended standards for provision – this shows deficits in amenity green space, young people and children's spaces and natural and semi-natural space provision

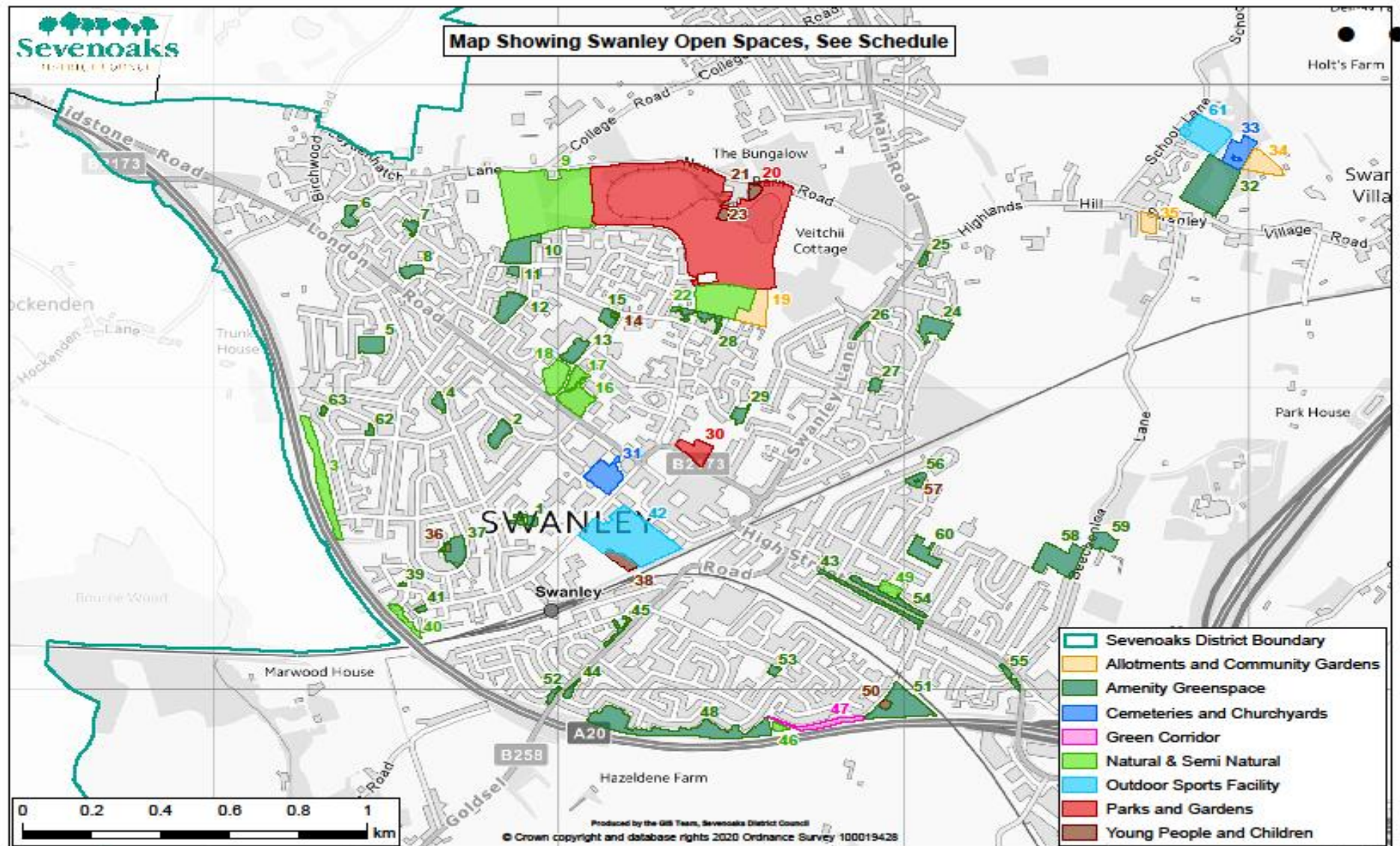
SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Summary of Open Space Allocations by Purpose					
Population of Swanley: 17,240 ONS 2018 mid-year estimates					
Purpose	Provision in Hectares	FIT Recommendation	Total recommended area in Hectares	Comment	
Amenity Green Space	9.45	0.60 hectares/ 1000 population	10.34 (11.78 to 2037 due to population increase ~)	A deficit and poorly distributed around Swanley	
Parks and Gardens	14.64	0.80 hectares/ 1000 population	13.79 (15.72 to 2037 due to population increase ~)	Walking distance exceeded in parts of town	
Young People and Children	0.75	0.25 hectares/ 1000 population	4.31	Needs greater provision	
Outdoor Sports Facility	2.95	-	-	-	
Natural and Semi Natural	9.62	1.8 hectares/ 1000 population	31.03	Difficult to achieve in a town	
Allotments	1.55	-	-	-	
Cemeteries	1.34	-	-	There is a need for a new cemetery as few spaces are left.	

	Quantity requirements are met
	Current quantity requirements are met
	Quantity requirements are not met

Population increase based upon 1,148 homes @ 2.4 people per home.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION



Sport and Recreation Facilities

The NP questionnaire shows that 69% of residents felt that indoor and outdoor sports facilities were either a concern or big concern in Swanley.

A new indoor sports facility has now been constructed at White Oak, to replace the existing facility which had been on the site. The development includes a new, smaller, swimming pool with movable floor, learner pool, changing village, Tag active, Toddlers play area and three multi-purpose spaces at ground floor level. At first floor level there is a fitness Suite and two Studios with changing facilities. This new sports facility received approval despite much public opposition to the reduced facilities being offered, and objections from Sport England. There has been a loss of Amenity Green Space (AGS) to build the development which will increase the current deficit in Swanley. The loss of AGS may have been acceptable for an equal or better facility. A total of 40 dwellings will be provided as part of the development.

The White Oak Leisure Centre Clubs have identified the following loss of facilities. Over the course of time some of these clubs maybe accommodated by the new facilities at White Oak but we know some have been displaced.

Sports Hall and Studio Uses not catered for:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archery • Athletics club, 80+members (age 7-70+) • Badminton – Primetime, 100 members (age 50+) • Badminton club, 16 members (age 45-85) • Dancing competitions • 5-A-Side Football • Gymnastics club, 170+ members (age 4-17) and coaches • Martial Arts clubs x 3 (Karate, Judo, Taekwondo), 130+ members • Netball club, 85+ members (age 3-25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roller Hockey clubs x 3, 355+ members (age 6+) and coaches • Short Mat Bowls • Short Tennis • Table Tennis clubs x3 • Toddler Sport • Toddler Gym • Trampolining • Walk up, pay and play users • Wrestling event
--	--

Pool and Diving Pit Users not catered for:

Synchronised swimming club, 40 members (age 8-18), 5 coaches
 Sub aqua club, 50 members
 Diving club, 70 members
 Deep water aerobics
 Kent Police

Not all the water sports facilities will be catered for in the new development and as a result Swanley, as the second largest town in the district, will be underprovided with indoor facilities to meet local needs without the need to travel.

This may be mitigated by the redevelopment of the Orchards Academy which is currently being improved and replaced with an intended completion date of September 2025. This may include facilities for public use but no information is currently available on the details.

Community Buildings

The Community Buildings Assessment in the *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base* shows that Swanley and Swanley Village have 22 buildings that have rooms for hire that have kitchen and toilet facilities. These are used by local community groups, individuals and families for educational, social and other activities which cannot be accommodated in people's homes.

It should be noted that the majority of these (15) are council owned or schools. For schools, the main use may prohibit access at dates and times which are convenient for activities that are organized for social and educational activities by the community. The remainder (4) are churches which have spaces not always suitable for these activities either and only 3 are run by independent organizations. Many are also not suitable for the sports clubs displaced by the changes to the White Oak

The Community Buildings Assessment also details the kinds of uses that are possible, the equipment available, and accessibility for people with mobility problems and whether they need improvement together with any improvement needs.

Education Facilities

The results of our Neighbourhood Plan survey revealed that for schools and further education infrastructure, 41% considered that this was either a concern or big concern at the moment, with 18% considering it was not a concern. 41% thought it was neither.

Secondary Education

Regarding Secondary Education, according to the UK Census (mid-year 2018 estimates) there are 1,790 12-18-year-old children in the three wards of Swanley and Hextable. The only secondary school in Swanley and Hextable is the Orchards Academy. However, the Ofsted Report, July 2016 indicates that the number of 12-18-year old pupils at the school is only 525. This would indicate that 1,265 pupils are being educated outside of the Swanley and Hextable area.

The number of households in the three wards of Swanley and Hextable amounts to 8,900, according to KCC's Housing Stock 2017 Dwelling Estimates Research and Evaluation figures. This results in a figure of $1790/8900 = 0.2$ 12-18-year-old children per household.

The current estimate of new dwellings for Swanley as of June 2020 is 1,148 (Swanley Housing Site Schedule in the *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*). The SDC emerging LP indicates 275 dwellings for Hextable, giving a total of 1,423 dwellings.

This gives rise to a potential additional number of 12-18-year-olds of $1,423 \times 0.2 = 285$ by the end of the plan period. If the same proportion as currently were to attend the Orchards Academy there would be $525/1790 \times 257 = 75$ additional pupils by the end of the plan period.

If the Pedham Place development was to proceed (which is in Farningham Parish but close to Swanley, with 2,500 additional homes) it would be reasonable to assume a requirement for $2,500 \times 0.2 = 525$ 12-18-year-old children which would need a new Secondary Education School on site.

KCC need to monitor developments in Swanley and Hextable to be sure secondary school provision can accommodate new housing developments in Swanley and Hextable. The current redevelopment of the Orchard Academy may accommodate some of this need but plans for pupil numbers are not currently available.

Primary Education

Regarding Primary Education, according to the UK Census (mid-year 2018 estimates) there are 1,940 4-10-year-old children in the three wards of Swanley and Hextable. There are seven primary schools within the three wards of Swanley and Hextable with student count figures taken from website information as follows:

Primary schools in Swanley	
St Bartholomew's Swanley	349
High Firs Swanley	204
Downsview Swanley	200
Hextable Primary	443
Horizon Primary Academy Swanley	209
St Mary C of E Swanley	233
St. Paul's Swanley Village	109
Total	1,747

The difference may well be that some pupils are attending outside the catchment area such as Crockenhill Primary School. Using the current housing stock figure of 8,900 homes for the three wards of Swanley and Hextable, this results in a figure of $1940/8900 = 0.22$ 4-10-year-old children per household. The current anticipated number of homes, from above, is 1,423 in the three wards of Swanley and Hextable. This gives rise to a potential additional number of 4-10-year-olds of $1,423 \times 0.22 = 313$ by the end of the plan period. This would amount to a potential addition for each school of 45 pupils per school and a need for an additional classroom in each as a minimum.

KCC need to be making provision for these additional classrooms.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

To meet the needs identified by the assessment of Community Infrastructure in Swanley the following policies are proposed:

NP Policy SwC1 – Health Facilities in Swanley

Development proposals for health facilities in Swanley will be supported where they are:

- a) Located in the Swanley Town Centre
- b) Have adequate parking for visitors, patients, and staff

Provide facilities for social interaction for patients and visitors and health related education for patients and health professionals

NP Policy SwC2 – Open Space

Development proposals that result in any loss of existing public green spaces as shown on the map, across all types within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported only where replacement green spaces are provided for public use which are suitably located and equal or superior in terms of size and quality.

NP Policy SwC3– Indoor Sport facilities

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Development proposals that provide indoor dry sports facilities are supported, subject to other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

NP Policy SwC4 – Community Infrastructure Levy Investments

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The provision of a multifunction Indoor sports facility is strongly supported by the Neighbourhood Plan for further investigation and implementation and should be a priority for investment of Community Infrastructure Levy by Swanley Town Council and should be for Sevenoaks District Council

NP Policy SwC5 – Community Buildings.

Proposals that result in the loss of existing community buildings will not be supported unless there is clear evidence that:

- a) There is no need for the facility (in terms of the current capacity of existing provision, its opening times, location, accessibility, and range of facilities available to local people and businesses) or suitable alternative facilities of a similar size and quality are re-provided as part of the proposal.
- b) proposals offer alternative benefits to the community in terms of access to space to assemble, worship, participate in educational activities and personal or civic celebrations

CONSERVATION DESIGN AND HERITAGE

The Neighbourhood Plan for Swanley has taken a holistic view of conservation, design, and heritage to guide development into the future.

Conserving the natural and built assets of the neighbourhood plan area, and the finite resource of the planet seems to require not just protecting those that currently exist into the future, but also ensuring that those that may be developed going forward do not deplete them further.

The Neighbourhood Plan vision for the area therefore takes account of conserving health for residents and enabling them to reduce the impact of development on the use of energy and other natural resources – water, air, building materials, landscape and wildlife assets and design quality. Many of these issues are covered in other parts of the Neighbourhood Plan, particularly Chapter 4 “A sustainable development strategy for Swanley”.

Consideration is given in this chapter to the need to conserve the historic and landscape assets of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area and the objectives below have been used to guide the development of policies and proposals to achieve the plan vision in relation to heritage and conservation and achieving sustainable development as defined in national planning policy (NPPF 2021).

Objective	UN Sustainable Development Goal
To enable development in Swanley that is appropriate to its location, character, history and built form.	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
Wherever appropriate, to protect the heritage, wildlife and Green Belt of Swanley and their contribution to the health and well-being of its residents.	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 15 - Life on land Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals
To enable the upgrade and refurbishment of buildings and land in Swanley to use all resources in a sustainable way to reduce waste	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities

Objective	UN Sustainable Development Goal
To enable where appropriate the generation of affordable and clean energy from development	Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities
To enable development in Swanley that creates minimal negative impacts	Goal 3 - Good health and Well being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities

Planning Policy Background for Design Heritage and Conservation in Swanley

National Policy (NPPF 2021, National Design Code 2021) and District planning policy (Current Core Strategy 2011, ADMP 2015 and SDC emerging Local Plan 2018) is relevant to design and conservation issues in Swanley and emphasizes the need for good design and sustainable development and protection of health, the Green Belt, open space, and local distinctiveness.

These policies are focused on national and district wide needs and challenges but there are also specific local needs and issues in the Neighbourhood Plan that should be addressed, based both on the views of residents and the fine grain of local evidence.

