

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION



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

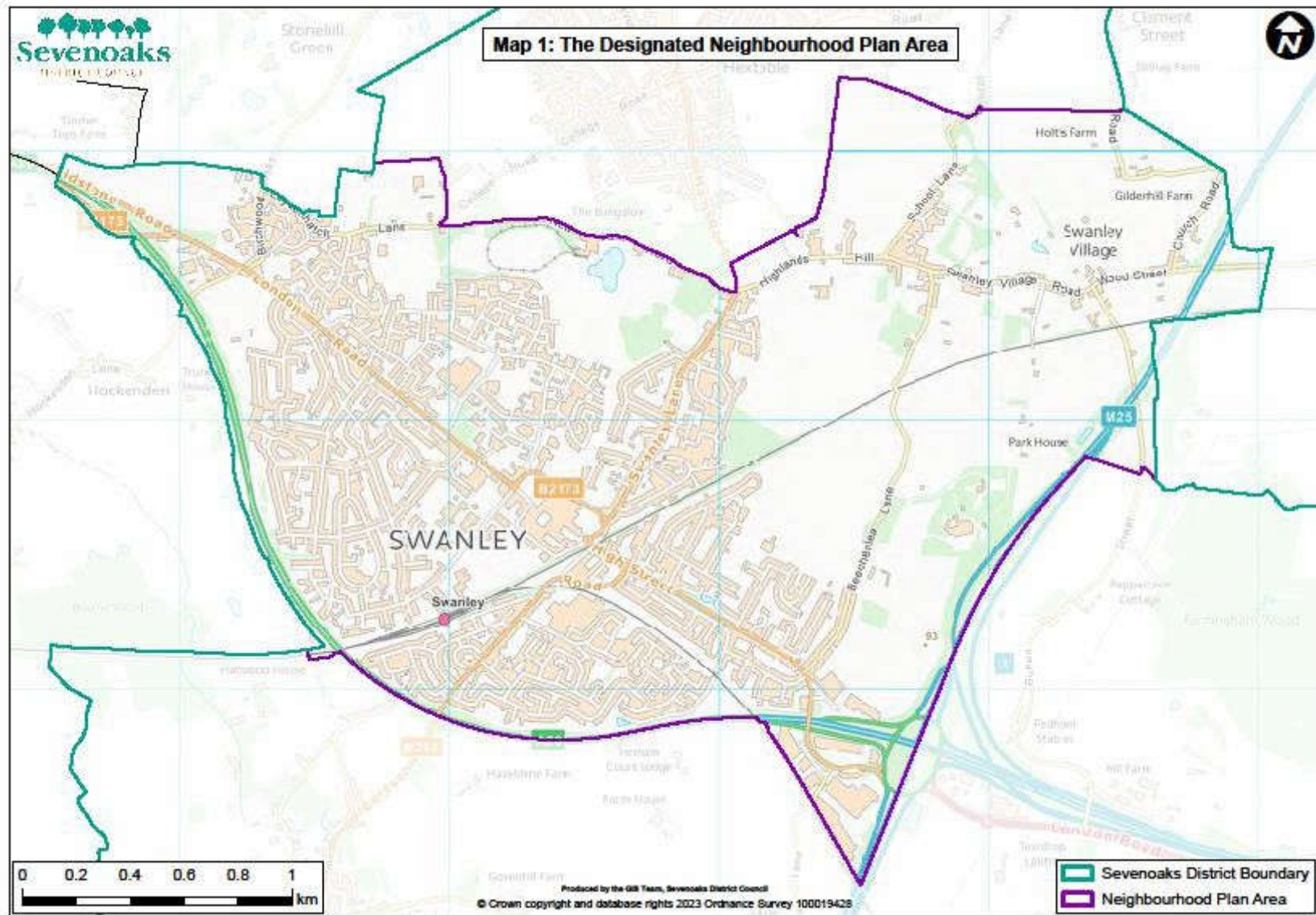
- Designation of the plan area
- Designation of the Qualifying Body
- Engaging with the community
- Writing the plan
- Consulting with the community
- Submitting the plan to the local authority for further consultation
- The plan is inspected by an independent planning examiner.
- A local referendum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

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

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 (SDC), which was formally agreed to cover the whole of the area shown on MAP 1.

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For some time, no progress was made, but the area began to come under development pressure and SDC 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 Parish. 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 SDC 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 SDC. The SDC 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. The current Local Plan for Sevenoaks District comprises its Core Strategy (adopted in February 2011) and an Allocations and Development Management Plan (adopted in February 2015). These are used as current planning policy across the District.

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SDC decided to review these Local Plan documents and an emerging SDC Local Plan was submitted for examination to the Planning Inspectorate 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 as policy.

After an unsuccessful high court challenge of this decision by SDC, it is now preparing an updated evidence base to inform a revised version of the Local 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 spring 2024 with a submission version to the Planning Inspectorate to conduct an examination of the Plan, in Summer 2024. On 15 November 2022, SDC agreed to withdraw the previous 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.

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 SDC Local Plan's emerging policies and their supporting evidence as the Neighbourhood Plan has developed. The Neighbourhood Plan policies have been discussed with SDC 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 (Their evidence base can be found [here](#)) and the SDC 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 have been used to inform the production of the Neighbourhood Plan. The SDC evidence base which supports these plans have also been used to support the Neighbourhood Plan's development. The full details of the SDC current evidence base for the SDC 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation can be found [here](#).

In addition, the development of the Neighbourhood Plan has required some research and assessment undertaken by the Steering Group or others, where they provide evidence relevant to the proposed policies. This work is referred to in the plan as the *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*. This is organised in accordance with each chapter of the Neighbourhood Plan for ease of reference along with evidence of the consultation that has been undertaken during the Neighbourhood Plan's development.

Each chapter of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan follows the same structure –

- Introduction
- Planning Policy Background
- Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Proposals
- Current provision and Issues
- The Views of Swanley People

In addition, a separate document, The *Swanley Village Design Guide* forms part of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan.

¹ The purpose of this stage is to engage with 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 the case with 71.4% travelling to work by car and 12.3% using the train (Census 2021).

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 named 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 has become 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.