Conservation, Design and Heritage in Swanley

In 2017 as part of its work on the Local Plan, SDC commissioned two major pieces of work – the Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment and a Landscape Sensitivity Analysis.

Swanley is described in these documents as being between two areas of landscape character categorised as “Settled Farmland” with Hextable to the northeast and Crockenhill to the south-west of the town. The key characteristics of these two areas, their current condition and sensitivity/valued attributes of character and ecosystem support are described in the table below.

Landscape Character Areas – Settled Farmland	
Hextable	Crockenhill
Key characteristics	
Gently undulating chalk and sandstone sloped with varied size fields separated by hedgerows and fences	Undulating chalk and sandstone landscape overlain by irregular medium scale pattern or arable, pasture and horticulture
Land used for arable crops and horticulture, mixed in with suburban land uses including horse paddocks and plant nurseries	Horsiculture on rough grass paddocks

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Landscape Character Areas – Settled Farmland	
Hextable	Crockenhill
Trees are found within parklands and Hedges	Fields divided by a mixture of mature hedgerows and post and wire fencing
Scattered urban fringe development historic nucleated village and isolated farms. Busy roads link the urban areas whilst narrow lanes are found in more rural areas	Well wooded character including copses of ancient woodland and mature hedgerow trees
Strong sense of enclosure afforded by the hedges and topography, particularly in the east	Nucleated historic village of Crockenhill with isolated farms along narrow rural lanes
Clear views to dense adjacent urban development at Swanley and Hextable	Long views to south London
Condition	
The intactness of the area has been affected by widespread suburban encroachment (including incongruous metal fences and gates in the rural landscape) large scale transportation routes and hedgerow loss which adversely affect condition. However there are areas of remaining intact landscape where field boundaries, rural lanes and historic villages survive	The condition of the area is adversely affected by modern and incongruous residential and farm buildings, hedgerow loss, horticulture and a lack of general maintenance. Positive elements of the landscape include the areas of broad-leaved woodland, hedge lined roads and small-medium scale field patterns, although these are becoming fragmented and lost in places.
Key sensitivities	
The remnant small scale field pattern (parliamentary enclosures) located around the edges of Swanley Village	Small scale field pattern which includes some areas of parliamentary enclosure
Small copses of Ancient woodland areas of scrub and mature hedgerows which are important to the ecological value of the landscape	Remnant historic land uses including orchards
Historic settlement patterns including Swanley Village Conservation Area which contains numerous listed buildings of a traditional vernacular	Areas of ancient woodland and hedges along field boundaries and lands which provide valued ecological resources and wildlife corridors
Important adjacent recreational facilities including Swanley Park	The historic core of Crockenhill with many buildings of a traditional vernacular
Narrow rural lanes with steep banks and high hedges	Historic narrow winding lanes, lined by thick, mature hedgerows
The sense of enclosure afforded by the topography and small scale of the landscape particularly to the east of Swanley Village	The localised sense of enclosure afforded by the woodland and the topography, particularly to the north west of Crockenhill
Long views across the landscape from the hill summits and more open areas.	Long views north from Daltons Road which include the south London suburbs.
Source: Sevenoaks Landscape Character Assessment Jan 2017	

The Character of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Area

As part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan a character assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan area was undertaken. (See *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base* – Swanley Character Assessment)

This was prompted by the overwhelming view of local residents expressed by all consultations on the Plan that tall buildings are out of character for the Neighbourhood Plan area and that Green Belt land should be protected. This view was partly felt most strongly as a result of a hybrid application made for Swanley town centre which proposed buildings from 4 to 11 storeys in height. This development proposal was initially refused by SDC but eventually agreed at appeal in 2019 despite fierce local opposition.

The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out the government's objectives for new development. The NPPF does not have any specific policies on tall buildings, however, it sets out a number of more general design and planning principles which are relevant to the development of tall buildings.

Good design is a key requirement of the NPPF. The NPPF states that it is important to plan positively to achieve high quality and inclusive design and that local authorities should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected in their area.

These should be based on a clear vision for the future of the area and upon a detailed evaluation of the characteristics that define it.

The NPPF promotes an urban design led approach to planning that requires buildings to respond to the location in which they are located rather than prescribe specific architectural styles.

Chapter 12, Well-designed places, paragraph 130 notes that: "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a. will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b. are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c. are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d. establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e. optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

- f. create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Chapter 9 para 105 states that: 'Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes.'

The current SDC Core Strategy (2011) Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and emerging Local Plan (2018) do not contain policies related to the acceptability or otherwise of tall buildings at any locations in the District and they are not defined there either. In addition SDC's Local Plans do not identify design policies which specifically address the massing and form of new development at higher densities defined in the plans.

The Character Assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan addresses these issues for the Neighbourhood Plan area and forms the basis for its policy in relation to protection of the Green Belt and the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Plan area included in Chapter 4 but is also important to the issues of tall buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area and their contribution to meeting higher densities for development to achieve greater number of new homes in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Character Assessment identifies six character areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

SWANLEY CHACTER ASSESSMENT 2022	
Character Area	Key Characteristics
Green Belt land	Characterised by open countryside and farmland
Swanley Village	A historic hamlet washed over by the Green Belt with a conservation area and 15 listed buildings
Edge of Swanley	Characterised by a mix of uses abutting open countryside and farmland designated as Green Belt
Swanley Town centre	Characterised by a predominance of employment and service uses (retail and other Town Centre uses) with planned development of 4 to 11 storeys in mixed use including residential
Edge of Town Centre	Characterised by commercial and industrial uses of 1 to 2 storey building with large footprints
Swanley	Characterised by predominantly residential use of the Town in mainly low rise buildings of 2 and 3 storeys with a diversity of residential types (predominantly detached and semi-detached in street layouts) and a very small number of apartment block homes

Definition of Tall Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan area:

The term tall building is a relative one and relates to both context height and the characteristics of an area as a whole, either as a place with consistent / homogenous height (coherent context) or varied height (varied context).

The character areas of Swanley, Swanley Village, Edge of Town Centre and edge of Swanley are considered to have a coherent context of 2/3 storeys (6-9 metres)

These areas will be generally more sensitive to additional height due to this coherent context. Impacts of tall buildings on parks and open spaces, public transport accessibility, conservation areas or heritage assets are likely to be greater in these areas.

A tall building for Swanley is defined for these areas as a building that is up to 4 storeys or 12 metres in height.

The character area of Swanley Town Centre however has a varied context which is also likely to vary even more once approved developments in the Town Centre are implemented.

The tall buildings associated with recent approvals in the Town Centre have been justified on the basis of their “landmark” contribution to the Town Centre. The tall buildings in these applications – varying in height from 4 to 11 storeys have been permitted based on helping to improve the legibility of the Town Centre, and defining and marking it as a transport and commercial hub for the Town and the surrounding area.

A Tall building is defined for the Town Centre as a building up to 11 storeys or 33m in height.

Even within these definitions it will be important that all development proposals that propose tall buildings in the relevant character areas take into account their visual, functional, environmental and cumulative impacts, particularly in relation to their impact on the character area of Green Belt and open countryside that form a major part of the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In addition, increased densities do not have to be achieved by tall buildings and the density guidelines provided in this plan (see Chapter 8 housing) can be achieved in low or medium rise forms that still provide high densities as illustrated below (Report of the Urban Task Force 1999). These have the advantage of making best use of land available, with recognisable street patterns that follow the current character of Swanley.

Historic assets and the built environment

Swanley Village is the other main settlement in the Neighbourhood Plan area and is situated a mile and a half north-east of the modern town of Swanley. The M25 motorway is 350m to the east of the village and the railway line between London and east Kent runs just to the south, the nearest station being at Swanley. The countryside around and including the village is designated as Green Belt.

The village is set in agricultural land amongst a variety of farms, and has a school, church and two public houses. In recent years the building of thirty new houses on the former industrial site in School Lane has radically increased the proportion of residential properties in the village.

Swanley Village Conservation Area covers about 10 hectares and contains listed buildings. It was first designated in 1984 and was substantially extended in 1997. The original designation was limited to the heart of the original village, from School Lane to the Old Place, but was then extended to include the open land to the north and north east, up to St Paul's Church and Old Vicarage. Highlands Farm to the west was included, as were the Priory and Coldharbour Farm to the east.

The Conservation Area now covers most of the village, with a few exceptions made for new development or buildings of lesser historic interest. The area is roughly triangular with linear extensions to the east and west along Swanley Village Road and Highlands Hill.

Agricultural land still forms the setting of the village. The main features of Swanley Village Conservation Area's special historic and architectural interest are capable of being summarised as follows.

- It retains the character of a Kentish rural hamlet;
- There is a well-defined village boundary and sense of rural isolation despite its proximity to Swanley town and it being close to the M25;
- The village contains a mix of historic buildings dating from the late medieval to the early twentieth century that reflect the incremental development of the village;
- There is an important group of Victorian buildings comprising the church, school and vicarage, set within a parkland setting, and built by the notable Victorian architect Ewan Christian;

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

- Traditional craftsmanship embodied in original building materials and architectural features.

In addition to the village, Swanley also has a number of features of heritage value which residents would wish to protect. These include some of its fine churches such as St. Mary the Virgin's church, built 1860-65 in the French Gothic style. Although the Neighbourhood Plan area's main heritage assets in the form of listed buildings lie in Swanley Village there are also listed features which are important to the past history of Swanley as shown in the table below:

Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area	
Swanley	Swanley Village
Coal Duty Boundary Marker Swanley Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent,	Alice Dene Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Church of Saint Paul Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Coach House to South East of the Old Place Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
Coal Taxpost (Obelisk) on North Side of Railway 500 Yards West of Swanley Station Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8	Downs Cottages (Nos 1, 2 and 3) and the Old Cafe Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Elizabethan Cottage Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Highlands Cottage Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Highlands Farmhouse Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Hillbrow Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Lychgate to West of Church of Saint Paul Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Malibar Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Numbers 1 and 2, White Cottages Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	Old College Cottage Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Listed Buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area	
Swanley	Swanley Village
	Stables to East of the Old Place Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
Swanley War Memorial Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8	The Old Cottage Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
	The Old Place Swanley, Sevenoaks, Kent, BR8
Source: Historic England	

This list is not comprehensive as there are a number of features like the gates to the former White Oak Hospital are well known to residents and in need of protection. Kent heritage environment records include a number of these types of features which the NP seeks to protect from any negative impacts of development.

More modern development in Swanley also has features of note from the perspective of the built environment, art and architecture that are specific to the time they were built. This is particularly the case for the work of William Mitchell the sculptor and artist who created multiple exterior panels up two residential stairways in Swanley Town Square (1968). These murals are not listed, but Swanley Town Council is currently seeking listed status for these unusual panels that are an example of his abstract and stylised work in concrete, which are the only examples of his work in Kent. In the meantime, they have been identified as Non Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) in the Neighbourhood Plan's policies to trigger, if any planning applications for their change or removal come forward, they will then be considered against national policy and local policy on NDHAs.



The Views of Swanley Residents

The Residents Survey conducted in 2018 for the Neighbourhood Plan showed a very strong view about the future of the landscape – which is mainly Green Belt - around Swanley and some concern about access to the countryside. In addition to answering the survey questions residents also made comments about the need to prevent the coalescence of Swanley, Hextable and Swanley Village and over forty comments specifically described the rural or semi-rural setting and feel of Swanley Town.

The way that the rural landscape surrounds Swanley also reflects survey respondents when they identified the positive attributes of the Neighbourhood Plan area – as being a village in a rural or semi-rural setting - and their attitudes towards access to the countryside and high-rise development in Swanley. (See Consultations Statement).

Resident interest in issues associated with protection of Wildlife and the heritage of the Town is demonstrated by the large number of local groups such as the History Society, Park User groups and the Swanley Nature and Wildlife Group.

The questionnaire data also shows that 3-4 storey was the most favoured option in terms of height of new development of any use, but that the Town centre was favoured more for development that was marginally higher than that in the rest of Swanley with some accepting 5 and 6 storey development. Many comments were made about high rise development generally rather than specifically in relation to housing, but the comments add to this by setting out the main reasons people were concerned about high rise development of housing:

- That it did not suit the built character of Swanley as a Town in terms of its form
- It did not accommodate the needs of children and young people for access to the outdoors and play
- It did not accommodate the need for specific housing types that met the needs of people with health or disability issues associated with age or specific health conditions (e.g. dementia) that required housing types such as bungalows, assisted living/sheltered accommodation or care homes.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

In order to conserve and enhance the heritage assets of Swanley and Swanley Village the Neighbourhood Plan Group sought the advice of consultants to produce a design guide for development in Swanley Village to provide more detailed guidance to developers and Sevenoaks Council when considering development proposals in the village.

This Design Guide has been prepared for formal inclusion in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan with the aim of securing the highest quality new development in the most sensitive areas of the Neighbourhood Plan area located in the Green Belt and partly covered by a Conservation area.

The policies set out below seek to protect and enhance the character, heritage and conservation assets of the Neighbourhood Plan area and align with policies in Chapter 4 of the Neighbourhood Plan related to a sustainable development strategy for the area, that protects its Green Belt and surrounding countryside and retains the semi-rural and rural feel of the whole Neighbourhood Plan area.

SwDC&H1 Tall Buildings

Development proposals for tall buildings should take account of the definitions provided in the Neighbourhood Plan for the different character areas of Swanley. Such proposals should:

SwDC&H1 Tall Buildings

- Have good access to public transport
- Contribute to improving the permeability of the site and wider area, wherever possible
- Relate well to the form, proportion, composition, scale and character of surrounding buildings, urban grain and public realm (including landscape features), particularly at street level
- Incorporate publicly accessible amenity space and local play areas within the site area.
- Where appropriate, provide additional green spaces in the form of roof gardens for residents of the development
- Have ground floor activities that provide a positive relationship to the surrounding streets
- Incorporate the highest standards of architecture and materials, including sustainable design and construction practices
- Should not affect their surroundings adversely in terms of microclimate, wind turbulence, overshadowing, noise, reflected glare, aviation, navigation and telecommunication interference
- The impact of tall buildings proposed should be given particular consideration in relation to their impact on local or strategic views both from the designated Green Belt land which surrounds Swanley and from Swanley to designated Green Belt land.

Policy SwDC&H2: Swanley Village Design Guide

Development proposals for Swanley Village, should demonstrate how the overarching design and architectural design principles in the Design Guide have been applied to proposals within both the New Swanley Village area and, where applicable, the Conservation area as defined in the Guide.