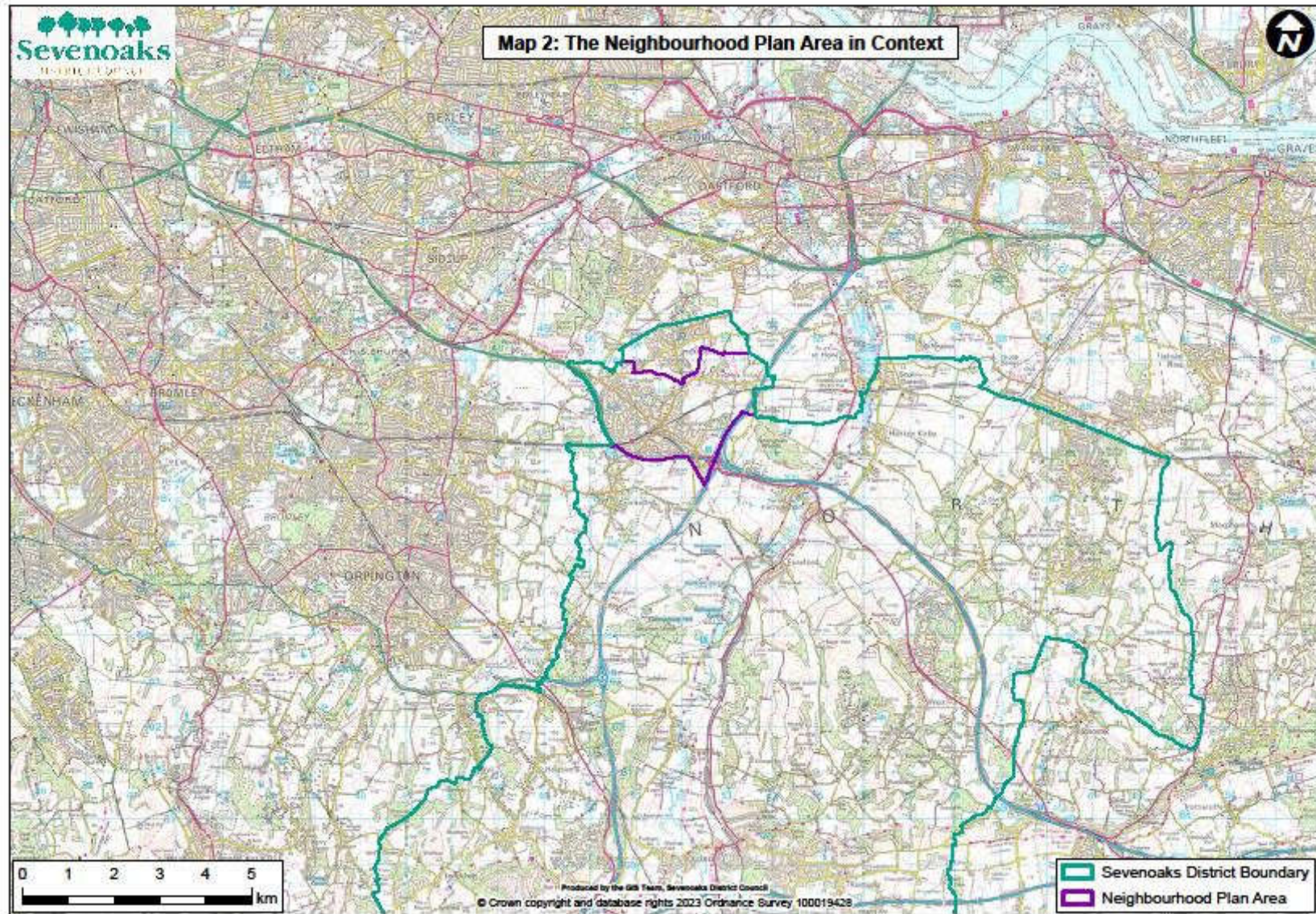
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Traffic congestion has indeed transpired to be a real problem in the town and there has been a loss of smaller retail outlets, in common with many towns in England.

A detailed profile of the town can be found in the [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base](#).

Swanley Today

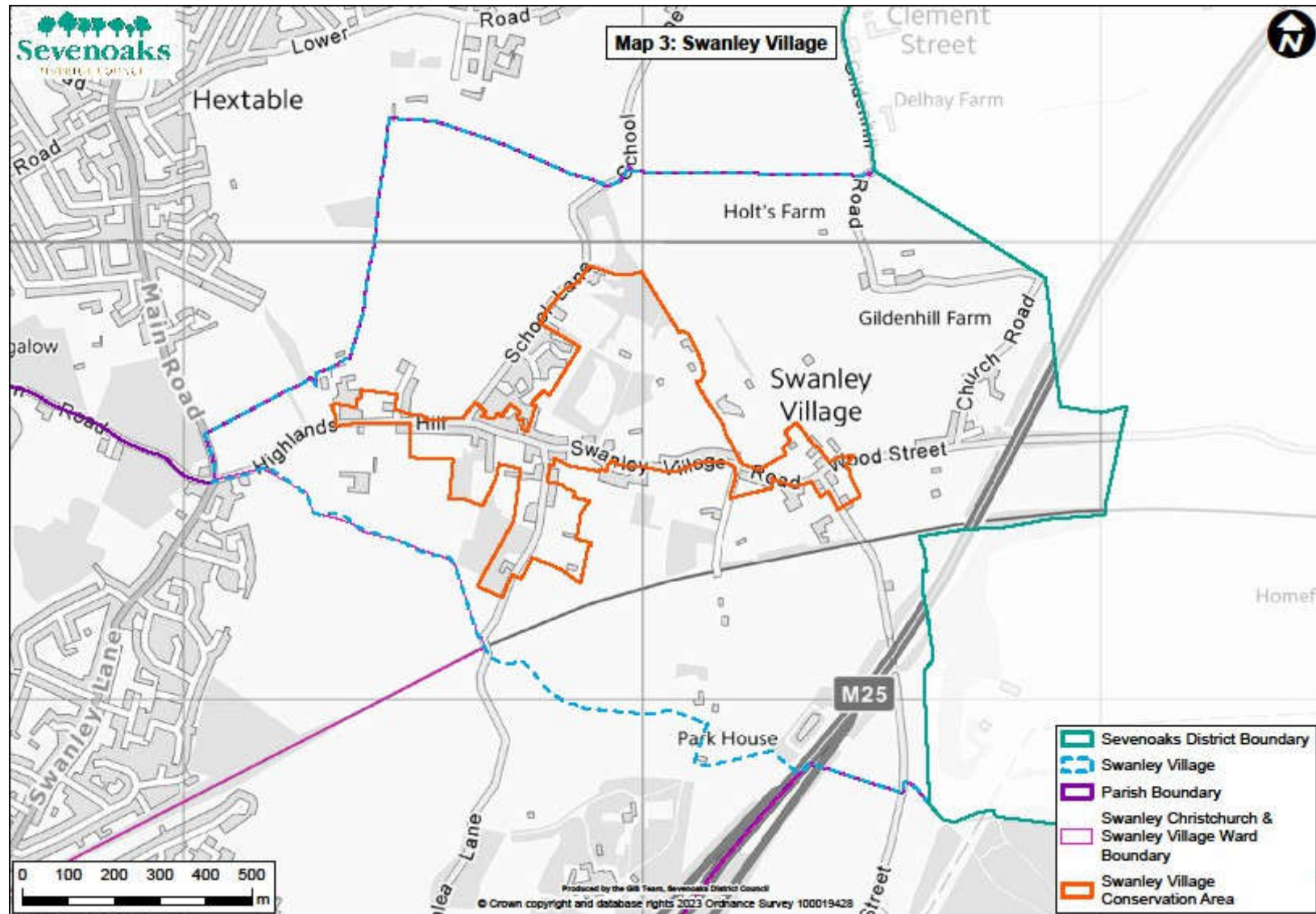
Swanley is a town and civil Parish in the Sevenoaks District in the County of Kent. It includes two settlements - Swanley Town and Swanley Village. The Neighbourhood Plan area covers the whole of Swanley Parish. It's context within the District is shown on MAP 2.



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Swanley Town is the second largest of the five towns in the district. It is surrounded by designated Green Belt, falls partially within the Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the A20 to the south. It 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. Swanley is twinned with the French town Verrieres-le-Buisson a commune in the southern suburbs of Paris, 13.3 km from its centre.

Swanley Village (see MAP 3) is the other settlement in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area. It is washed over by Green Belt and 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.