Policy SwDC&H3 Heritage Asset Protection and Enhancement

It is proposed that the murals of William Mitchell, located in Swanley Town Centre are allocated as non-designated heritage assets to ensure their protection into the future

HOUSING

Introduction

The provision of the opportunity for all residents of Swanley, existing and future, to live in a decent and affordable home, is a key goal of the Neighbourhood Plan. Well-designed housing that is easy to live in and maintain and low cost to run makes a fundamental contribution to the well-being of local residents and their children, their mental health, their physical well-being, and the scope and quality of employment opportunities available to them. In short, sound housing underpins the cost of a given community to both the local and national economy as well as the extent and quality to which the community is able to contribute to the economy and to society at both the wider District and National levels.

Combined with this goal, Swanley has also been under pressure from development of housing. Central government demands that Sevenoaks Council, across the District makes provision for housing need and in turn Swanley has to accommodate new homes and residents as a result.

Climate change and the 2020/2021 global pandemic will require changes to what people will need from their accommodation in the future. These changes will need to facilitate a changed world of greater work and study from home, the need for greater connectedness physically and virtually, the importance of open space for well-being, reduction in energy use and protection for the negative impacts of climate change.

The following vision and objectives for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan that are related to housing were developed from the original survey of residents that took place in 2018 and have been devised to make sure that Swanley can welcome new residents to the Town, but also mitigate the inevitable impacts that such development may bring.

Vision	
<i>Swanley will accommodate change up to 2037 that retains and improves its environment and semi-rural setting and benefits and sustains its community - its people, its facilities and its heritage"</i>	
Objective	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
To provide housing that meets the needs of local people and that is supported by infrastructure that will provide for residents' health, recreation, education and connections to the Sevenoaks District and beyond.	Goal 3 - Good health and Well being
	Goal - 4 Quality Education

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Vision <i>Swanley will accommodate change up to 2037 that retains and improves its environment and semi-rural setting and benefits and sustains its community - its people, its facilities and its heritage”</i>	
Objective	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
	<i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i>
To enable development in Swanley that is appropriate to its location, character, history and built form.	<i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> <i>Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production</i>
To enable the upgrade and refurbishment of buildings and land in Swanley to use all resources in a sustainable way to reduce waste	<i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i>
To enable where appropriate the generation of affordable and clean energy from development	<i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i>
To enable development in Swanley that creates minimal negative impacts	<i>Goal 3 - Good health and Well being</i> <i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i>

Planning Policy Background for Housing in Swanley

The current Sevenoaks Local Plan documents are the Core Strategy of 2011 and the Allocations and Development Management Plan of 2015.

These documents identified Swanley as the second priority location of housing development (after Sevenoaks itself) in Sevenoaks District and proposed sites in a mixture of residential and mixed-use allocations for 3,300 homes up to 2026.

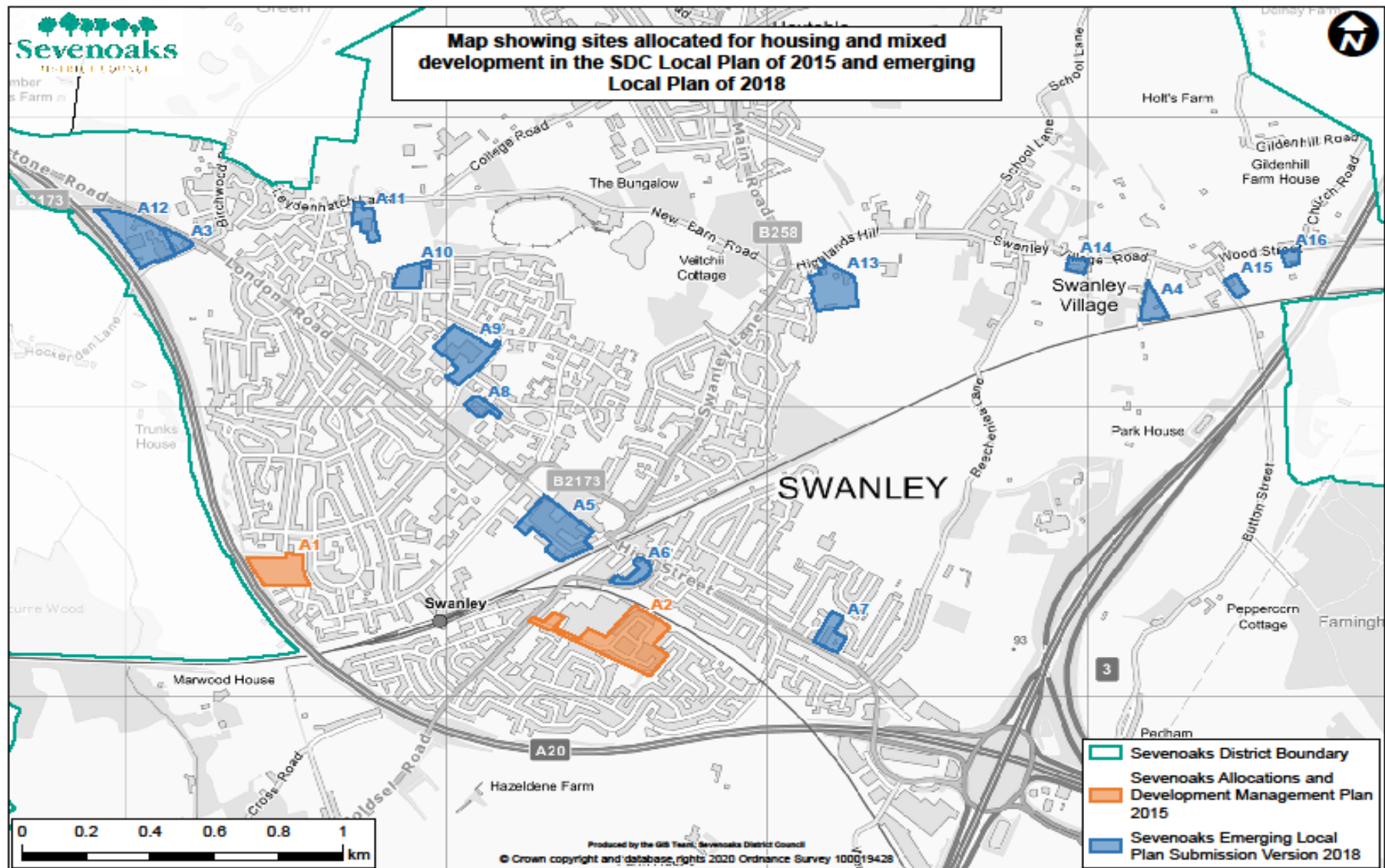
An update of these plans has been started for a new Local Plan to cover the period of 2015 to 2037. This process has been slow (see Chapter 1) and account has been taken in developing policies towards housing in the Neighbourhood Plan of both the current Local Plan documents (the Core Strategy and the Allocations and Development Management Plan) and the latest submission version of the Local Plan of 2018.

The policies and allocations of the Local Plan 2018 version are based on evidence related to housing comprising:

- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment of 2015
- Local Housing Needs Analysis of June 2017
- The Brownfield site register of 18th December 2019
- The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment of 2018
- Green Belt Assessment Report of 2018

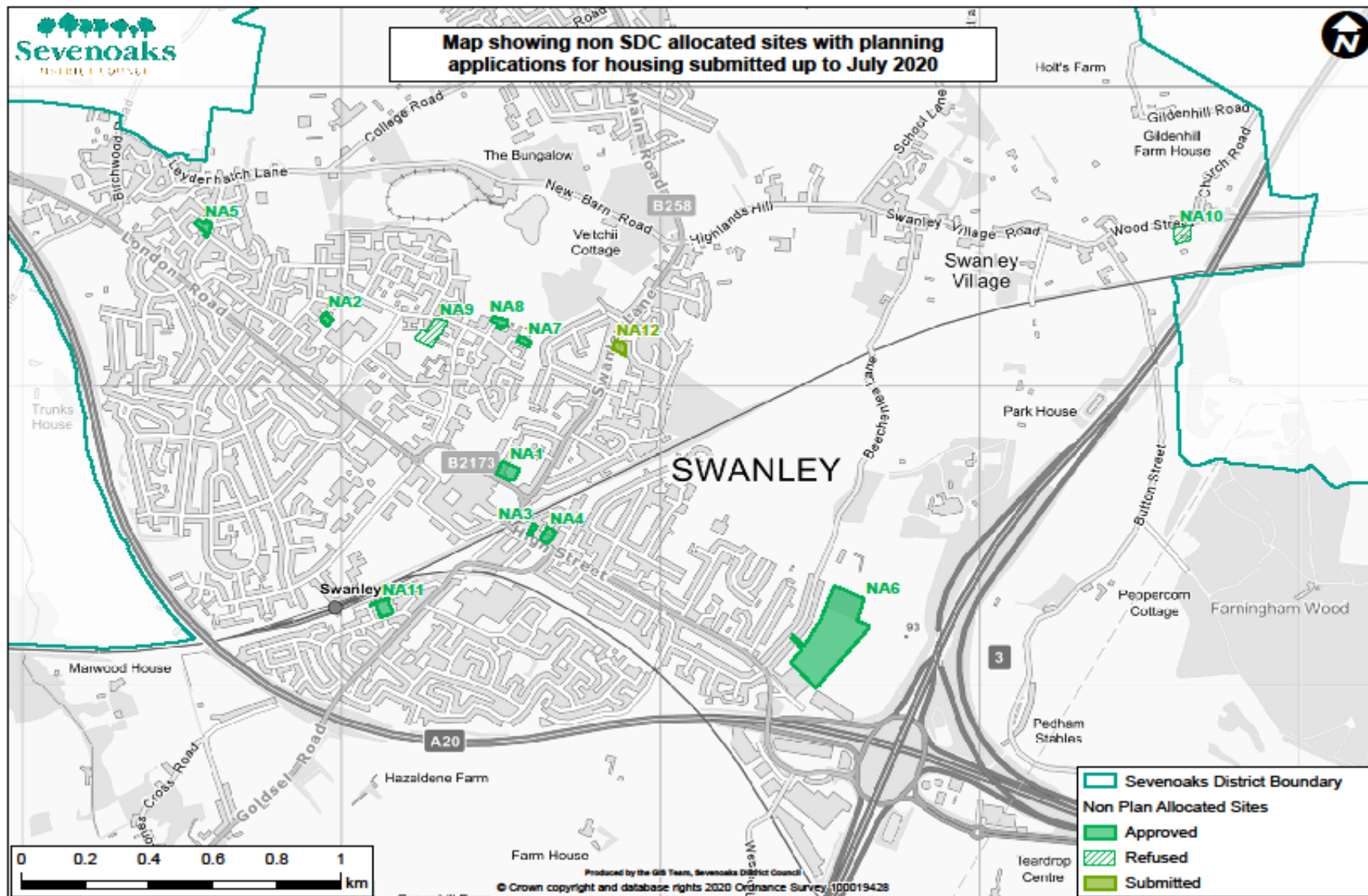
The emerging Sevenoaks Local Plan of 2018 proposes to allocate a total of 13 sites in Swanley (including pitches for gypsy and traveler accommodation, mixed use development and residential sites).

The location of these sites is shown on the map below:



Of the 16 allocated sites, 5 have already been developed or started and will provide 461 homes

In addition to the sites allocated in the existing and emerging Local Plan of Sevenoaks, some sites come forward when owners of land and buildings decide to redevelop them. In Swanley a total of 11 sites have come forward in this way and 10 of these have been given planning consent providing a further 179 homes in addition to those that have been allocated for housing or mixed housing/other uses.



Housing in Swanley

Housing Character

Swanley is mainly characterised by suburban development that is low rise, mainly family homes with gardens in comparison with the rest of Sevenoaks District at the time of the 2011 census.

Housing Types Swanley Parish				
	Swanley	%	District	%
Total household spaces	6,868		48,400	
Total household spaces with residents	6,790	98.9	47,020	97.1
Total household spaces without residents	78	1.1	1,380	2.9
Detached houses or bungalows	752	10.9	16,101	33.3
Semi-detached houses or bungalows	2,853	41.5	13,870	28.7
Terraced houses or bungalows	2,149	31.3	11,284	23.3
Flats, maisonettes, or apartments	1,110	16.2	6,578	13.6
Caravans or other temporary structures	4	0.1	567	1.2
Occupancy rating (rooms) of -1 or less	452	6.6	2,160	4.5
Source Census 2011				

The exception to this will be Swanley Town Centre shown on the map below which is the commercial and civic core of Swanley Town which will be relatively high rise, since recently approved hybrid developments in the Town Centre are intended to provide both a refreshed retail offer as well as housing that is high rise and designed as a landmark building to clearly identify the centre of the Town.² These plans had a difficult journey through the planning process which went to appeal, partly due to the tall form of the development to achieve high densities (208 Dwellings per hectare) which many residents of the Town considered overbearing and not in keeping with the character of Swanley. The appeal was in the end allowed.

Proposed densities in the emerging Local Plan site allocations of 2018 are also higher in the Town Centre at 74 to 100 dwellings per hectare.

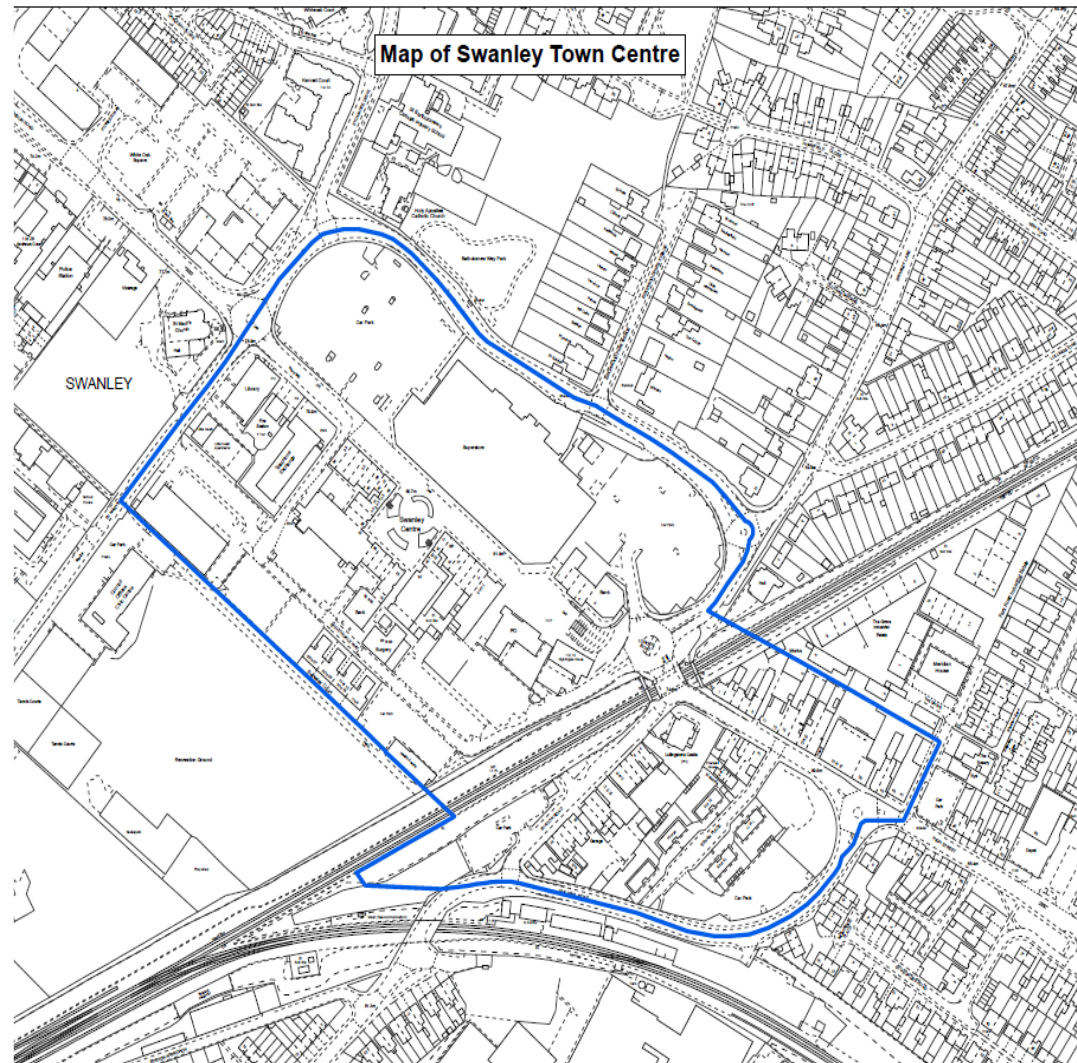
² See Application 17/02279/FUL

Permitted development of changes of use from business to residential has also seen the conversion of some higher rise buildings in the Town, such as at Horizon House for homes (Formerly the highest building that could be seen from different directions in Swanley). As found in recent studies³ of such conversions these dwellings are of low quality with very limited amenity and play space and lack of natural daylight to habitable⁴ rooms.

The main feature of the housing in Swanley is that it is low rise, with the majority of housing development having taken place from the post-war period to late 1980s. Whilst some remain on the outer limits of the Town, Victorian houses and shops were demolished to create a new Town centre in the 1970s. Whilst the existing shops provide living accommodation on the first floor, the emphasis in the centre is upon the Town's main retail and other services offering.

³ Town and Country Planning Association (2020) "No Place for Place making"

⁴ A room used for dwelling purposes but which is not solely a kitchen, utility room, bathroom, cellar or sanitary accommodation



The other settlement of homes that forms part of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area is Swanley Village, a distinct settlement that is historic in nature, almost completely covered by a conservation area and the site of most of the listed buildings in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. As a

settlement it is small and low density and has developed very gradually over centuries surrounded on all sides by countryside – principally designated Green Belt.



Swanley Village

Housing Need

The need for housing of all types in Swanley has been quantified by Sevenoaks District Council in June 2017 as part of its Local Housing Needs Study. This study includes Swanley as part of the North West Place making area of the District which includes Hextable, Crockenhill and Well Hill, Halstead Knockholt and Badgers Mount. This shows that the 11.4% of the households in Swanley and the wider North West area are in housing need.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Households in Need by Placemaking area				
Placemaking Area	Total Number of households	No of Households in Need	% Households in need	
Darenth valley	5,175	485	9.4	
North-East	9,134	866	9.5	
North-West	10,928	1,245	11.4	
Sevenoaks and Surrounds	12,297	1,225	10.0	
South	6,691	784	11.7	
Upper Darent Corridor		474	10.4	4,570
Sevenoaks District Total (All Households in Need)		5,079	10.4	48,795
Source Extract from Table 6.2 Sevenoaks Local Housing Needs Study 2017				

Work done on housing need in Swanley only was also completed in September 2014 based on a survey posted to every household. Approximately 7,265 surveys were distributed with 470 surveys being returned, representing a response rate of 6%.

Analysis of the returned survey forms identified that 67% of all respondents were owner occupiers. 74% of them had lived in the parish for 10 years and over.

Overall, the survey identified a housing need for 62 households; they were:

25 single people

15 couples without children

22 families

A total of 92 adults and 37 children have a housing need

Respondents indicated strong local connections to Swanley; 55 lived there and 7 lived outside.

Given the elapse of time, the small survey response and the continued rise of property value and rents in Swanley it is likely that this need is underestimated for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area.

Housing Tenure

The Town has a diversity of private and social housing. The principal social housing areas are in St. Mary's and White Oaks wards. The majority of social housing in Swanley is provided by West Kent Housing Association.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

The three principal privately owned housing areas are the Newlands (to the north of the Town), St Georges (to the east), High Firs (to the south) and Selah Drive (to the west). As with all locations across the UK, Swanley is subject to Central Government policy to address housing needs for those who cannot be provided for by the market.

Swanley is a community of households that is mainly home owners, but with a significant number of people in rented accommodation as shown by the table below.

Housing Tenure Swanley Town				
Tenure	Parish	%	District	%
Owner occupied households	4,358	64.2	34,200	72.7
owns outright	2,021	46.4	17,642	51.6
owns with a mortgage or loan	2,337	53.6	16,558	48.4
Shared Ownership	141	2.1	798	1.7
Rented Households	2,197	32.4	11,275	24.0
rented from a local authority	317	14.4	800	7.1
rented from an housing association	1,428	65.0	5,418	48.1
privately rented	406	18.5	4,547	40.3
other rented	46	2.1	510	4.5
Living Rent Free	94	1.4	747	1.6
Source Census 2011				

Housing Affordability

The Housing Need Study for Sevenoaks District of 2017 shows privately rented accommodation in the neighbourhood area is not affordable to Swanley residents based on income so there is a need for social rented homes, specifically in the smaller property types (1-2 bedroom).

Combined with the increased costs of home ownership this means that few households are likely to be able to address their housing needs in an affordable way for them.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Housing Density

The most recent Annual Monitoring report for Sevenoaks of 2018/2019 shows that density targets across the District set out in the current and emerging Local Plans have been exceeded, achieving average densities of 63 DPH across the district against the target of 40 DPH. Swanley Town Centre, which has a Local Plan policy target of 75 DPH, has particularly seen this target exceeded with some schemes approved at 150 and 208 dwellings per hectare. (See *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base* document - Swanley Housing Site Schedule).

Table 7.3 Gross Housing Units Completed at Different densities across the District							
	Main Settlements	Sevenoaks Urban Area	Sevenoaks Town Centre	Swanley	Swanley Town Centre	Edenbridge	Rest of District
Target	40dph	40dph	75dph	40dph	75dph	40dph	30 dph
Density	65dph	79dph	106dph	106dph	n/a*	40dph	55 dph
Gross Completions 2018/19	236	106	9	111	0	19	81
*No Completions in 2018/2019							
Source AMR 2019/2020 Sevenoaks District Council							

Recent Housing Development in Swanley

As part of the development of the neighbourhood Plan a survey of all sites, both allocated and non-allocated has been undertaken (see *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base* document – Swanley Housing Site Schedule). A summary of all the sites is shown on the table below and the maps are included in the Planning Policy background above.

SITE TYPE	SITES	NUMBER OF HOMES	Potential Population (at 2.4 persons per homes)
Current and emerging Local Plan Allocated sites with planning approval	A1,A2,A5,A8,A9,A10, A13	702	

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

SITE TYPE	SITES	NUMBER OF HOMES	Potential Population (at 2.4 persons per homes)
Current and emerging Local Plan Allocated sites planning application submitted		0	
Non allocated sites with planning approval	NA 1-8, NA10, NA11	179	
Non allocated sites planning application submitted		0	
Allocated and Non allocated sites planning application refused	A6, NA9	125	
Sevenoaks District Council estimates of number of homes (including pitches) from current and emerging Local Plan allocated sites using emerging Local Plan allocations or estimates from development guidance	A3, A4, A6, A7, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16	267	
TOTAL (excludes refusals)		1,148	2,755
<p>Sites that have been duplicated in the ADMP of 2015 and emerging SLP of 2018 have been counted once in the summary table based on the latest Development guidance or emerging SLP 2018 estimates of numbers of homes.</p> <p>Care Home approvals are based on SDC advice about equivalent number of homes</p>			

It is clear from this that Swanley is benefitting from development interest in housing due to its locational benefits in terms of accessibility to London and other Towns in Sevenoaks and its Green Belt setting. The current uncertainty surrounding an up to date Local Plan and good development management that would flow from it, means that the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan can assist in setting policies that can guide development so that it is well designed, of good quality and can enhance rather than detract from its existing character which is well loved by local residents.

The Views of Swanley Residents

A resident questionnaire survey undertaken in 2018 asked for residents views on a number of issues related to housing based on recent developments in the Town centre and concerns that had also been expressed on housing types, affordability and an overall view on whether there as a need for new homes in the Neighbourhood Area. 52% agreed and strongly agreed that there is a need for new homes in Swanley and 49% felt that appropriate densities in most of Swanley per hectare was 40 dwellings

In addition, to the survey questions, respondents to the survey were also asked to write comments on any aspect of housing in Swanley.

327 additional comments were written that related to housing. Of the comments made, most were related to the overall provision of new homes. Those that expressed opposition to development of any new homes were made on the basis that new homes would have a negative impact on Swanley in terms of its infrastructure. The most commonly mentioned concerns were:

- Increased traffic volumes (including on the wider road network),
- Traffic congestion and pollution
- The effect on the Green Belt and open spaces (both their loss and pressure on their use and future quality)
- The ability of existing health, education and leisure facilities to accommodate an increased population in the Town.

It was also felt that there were better locations for housing development in Sevenoaks District and opportunities on brownfield sites in Swanley to provide new homes, rather than accommodating development on green field sites.

There were specific comments made that were related to the extent to which people felt that social rented housing should be able to be allocated specifically to existing Swanley residents who were in housing need. Mention was made of the needs of young people sharing bedrooms and those who wished to stay in the area due to family and other connections

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

The policies proposed for the Neighbourhood Plan seek to build on the success of the Sevenoaks Local Plan in securing higher density development in Swanley Town Centre in order to address the shortage of suitable development land across the district.

Good housing design that enhances Swanley as a place is considered to be of paramount importance to the current residents of Swanley and to ensure it continues to attract new residents by the provision of high quality residential environments. This reflects Central Government advice as set out in the National Design Guide of 2019 and National Model Design Code of 2021.

The policies below are informed by both this focus on design that is sympathetic to the character of existing places and ensure that they are well planned into the future.

The policies are also influenced by the COVID 19 pandemic of 2020/21 and the challenges of climate change.

This has seen a major shift towards homeworking and virtual communications and may result in a sea change of the need for space in people's homes for work and study. It has underlined the need for easy access to natural spaces, fresh air and facilities for active and passive recreation that is located close by.

Density proposals for the Town Centre are recommended at a higher level than in the current and emerging Local Plans for Sevenoaks to reflect the reality of densities being achieved in the Town Centre area (see Swanley Housing Site Schedule [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base](#) document)

The design of homes in terms of internal noise abatement, access to fresh air and easy maintenance also needs to be addressed by the detail in planning policies to accommodate these likely changes in the way people, live, work and play.

SwH1 Energy Efficient and Healthy Homes:

All new housing developments shall be built to the highest standards of thermal insulation, air tightness, and with double glazing as a minimum requirement.

New homes should be designed to meet an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A to reduce costs in use and contribute to reducing climate change impacts associated with the use of energy.

Ventilation needs careful design with high air tightness building fabric construction. Wherever feasible all homes (including areas of circulation), should have the maximum possible natural ventilation via openable windows.

Where mechanical ventilation is used measures should be incorporated to prevent:

SwH1 Energy Efficient and Healthy Homes:

- External noise transfer from outside the building.
- Cross talk between internal rooms.
- Ventilation Plant noise.

SwH2 Housing Space standards

Homes should meet the Government's nationally described space standards (NDSS) guidelines as a minimum. Extensive tree and shrub planting shall be incorporated into all developments to provide a healthy and visually pleasing environment. Designs shall be inclusive for all members of society and cater for those with disabilities and the infirm wherever feasible.

Housing layouts must demonstrate how homes meet the storage requirements in the NDSS without being impacted by plant for mechanical ventilation and heating kit

SwH3 Private Amenity Space for New Homes

All new homes where feasible should have access to outdoor space in the form of a private garden, balcony or patio. These should be additional to the Gross Internal Floor Area minimum spaces sizes provided in the NDSS

SwH4 Homes for Work and study

All homes should, where feasible, have dedicated working space with natural light

SwH5 Housing Density

Housing developments in the Neighbourhood Plan area are expected to deliver the following densities where feasible subject to meeting the other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Location	Density
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SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Swanley Town centre	100 DPH
Rest of Swanley	50 DPH
Edge of Swanley (sites adjacent to the Green Belt Boundary) and Swanley Village	30 DPH

NP Policy SwH6 Public Amenity space

New housing developments should include Publicly accessible Amenity Green Spaces based on 0.60 Ha of area per 1000 new residents to be accommodated within the development. Amenity green spaces/roofs shall be provided for all commercial and community infrastructure developments.

There is a deficit of AGS in Swanley and therefore further developments on AGS land is not supported.

NP Policy SwH7– Children and Young Peoples Play Space

Swanley has a deficit of play space for children and young people. All new developments in excess of 5 dwellings must include a Local Area for Play (LAP) and all developments in excess of 10 dwellings a Locally Equipped Area for play (LEAP)

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY

Introduction

In an age of climate change the provision of places to work is a key element of achieving sustainable development in Swanley. Reducing the need to travel, particularly by car, means providing space for economic activity that ensures that Swanley is a sustainable place for people to live; providing shops and services as well as local employment to alleviate poverty.