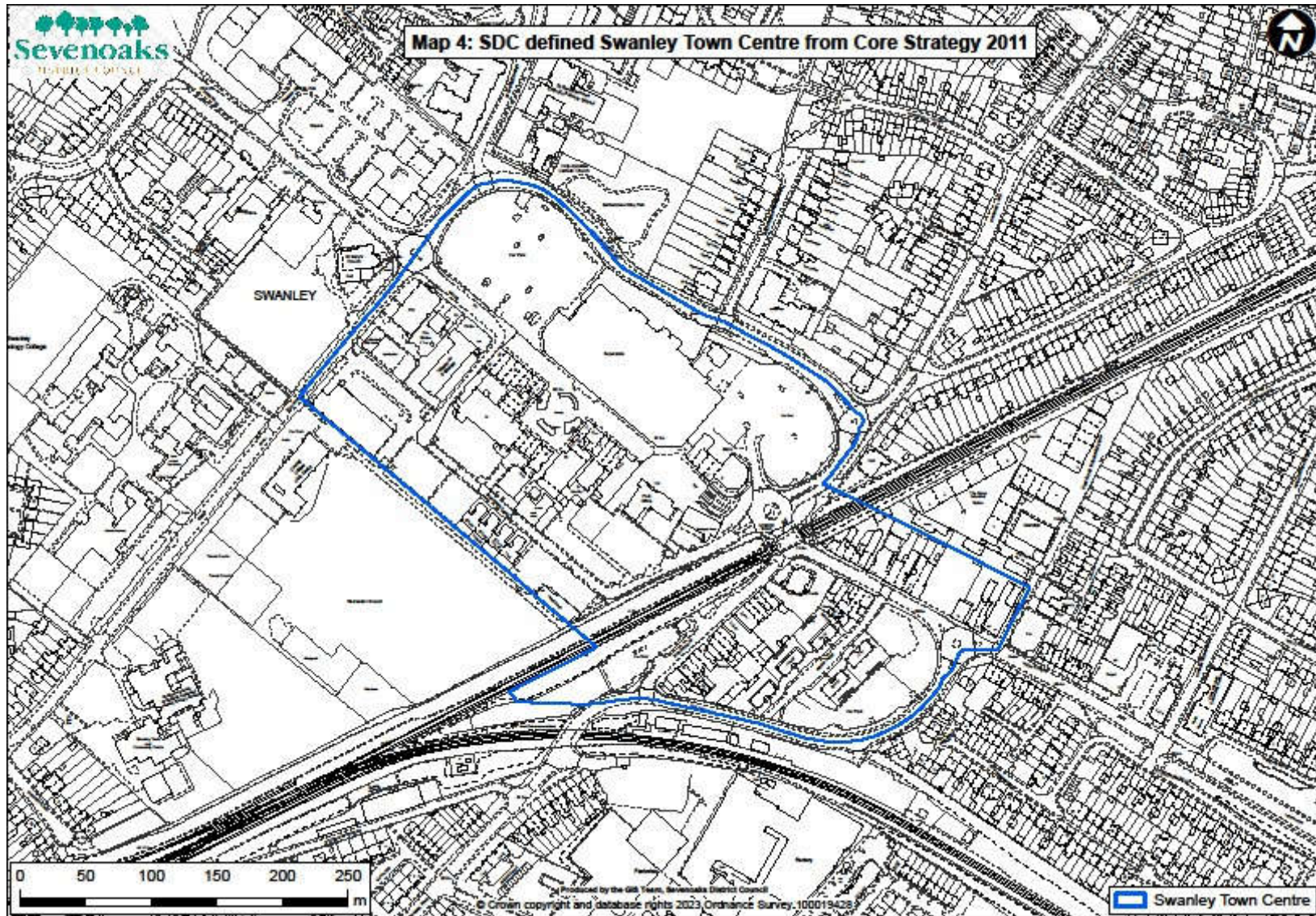


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The population at the 2011 census was 16,226 and by 2021 had grown to 17,821.

The local council is Swanley Town Council. The town is also administered by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council (KCC). It is part of the Sevenoaks parliamentary constituency. As of 2023, Laura Trott, Conservative, is the constituency MP.