Census data from 2011 shows that car ownership levels are high at between 1.12 to 1.48 and vehicles per household for the Swanley wards of St Mary's, White Oak, Christchurch and Swanley Village and that 35-38% of residents in work travel there by car. Locating employment space in Swanley itself could change these figures and help to reduce air pollution and noise from traffic.

Over time Swanley has seen a significant reduction in employment space available for local companies or new businesses. Sevenoaks Monitoring Reports from 2015 show significant losses of what was previously classified as B1(c) uses (suitable for location in residential areas) with 11,229 sq. m lost in 2016/2017 and little new provision. The main exceptions to this are two main approvals for planning consent for new employment space. One at Broom Hill which had been allocated in the current Sevenoaks Allocations and Development Management plan. This will provide 14,496 square metres of new employment space in four buildings which will be mainly warehousing with small ancillary offices. The other is the approval of the Swanley Town Centre development which will provide 1,457 sq. metres of mixed retail and employment space. Both are relatively recently approved and in the case of Broom Hill provide employment, albeit at low density given its focus on storage and logistics.

There are other employment generating uses such as plant nurseries which have also been lost to housing in the last two years as well as some permitted development conversions to housing.

Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Steering group adopted the following objective for the Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the Economy and Employment, to reflect residents concern about jobs and employment and their connection to contributing to community and individual well-being.

Neighbourhood Plan Objective	UN Sustainable Development Goal
To provide spaces and support for employment that are relevant to and accommodate the needs of businesses, investors and entrepreneurs.	Goal 1 - No poverty Goal 2 - Zero Hunger Goal 4 – Quality Education

Neighbourhood Plan Objective	UN Sustainable Development Goal
	<p><i>Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth</i></p> <p><i>Goal 9 - Industry Innovation and Infrastructure</i></p> <p><i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i></p> <p><i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i></p>

Planning Policy background for Employment and Economy in Swanley

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan are informed by the following studies prepared for the SDC Emerging Local Plan 2018.

Economic Needs Study 2016
 Sevenoaks District Council Economic Development Strategy 2018-2021
 Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) 2018
 Sevenoaks Urban Area Economic Study 2018
 Retail Study 2016
 Tourist Accommodation Needs Study 2015
 Settlement Hierarchy 2018

These show that Swanley has low vacancy rates for commercial premises and that there is a need for increased and improved provision of employment space as much of the existing stock is ageing and in need of modernisation to meet the needs for new businesses.

In relation to retail it has for some time been negatively impacted by the out flow of shoppers to Bexleyheath, Bromley, Orpington, Lakeside, Bluewater and Tunbridge Wells, but that the harsh environmental, poor public realm and lack of diversity of the retail offer of the Town Centre inhibits people shopping locally. They also show that Swanley could benefit from the market for short breaks in Kent if the visitor accommodation was increased and upgraded.

Current and emerging local plan policy focusses on protection and provision via the designation of Broom Hill as an employment area. Now that this site has come forward for development, there is a need to reinforce protection of smaller sites and upgrade existing premises as set

out in the Neighbourhood Plan policies below. The growth in home working will also need to be accommodated, as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan housing chapter (Policy SwH4)

Provision of Employment space

The current stock of employment space is focused in the ten employment areas included in the current and emerging Sevenoaks local plan:

Site Address	Size (ha)	Ref Local Plan 2018
Park Road Industrial Estate Swanley	1.3	EMP1-16
Moreton Industrial Swanley	1.8	EMP1-15
Swan Mill Goldsel Road Swanley	2.6	EMP1-13
Media House Azalea Road Swanley	0.3	EMP1-14
Swanley Town Council Offices	0.4	EMP1-12
Wested Lane Industrial Estate	8.2	EMP1-11
The Technology Centre Swanley	1.8	EMP1-19
Broom Hill Swanley	4.3	EMP1-20
Southern Cross Industrial Estate	1.9	EMP1-17
Teardrop Industrial Estate Swanley	3.4	EMP1-18

As part of the work on the Neighbourhood Plan several other sites have also been identified which provide employment space:

- Upper Hockenden Farm, Hockenden Lane Swanley
- Gateway Trading Estate London Road 5 warehouse units of 550m plus a yard

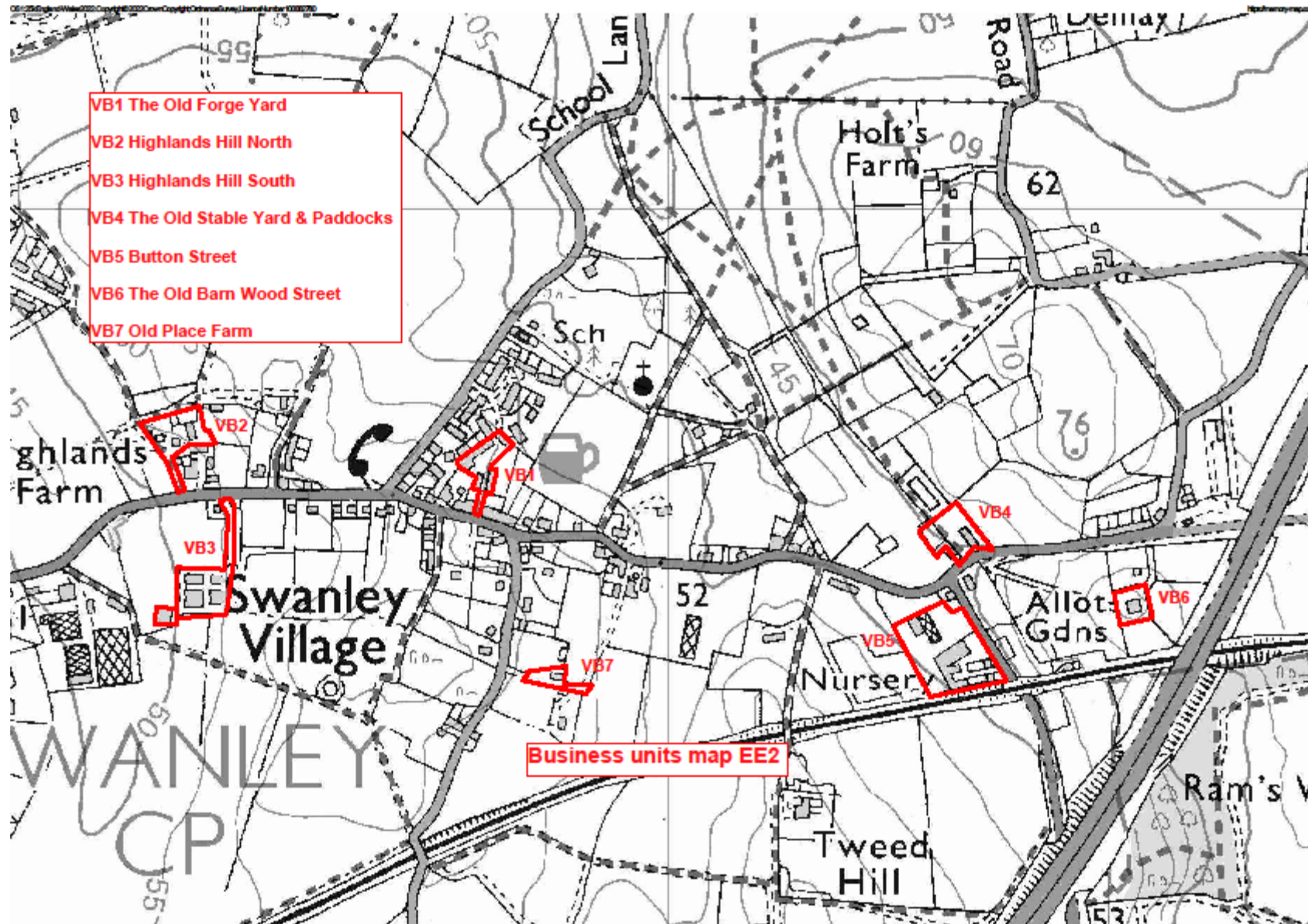
All of these sites are the largest areas of employment provision in Swanley, many of which are in employment uses which may generate noise or traffic movements unacceptable in residential areas. There are many other sources of employment provided via smaller premises, many providing retail services to local residents. These are shown on Map EE1-1 and EE1-2 since they offer potential opportunities for sub division, extension or other intensification of their use to increase the overall stock of employment space in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

There are also small sites in Swanley Village.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Swanley Village Employment sites	
VB1	The Old Forge yard
VB2	Highlands Hil North
VB3	Highlands Hill South
VB4	The old Stable yard and Paddocks
VB5	Button Street
VB6	The Old Barn Wood Street
VB7	Old Place Farm

These are shown on Map EE2 as they are in need of protection where feasible to prevent the loss of small employment spaces in the village, adding to its vitality and providing support to keep other services in the village viable into the future.



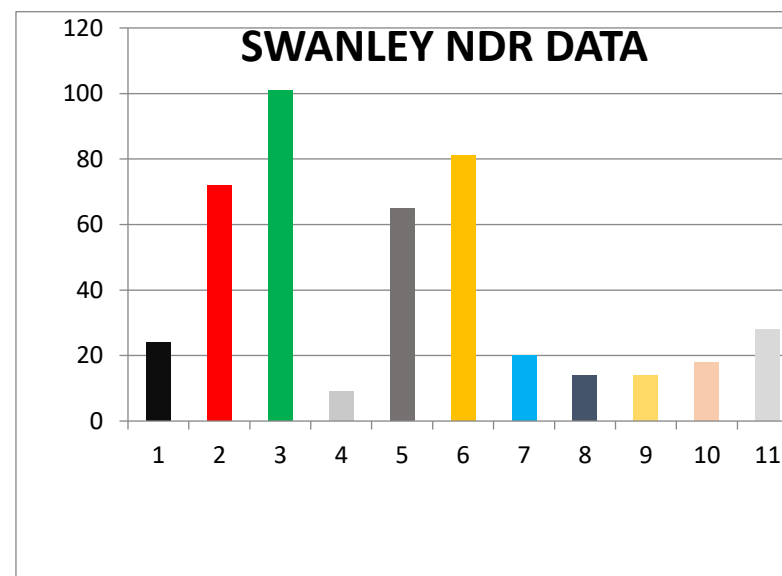
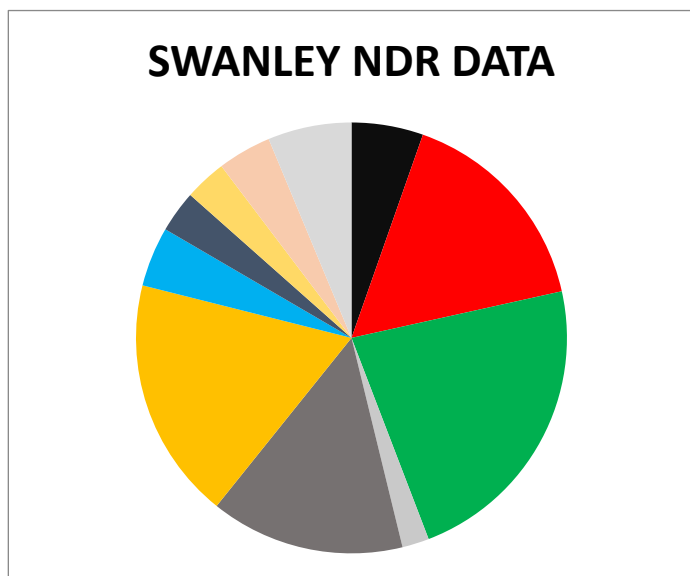
Other existing employment premises

As part of the work on the Neighbourhood plan an analysis of data from the Valuation Office Agency for non-domestic rate paying premises as of November 2019 showed that there is a varied mix of small shop premises, offices, workshops and storage units. (See *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base* – Swanley Non Domestic rates 2019).

There are 446 business premises in Swanley accommodating most types of activity – shops and hairdressers, post offices, offices, warehouses, factories and workshops. According to the non-domestic rates information 52 premises have been deleted mainly as a result of loss to residential.

Retail, warehousing and offices and small workshops/factories dominate provision in the Neighbourhood Plan are as shown in the table and charts below.

SWANLEY : TYPE OF NON DOMESTIC PREMISES	CODE	No.
Statutory Services (schools, libraries, fire stations, doctors surgeries)	1	24
Offices	2	72
Shops	3	101
Community Halls	4	9
Workshops / Factories	5	65
Warehouses & Storage	6	81
Car Parking and Car Showrooms	7	20
Advertising / Comms	8	14
Communication Masts	9	14
Sui generis (unique)	10	18
<i>Building undergoing conversion / converted to domestic / deleted</i>	<i>11</i>	28
		446
Source: VOA web site downloaded in 2019		



Some of these businesses are located in the ten designated employment areas included in the Sevenoaks Emerging Local Plan but many are located across the defined Swanley Town Centre area on Station Road and the High Street, particularly the retail uses.

Employment and Skills in Swanley

Employment of people in Swanley shows more people are economically inactive compared to the District as a whole, mainly because they are retired, in poor health or studying.

Swanley Employment	Parish	%	District	%

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Total Economically Active - % of population aged 16-74	11,808	54.2	82,098	53.9
In Employment	8,228	37.8	58,707	38.5
Part-time	1,737	8.0	11,527	7.6
Full-time	4,618	21.2	31,826	20.9
Self-Employed	1,090	5.0	11,180	7.3
Full-time Student	256	1.2	1,842	1.2
Unemployed	527	2.4	2,332	1.5
Total Economically Inactive	3,580	16.4	23,391	15.4
Retired	1,790	8.2	12,531	8.2
Student	504	2.3	3,353	2.2
Looking after home/ family	624	2.9	4,448	2.9
Permanently sick/disabled	437	2.0	1,786	1.2
Other	225	1.0	1,273	0.8
Source Census 2011				

The education and skills of people in Swanley lags behind that of the District as a whole with a large number of people having no qualifications at all.

Swanley Parish Education/Skills % of population aged 16+	Parish	%	District	%
No qualifications	3,777	28.7	17,753	19.2
Level 1 qualifications	2,332	17.8	12,708	13.7
Level 2 qualifications	2,275	17.3	15,189	16.4
Apprenticeship	545	4.1	3,158	3.4
Level 3 qualifications	1,361	10.4	10,267	11.1

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Swanley Parish Education/Skills % of population aged 16+	Parish	%	District	%
Level 4 qualifications and above	2,263	17.2	29,580	32.0
Other qualifications	585	4.5	3,826	4.1
Source Census 2011				

Planning control is limited in what it can do to improve skills but it can ensure that space is available for those who wish to establish new businesses or expand current premises to accommodate economic activity and employment. This will also contribute to a reduction in the need to travel, particularly as so many current residents are employed outside Swanley. It is clear however that protection and extension of employment spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan area is necessary and for KCC to re-double its efforts along with other partners to improve the education and training provision in the area.

The Views of Swanley Residents

495 people responded to questions about employment and the economy in the Neighbourhood Plan survey of 2018. Questions were asked about the provision of employment space in Swanley, the provision of visitor accommodation and the retail offer in the town Centre.

The majority of respondents were supportive of improved and increased provision of these facilities.

In addition people who filled in the questionnaire were also asked to make other comments if they wished. Those that were relevant to working and employment related to questions about the Town Centre, and employment and business generally. Below is a summary from the 300 comments made relevant to business and employment. Most were made about retailing but some were made about other issues:

- Increasing the diversity of shops and restaurants
- Encouraging independent traders rather than chains
- Avoiding an increase in charity shops (21 comments) and takeaways (15 comments)
- Micro enterprise space on short lease terms (2 comments)
- More affordable workspace (6 comments)
- Increase entertainment facilities - bowls, theatre, cinema (11 comments)
- Address need for parking near centre (8 comments)
- More employment space will avoid the need for more traffic to and from employment

- More banking facilities

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

NP Policy SwEE1: Improving and increasing employment on existing employment site

Proposals to upgrade, intensify or extend the employment sites on Maps EE1-1 and EE1-2 are supported

NP Policy SwEE2: Loss of Employment uses

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of land or buildings in employment use shown on Map EE1-1, EE1-2 and EE2 to non-employment uses, other than those which are permitted development, will only be permitted when:

- a) Marketing of the site over a period of a minimum of 12 months demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the use of the site for employment purposes; or
- b) The strategic need for the proposed use clearly exceeds the need for continued use for employment purposes.

NP Policy SwEE3: Small employment sites

Proposals for other smaller employment sites will be permitted where they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan and provided that all the following criteria are met so that proposals:

- a) Do not involve the loss of dwellings
- b) Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area
- c) Are well integrated into and complement existing clusters of activity
- d) Protect any neighbouring residential amenity
- e) Do not adversely impact upon road safety
- f) Enhance the overall development and provision of employment and self-employment space
- g) Do not adversely affect the attractiveness of the local countryside

NP Policy SwEE4

Proposals for hotel accommodation and visitor facilities within the Neighbourhood Plan area will be supported where they do not conflict with other policies in this Plan and provided that all the following criteria are met so that proposals:

- a) Do not involve the loss of dwellings
- b) Contribute to the character and vitality of the local area
- c) Are well integrated into and complement existing clusters of business activity
- d) Are well provided with parking and located close to public transport connections
- e) Protect any neighbouring residential amenity
- f) Do not adversely impact upon road safety
- g) Enhance the development and provision of employment and self-employment
- h) Do not adversely affect the attractiveness of the local countryside

TRANSPORT

The following vision was agreed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan survey, conducted to guide the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Objectives were developed by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group which is made up of representatives of Swanley Town Council and volunteer residents.

Vision Swanley will accommodate change up to 2037 that retains and improves its environment and semi-rural setting and benefits and sustains its community - its people, its facilities and its heritage”	
Objectives	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal
To reduce the impact of development on the town in terms of traffic volumes and type, congestion, air pollution and the safety of all road users.	Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-Being. Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities. Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals.
To enable personal mobility and active travel within Swanley and to the wider Sevenoaks district and beyond.	Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-Being. Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities. Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals.
To propose specific projects to improve the community infrastructure of Swanley, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New or safer roads and other transport facilities • Flood defences • Schools and other educational facilities • Medical facilities • Sporting, recreation and leisure facilities • Open spaces 	Goal 9 - Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure. Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities. Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals.

To enable development in Swanley that creates minimal negative impacts.	<p>Goal 3 - Good Health and Well-Being.</p> <p>Goal 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities.</p> <p>Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals.</p>
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Planning Policy Background for Transport in Swanley

National and District transport planning policy relevant to Swanley emphasizes the need for development to reduce the impact of traffic in terms of air quality and the existing capacity & safety of the highway network, and to promote sustainable low impact modes – cycling, public transport, walking and cycling.

National Policy Planning Framework (2021) **Promoting Sustainable Transport**

- *The NPPF requires that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are pursued as are limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes to help reduce congestion and emissions thus improving air quality and public health.*
- *Parking standards should take account of accessibility; type, mix and use of development; public transport availability; local car ownership levels and charging facilities for electric vehicles.*
- *Developments should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be unacceptable impact on highway safety or cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.*

Sevenoaks District Council Local Plan (Submission Version 2018) **Ensuring Well Connected Communities**

- *The Local Plan looks to reduce traffic congestion, improve public transport and reducing vehicular emissions. The Local Plan looks to enhancing interchanges with other transport modes such as rail, bus, walking and cycling.*
- *Walking and cycling is encouraged to improve health and wellbeing.*
- *The Local Plan seeks to enhance existing cycling routes and provide new routes interconnecting with the public rights of way network.*

- *The Local Plan encourages the switch to electrical vehicles and stresses the need for all new developments to include sufficient and suitable electrical vehicle charging points.*

The Swanley Transport Study of 2018 was carried out on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council by their external consultants SWECO (An engineering and design firm). The report is very thorough and identifies all the transport issues, both major and minor, in Swanley.

The report forecasts the traffic growth rates for the Local Plan period to 2037 and states: “The increase in traffic flows would have to be accommodated on the existing road network as no significant road capacity increases are planned or are likely to be possible. However, it is unlikely that these forecast increases in traffic can be accommodated without further compromising the operation of the highway network. Therefore, a reduction in current car use, and lower future car use, will be essential.”

The report states that the programmed improvements to the rail network are considered to provide sufficient capacity to cater for increases in rail trips to/from Swanley. The report goes on to state there are no planned bus improvements or increases in bus frequencies but it is hoped that these may respond to development as it happens.

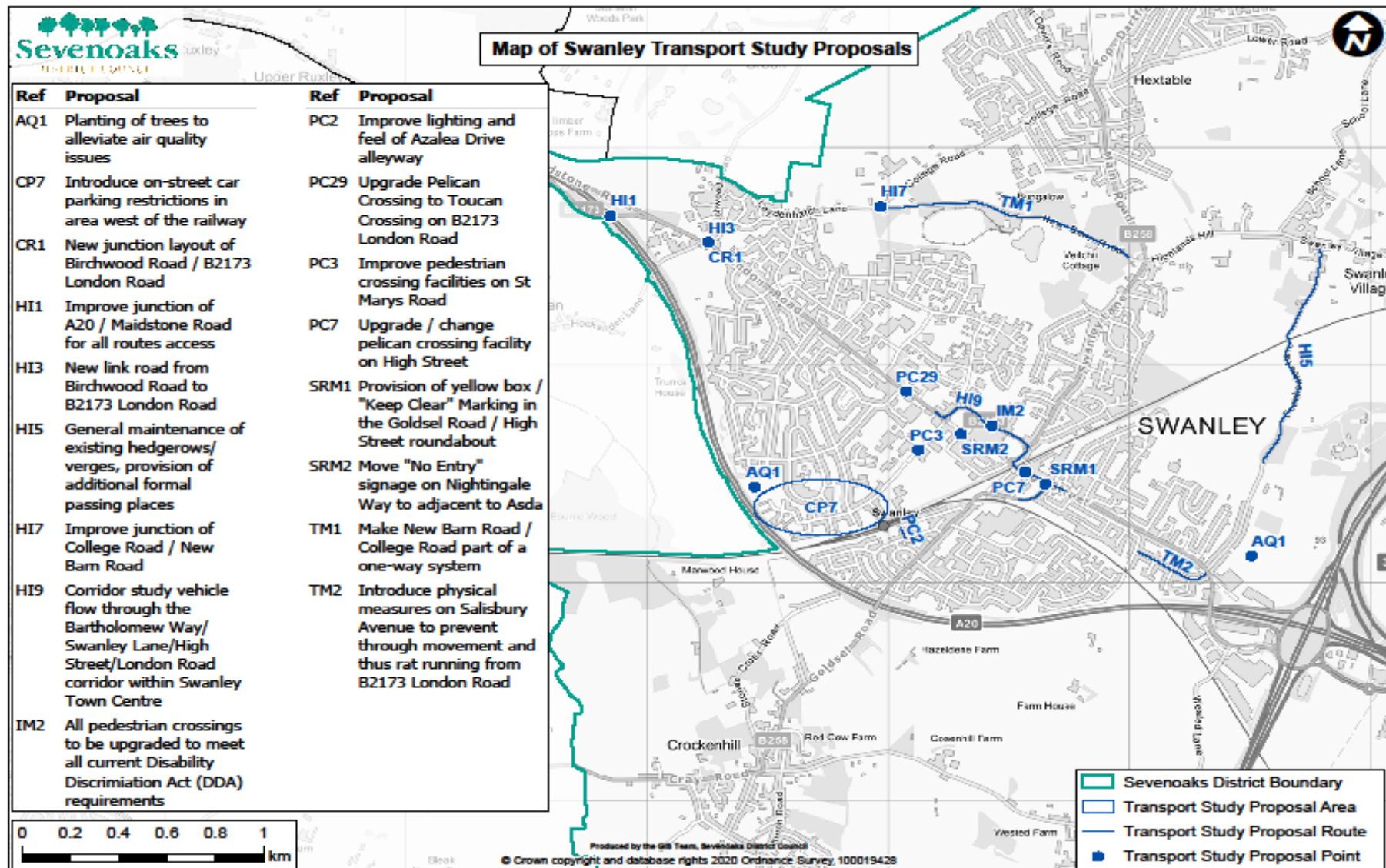
The report recommends Active Travel (walking and cycling) as a means of promoting healthy living and goes on to state “Without a strong and well supported active travel strategy with associated travel demand measures, the growth outlined within the Local Plan cannot be delivered in a sustainable manner.”

The travel demand measures suggested are flexible working; on-line shopping; walk/cycle/bus/car sharing; avoiding congestion periods and; travelling by a different route.

The report considers that unrestricted car parking in the town centre encourages private car trips and that to avoid congestion it will be important to encourage alternative means of travel to the private car. Car ownership in Swanley is still growing.

The study is a constructive attempt to address all the issues associated with transport in Swanley and its proposals are addressed in the policies and proposals in this Neighbourhood Plan. A map of the references to proposals in the SWECO report is shown below and referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan policies and proposals.

It should be noted that not all the proposals in the SWECO report are supported in this Neighbourhood Plan as they do not meet its (the Plan`s) vision and objectives. The unsupported proposals can be found in our [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base](#) in the SWECO report. Those that are supported are included in **Policy SwT8**.



Transport Provision in Swanley

Swanley is the second largest town within Sevenoaks District and lies in the north western section of the District with approximately 17,000 inhabitants (Source: Mid-year estimates 2016).

Public transport provision within Swanley is limited. Currently two main bus routes serve the town, Swanley to Orpington, Hextable, Dartford and Bluewater and the other Swanley to Sidcup and Eltham. There are two other minor and underused routes also available. All services have very differing frequencies from every 20-30 minutes to hourly (or longer) services (see Map 1 below). Provision is particularly poor at the weekend and recent cuts means that the 477 will no longer go beyond Swanley Station. But route 2, which connects Swanley with Sevenoaks, because of timing and frequency gives people very little time in Sevenoaks.

Swanley Station, which is situated in the centre of the town provides Southeastern and Thameslink services to Ashford International, Canterbury West, Gillingham, London (Victoria and Blackfriars) and Sevenoaks. More recently the London Bridge Line increases Swanley's connections into London.

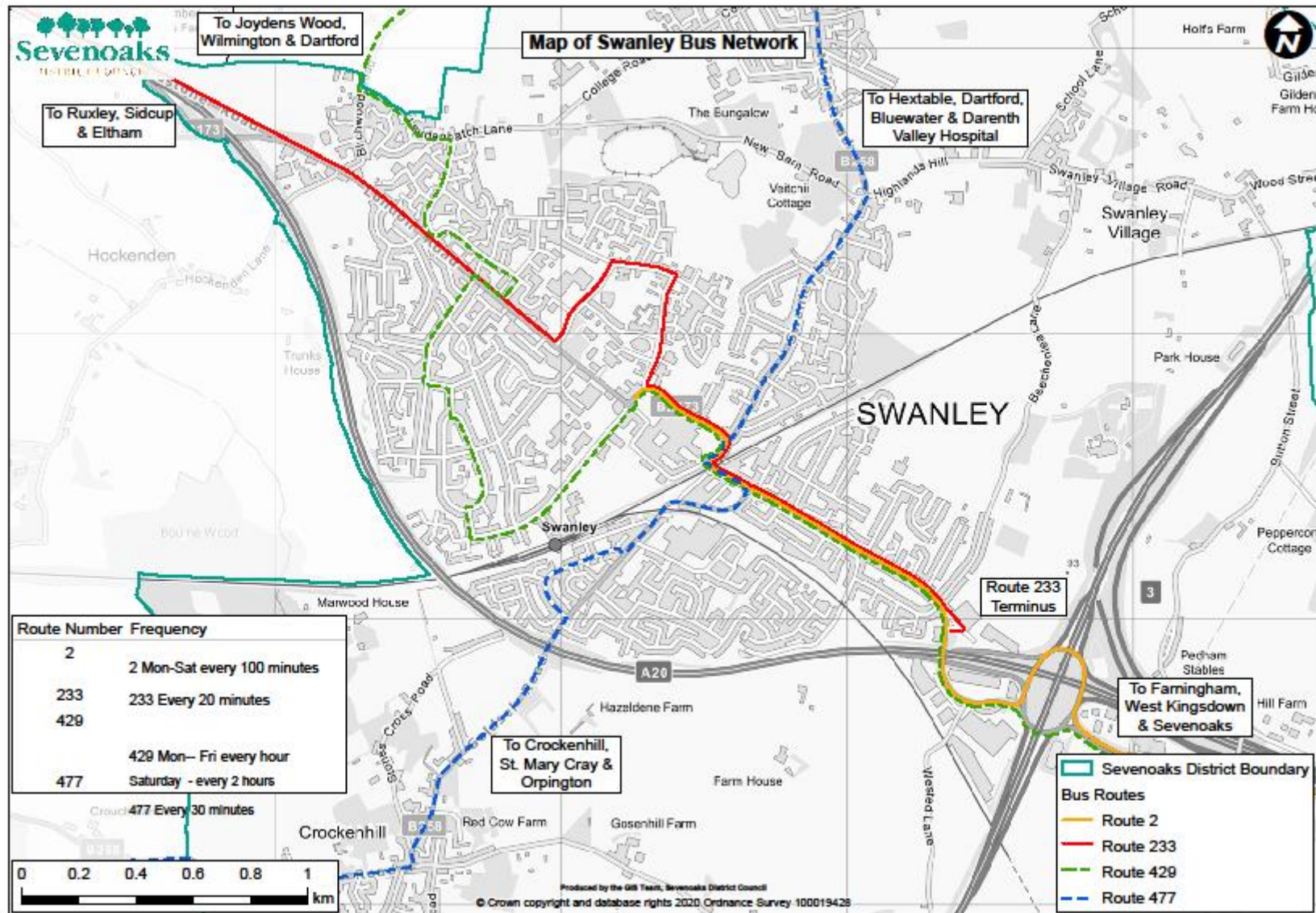
Cycling route provision in Swanley is limited as shown in Table 1 below, extracted from the Swanley Transport Study which proposes further routes in the town to improve the current position where only two routes are provided (see Map 2 below).