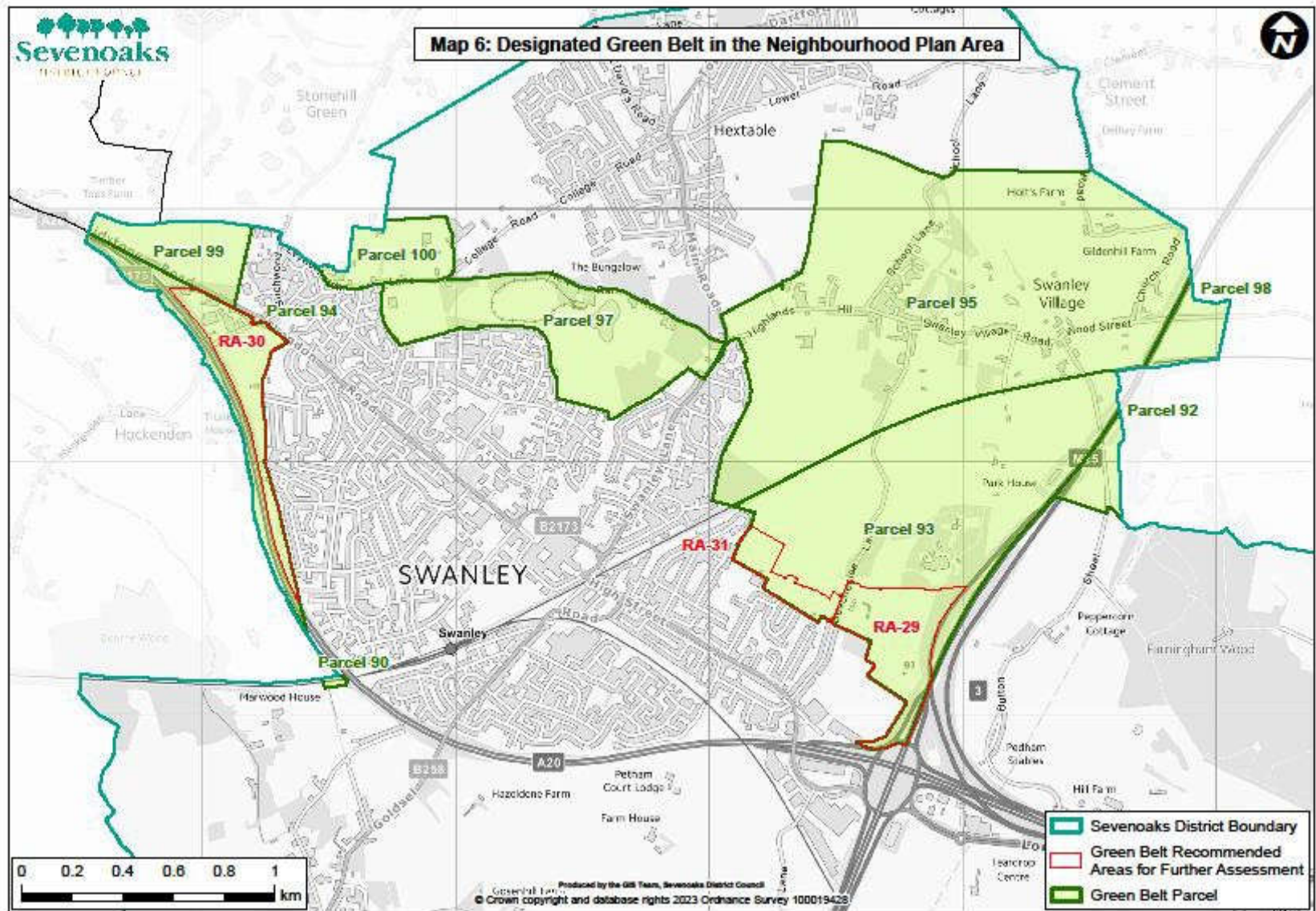
Swanley has a town centre defined in the SDC Core Strategy of 2011. It provides the existing population of the Neighbourhood Plan area with employment, retail, and leisure opportunities, including its busy market which takes place on a Wednesday most weeks of the year and has recently begun to operate on a Sunday.



Swanley's location and accessibility to London means that the countryside around Swanley Town is designated as Metropolitan Green Belt and Swanley Village is within the 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 of 31 March 2022). The full extent of this is shown on MAP 6 below showing the land covered by Green Belt designation and the location of Swanley.