Similarly, public cycle parking is limited.

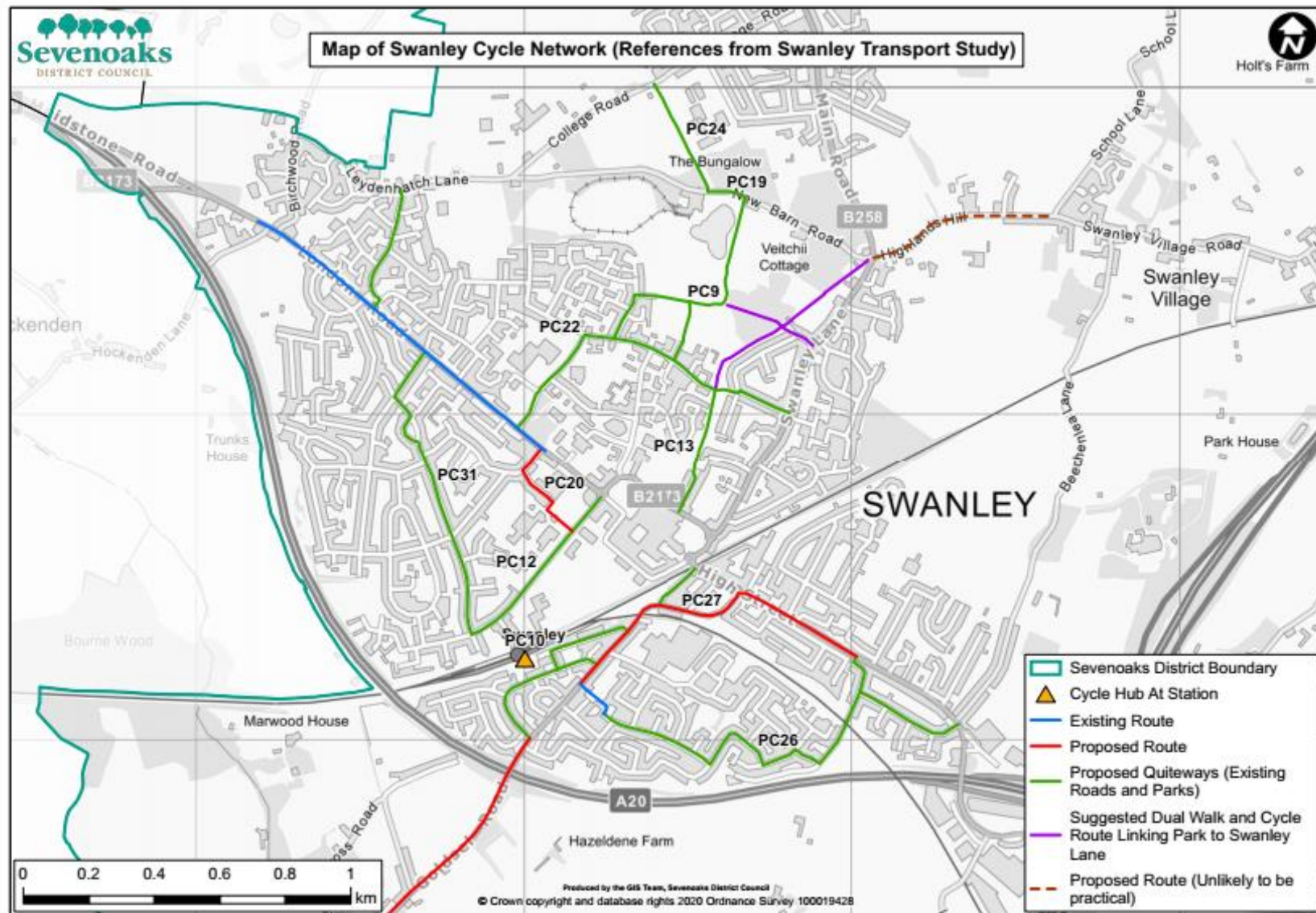
Using the Table 4 of the Sevenoaks District Council Cycling Strategy document as a basis, the current cycle parking provisions in Swanley are shown below in Table 1:

Table 1 - Cycle Parking Provision in Swanley.	
Location	No of Stands and lockers
Railway Station internal	8 stands and 10 lockers.
Railway Station external	10 stands – sheltered.
Outside ASDA adjacent old post office	10 stands – unsheltered.
Library	2 stands – unsheltered.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION



SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION



The level of car ownership in the three wards of Swanley is 1.25 cars/vans per household (Source: 2011 UK Census)

As can be seen on Map, below, Swanley is serviced locally by two main road routes. One from Crockenhill through the town centre and out towards Hextable, and the other from Ruxley Corner through the town centre and out towards the M25 and the villages of Farningham, Eynsford and West Kingsdown. They converge, more or less, at the Bevan Place roundabout.

Swanley is also located close to three strategic road routes: the A20/M20, the M25 and the A2. Whenever a traffic incident occurs on any of these roads Swanley experiences major traffic congestion as it is used as an “escape route” for drivers. The M25 is of the most concern because of the high volume of traffic.

Despite the convenience of an accessible road network, this results in poor air quality in Swanley, and it is deteriorating. Table 2, below, is an extract from the SDC 2019 Air Quality Management Report and shows the air quality at key locations in Swanley.

This confirms residents’ concerns about air pollution and their view that it is a negative feature of the town (see “The Views of Swanley Residents” below).

The figures emboldened in red in Table 2, below, are the values of Annual Mean Concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO_2 ⁵ greater than 40 which, at these concentrations, exceed the Governments statutory baseline figure in 2015. Every effort needs to be made to reduce to the World Health Organisations guideline limit of 10 micro grammes/cubic meter”. (Source : Department for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, “UK Plan for tackling nitrogen dioxide concentrations”).

Table 2 - Air Quality in Swanley.									
Measurement Points		Valid data Capt. 2018 (%)	Annual Mean Concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO_2 ¹						
Site ID	Location		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
DT13	Wested Lane	100		40.7	36.5	31.4	36.5	30.5	32.9
DT39	Bartholomew Way	100	42.3	42.4	38.4	34.7	40.9	34.5	36.4
DT40	London Rd 1	100	54.8	51.6	48.5	42.3	51.5	40.9	45.6
DT41	London Rd 2	100	45.7	43.5	43	37.5	42.7	40.1	38.6
DT83	Jessamine Terr	91.6		51.8	48.8	55.6	60.5	49.8	46.7
DT93	Pucknells	100		32.4	31.5	29.3	32.4	27.2	28.8
DT94	Birchwood Rd	83.3	37.6	36.5	35.1	33.7	36.9	32.2	33.8

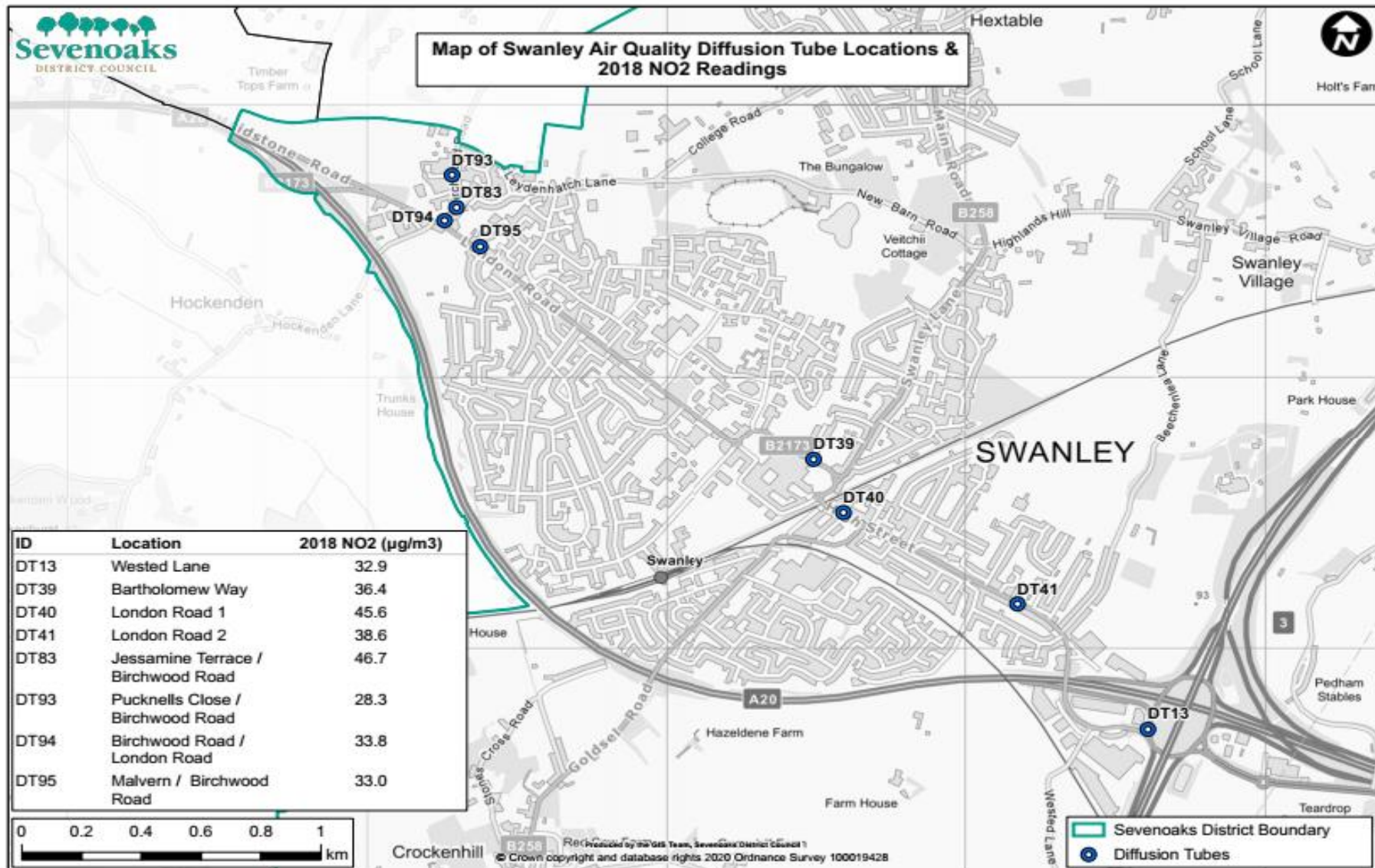
⁵ $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO_2 = micrograms of Nitrogen Dioxide in one cubic metre of air, captured in a diffusion tube, DT (a small tube that is coated at one end with a chemical that absorbs NO_2 for measurement purposes).

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION

Table 2 - Air Quality in Swanley.									
Measurement Points		Valid data Capt. 2018 (%)	Annual Mean Concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO ₂ ¹						
Site ID	Location		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	/ London Rd								
DT95	Malvern Birchwood Rd	100		36.6	35.2	34.1	38	33.6	33

Map below shows the location of the Diffusion Tubes and the NO₂ concentrations in 2018.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 14 VERSION



The Views of Swanley Residents

At the start of the Swanley Neighbourhood Planning Process a questionnaire was circulated to all residents and made available online between August and September 2018. 495 people responded and an additional survey of young people at Orchards Academy was also carried out. The questionnaire was a combination of open questions to elicit people's views and suggestions about potential proposals for people to express a view on.

The results of the main survey in relation to transport issues are summarised below (shown as a % of total responses received):

"What do you feel are the weaknesses or negative features of our community?"	Volume of traffic - 85% agreed.
	Speed of traffic - 76% agreed.
	Air pollution - 77% agreed.
"Some residents are concerned about road safety throughout Swanley. What should be done to help"	
Proposals	
Deter cars from using the town centre.	64% disagreed.
Create new cycle paths and footpaths for cyclists and pedestrians	69% agreed.
Provide an all-routes access to the A20 by-pass at Birchwood	76% agreed.
Deter articulated lorries from Country lanes in Swanley	77% agreed.
"Do you think there is sufficient car parking in the town centre?"	52% agreed.

The questionnaire also asked residents what their mode of transport was for travelling to work, to the shops in Swanley, and for social, domestic & pleasure activities. Table 3, below, lists the responses.

Table 3 - Swanley 2018 Travel Modes from Resident NP Questionnaire.							
Mode of Travel / To	Car	Bus	Cycle	Walk	Taxi	Train	Motorcycle
Work	45%	7%	2%	18%	1%	25%	2%
Work 2011 UK Census	59%	4%	0.8%	10%	0.7%	18%	1.4%

Table 3 - Swanley 2018 Travel Modes from Resident NP Questionnaire.							
Swanley shops	51%	8%	3%	33%	3%	-	1%
Social, domestic, & pleasure	57%	12%	1%	13%	5%	11%	1%

Table 4, below, displays a selection of comments from residents made in relation to transport that illustrate their concerns. They are not all consistent and some of them cannot be addressed by planning control. They illustrate that Swanley residents are concerned that any future major development could exacerbate Swanley's transport and traffic problems further.

Table 4 - Swanley Residents views on Transport (quoted verbatim)		
Are concerned at the unacceptable level of traffic congestion and pollution, especially during peak periods, on the roads leading to the town centre. In addition, any congestion on the M25/A20/A2 results in drivers using Swanley and its country lanes as a rat run. Because of the high level of traffic congestion Swanley cannot sustain any further increase of vehicles on its roads.	Would like to see that their country village lanes have, where appropriate, width restrictions to prevent HGV's access.	Do not wish to see any further road building or bridges within Swanley as this will only destroy local communities, increase and attract even more traffic which, in turn, will increase congestion and have a further detrimental effect on the quality of air we breathe.
Would ask that all country lanes should have their hedgerows satisfactorily maintained.	Request whether Swanley village should be protected by no entry signs/or the possibility of introducing a one-way system through the village.	Request the need for more paths in local villages i.e. Highlands Hill to Swanley Village.
Request whether it is feasible that only Council vetted heavy goods vehicles are allowed within Swanley's country lanes.	Have suggested whether it is feasible that vehicles leaving the M25 to use Swanley as a rat run could be charged (via electronic tagging); there are concerns are that it would not be a viable option or a practical solution. Are there any other means to stop traffic, from the M25, using Swanley as a rat run?	Request that all bridges should have their weight limits checked.
Request that more use is made of cameras, box junctions, traffic lights and traffic calming measures within the town centre and other areas where traffic congestion/speeding occurs.	Have asked that a proposed access to the A20 via a bypass at Birchwood needs to be evaluated, but this could mean even more traffic switching between the A2, A20. And it would not be popular with residents of Birchwood Road.	Request that speed limits are introduced, 20mph in residential areas and 30mph elsewhere i.e. from the Bull to the town centre. However, any implementation limits must prevent higher car emissions.
Would ask that the re-phasing of the traffic lights, to help ease the high volume of traffic from Ruxley corner at the Bull/London road/Birchwood road junction during the evening rush hour, be considered. Traffic for the A20/M25 is usually accessed at Crittalls Corner, but traffic from Ruxley Corner and that from Hockenden Lane predominately turns left at the Bull to access A2/Dartford etc. via Birchwood Road.	Idea of opening up Station Road would not improve Swanley's traffic congestion, as it would only move the congestion further up to the Lullingstone Castle Pub and the station road traffic will still have to give way.	Request more traffic wardens to be made available needed, especially around residential roads/schools to ensure compliance with parking restrictions etc.
Have requested that Swanley town council should ensure that Swanley's roads are adequately maintained and repaired.	Have asked the question as to whether the Bull/London road/Birchwood road junction is suitable for heavy goods vehicles.	Feel that there is no evidence that Swanley's roads are dangerous, but speed restrictions would slow traffic and reduce risk still further.

Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals

Trees are like the vacuums of our planet. Through their leaves and bark, they absorb harmful pollutants and release clean oxygen for us to breathe. In urban environments, trees absorb pollutant gases like nitrogen oxides, ozone, and carbon monoxide, and sweep up particles like dust and smoke. Increasing levels of carbon dioxide caused by deforestation and fossil fuel combustion trap heat in the atmosphere. Healthy, strong trees act as carbon sinks; absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide and reducing the effects of climate change. (Source: One Tree Planted)

Trees and Air Quality

SwT1 – Planting of trees

All new developments close to main transport corridors, indicated in AQ1⁶, (see Map of Transport Study proposals) where pollution is a problem shall incorporate extensive tree planting as part of the development.

Roads

A major review of Swanley's transport infrastructure was undertaken and reported in a report by SWEKO in 2018. As part of the neighbourhood plan all the proposals within it were reviewed and included in Neighbourhood Plan policies in this chapter. They are divided into specific schemes (**Policy SwT2**) and issues for further study and feasibility work by KCC and others (**Policy SwT7**). A map of all these proposals is shown at the start of this Chapter.

SwT2 Road Improvements

- a. The road improvements indicated in HI1² to HI9², CR1² and TM1² are supported measures to be funded by Swanley Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council via Community Infrastructure Levy:
- b. A new all movement junction on the A20 to the west of Swanley to help alleviate congestion within the town centre by providing an alternative route to western Swanley and areas to the north such as Dartford, without having to route through Swanley Town Centre or double back from Sidcup.

⁶ SWEKO Swanley Transport Study, Option Identification Reference

SwT2 Road Improvements

- c. New link road from Birchwood Road to the B2173 to avoid narrow section at the southern end on approach to junction with B2173. This measure would be designed to alleviate congestion and improve safety at the Birchwood Road/B2173 signalised junction
- d. Improving wayfinding including signing to car parks, Swanley Park and other key attractions
- e. All pedestrian crossings to be upgraded to meet all current DDA requirements.
- f. Upgrade the pelican crossing to the high Street
- g. Re-surface and improve the lighting and feel of Azalea drive as the gateway to Swanley station
- h. Provide yellow box marking at the Goldsel Road/High Street roundabout junction
- i. Introduce physical measures on Salisbury Avenue to prevent through movement and thus rat running from B2173 London Road
- j. Move no entry signage on Nightingale Way to adjacent ASDA access to clarify that there is no vehicular access on Nightingale Way and the pedestrianised area

Cycling

The evidence from the NP Questionnaire shows that cycling as a mode of transport in Swanley is poorly used. This may well be due to the fact that there is little off-road provision and that the roads are congested and narrow presenting a safety risk. If cyclists were to use the existing roads this would slow down traffic and increase congestion on the roads.

Clearly what is needed is a network of cycle paths linking all parts of the town to parks, recreation areas, and the town centre and railway station. The NP Questionnaire indicates support for this. However, it is unlikely that any cycle network could provide a safe traffic free route to make cycling a serious travel mode other than for recreational purposes.

There is a definite benefit to health and wellbeing in taking up cycling. Although, as the UK 2011 Census indicates that 1 in 5 are over the age of 65, cycling may not be an option for everyone and it is therefore important that vehicular capacity is available for those that need it.

SwT3 – Cycling

Cycling is encouraged as an alternative mode of transport to the motor car on safe, designated cycle routes whenever possible to reduce pollution and traffic congestion.

All new developments *should* incorporate *segregated* cycle access ways and adequate storage for bicycles in accordance with Policy **SwT6**. New cycle routes recommended in the SWECO report are supported:

SwT3 – Cycling

1. Cycle link from existing London Road cycle lane to St Mary's Road (along Oliver Road, Ruxton Close and existing path) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 14
2. West-east cycle route to the north of the town centre (along Hilda May Avenue, Northview and Woodlands Rise) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 16
3. Cycle link between Woodlands Rise and town centre (upgrade existing public footpath 0262/SD81/2) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 17
4. Cycle link from Swanley to Hextable (through Swanley Park and along existing footpath 0305/SD69/1) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 18
5. West-east cycle link from station to London Road (along Salisbury Avenue, restricted byway 0262/SD88/1; Glendale; Pinks Hill; Cranleigh Drive; Existing cycleway; Goldsel Road; Azalea Drive and Station Road) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 20
6. East-west cycle route to the station from London Road (along Salisbury Avenue, St George's Road, London Road, Goldsel Road and Station Approach) - SDC Cycling Strategy Route 21

A new Cycle Hub at Swanley station should also be provided as recommended by the SWECO report

Walking

The evidence shows that walking to work has increased significantly from 10% in the 2011 UK Census to 18% from our NP Questionnaire.

Our NP Questionnaire shows that an impressive 33% walk to the shops in Swanley centre.

Walking is good for health & wellbeing and reduces pollution and traffic congestion and the provision of new footpaths for pedestrians was strongly supported in the NP Questionnaire.

SwT4 – Walking

Development proposals should incorporate safe pedestrian footpaths throughout the development and link with other existing pedestrian routes where appropriate and relevant.

Bus

According to the NP Questionnaire, refer to Table 3 above, the use of buses in Swanley as a mode of travel is very low at 7% for travelling to work and 8% for getting to Swanley shops.

The reasons are probably the limited direction of travel, restricted times of operation, frequency and cost.

The two main services are the 233 and 477. The 233 frequency is every 20 minutes. The 477 frequency is every 30 minutes, but the service is very restricted in the evening and does not serve Swanley railway station.

If people are to be encouraged to use the bus service improvements to the service will be required. For some people the bus is their only option.

Train

Travel to work by train has increased from 18% in the 2011 UK Census to 25% indicated by our NP Questionnaire results.

The Swanley Transport Study indicates that increases in this mode of travel will be accommodated over the Sevenoaks District Local Plan period to 2037. Swanley is very much a commuter-based town as evidenced in the NP Questionnaire with 45% of people travelling to work by car.

The introduction of the Oyster card has proved popular. People travel into Swanley from outlying areas which causes road congestion and air pollution. Similarly dropping off and picking up using motor cars causes similar problems. Trains are often full when arriving at Swanley at peak times with standing room only.

Car

There is a need to reduce the use of combustion engine cars to reduce pollution levels in the town, which has levels in several areas that exceed maximum recommended levels. There is a need to use alternative modes of transport such as walking and buses whenever possible especially at peak times to avoid congestion. However, currently it is not possible to dispense with cars. In the Neighbourhood Plan area public transport is limited and as a result car ownership is high, there will need to be a transition over the Plan period to allow necessary infrastructure for alternative modes and electric vehicles to be implemented.

Car ownership in the three Wards of Swanley is 1.25 cars/vans per household. There are 950 homes to be built in Swanley over the plan period which could see an additional 1,188 vehicles on roads in the Neighbourhood Area (those listed in the submission version of the SDC Local Plan for Swanley on pages 34 and 35 and in the Housing document). This excludes the contribution from Hextable and Crockenhill. There will be additional congestion and further development will not be sustainable as indicated in the Swanley Transport Plan. There is a need to switch to self-charging hybrid cars immediately and all electric vehicles when the charging infrastructure becomes more available.

The motor car is by far the most used mode of travel in Swanley with 57% using the car for social, domestic and pleasure and 51% to travel to the shops in Swanley, as evidenced in the NP Questionnaire. This is likely to substantially remain the case throughout the plan period, and if we do not acknowledge this the regeneration of our town centre is likely to fail.

Encourage people to switch to self-charging hybrid vehicles in the short term and fully electric vehicles in the longer term to reduce pollution.

Encourage people to use alternative means of travel such as walking, cycling, buses and trains whenever possible. Developers must acknowledge the use of motor cars and make appropriate provision on all developments.

Encourage people to look at travel demand options such as flexible working; On-line shopping; walk/cycle/bus/; and avoiding congestion periods.

Parking

The NPPF states “Parking standards should take account of accessibility; type, mix and use of development; public transport availability; local car ownership levels and charging facilities for electric vehicles”. Car ownership levels are high at 1.25 cars/vans per household and this increases to 1.31 when the adjacent Village of Hextable is included. The use of the motor car is high especially in terms of social, domestic and pleasure purposes at 57%. It is the main mode of travel to the shops in Swanley at 51% (See [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base consultation](#).) The NP Questionnaire shows that when asked whether cars should be deterred from using the town centre, 63% disagreed. If parking in the town centre continues to be reduced to allow for development then people are likely to not use the centre as there are many nearby shopping venues in north west Kent with an abundance of parking. This would be likely to reduce the sustainability of the Town until such time as the infrastructure for other modes of transport is improved.

Parking is a serious problem for residents and businesses in Swanley. Our photographic Surveys and analysis of car parks and parking on the street of the Town Survey (see [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base: Parking and Traffic congestion in Swanley](#)) illustrate the extent of the problems of idling traffic, illegal parking, full to capacity car parks and obstruction for pedestrians and traffic.

The size of parking bays required by existing standards are also inadequate leading to inefficient use of space. It is understood that KCC standards are usually developed for application in Swanley but the work undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan (Parking survey) demonstrates that there is a need to consider the local issues in Swanley to address issues currently being experienced by residents and businesses.

SwT5 – Car and Cycle Parking

Development proposals for new residential development that require their parking needs to be met on street are not appropriate in Swanley. Car and cycle parking for residential development in Swanley should as far as possible provide:

- a) Off street vehicle parking to be contiguous with and part of each property rather than as part of a shared arrangement

SwT5 – Car and Cycle Parking

- b) Shared parking areas are to be designed to Secure by Design standards and each space clearly visible from the property it serves wherever possible.
- c) Parking provision will be required to meet the standards set out below unless there is a clear justification for the application of a lower standard to achieve sustainable development:

	Car Spaces *	Cycle Spaces *
• 1 bed house/apartment	1.5 +	1
• 2 bed house/apartment	2	2
• 3 bed house/apartment	2	2
• 4 + bed house/apartment	3	2

- d) Car and Cycle spaces should be provided for visitors at a rate of 1 space per 8 homes.
- e) All car parking spaces should have access to electric vehicle charging points.
- f) A garage will be acceptable as a parking space provided that its internal dimensions are at least 3 m wide x 6 metres long. Tandem Parking should only be permitted where there is no suitable alternative.

Space dimensions should be 4.8 m x 2.4 m for cars, and 2 m x 0.75 m for cycles.

* Off road + Rounded down.

Access

SwT6 Access for Vehicles, Pedestrians and Bicycles

Development proposals should provide adequate width roadways to cater for domestic traffic as well as emergency vehicles such as ambulances, fire engines and refuse collection vehicles.

- a) Residential premises with more than 50 dwellings shall have minimum of two access roads onto the main carriageways.
- b) All developments shall have well-lit artificial lighting to roads and footpaths using energy efficient LED lighting.
- c) Combined road and footpaths are only acceptable in smaller developments of not more than 10 dwellings.
- d) All developments should have dedicated cycle ways.

Future Infrastructure planning

The Swanley Transport Study by SWECO also made a number of recommended proposals for further work to investigate their feasibility and generate proposals for improvements for further consideration.

These are investigations that may provide great benefits for people in the Neighbourhood Plan area if feasible and subjected to consultation on the detail, but their study is supported.

SwT7 – Transport Infrastructure Planning

The proposals indicated in below, are supported by the Neighbourhood Plan for further investigation and feasibility of implementation and are offered as a project for investment of Community Infrastructure Levy by Swanley Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council:

A corridor Study of the lanes around Hextable Swanley and Crockenhill to establish where improvements can be made to facilitate the safe movement of vehicles along these roads for existing and future users.