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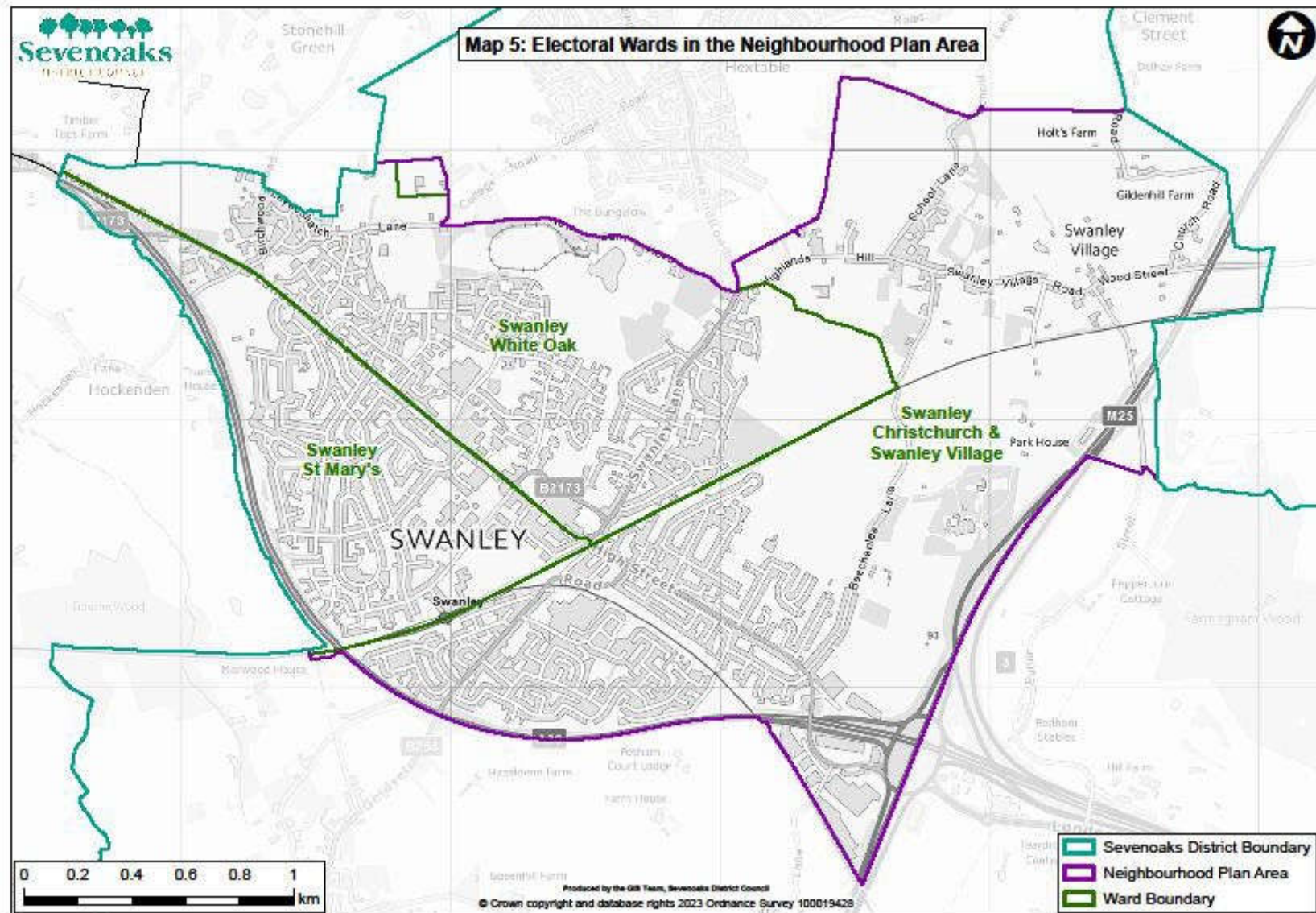


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In 2017 SDC undertook an assessment of the Green Belt in the District, which had not taken place prior to the adoption of the Current Core strategy in 2011 when the housing provision projections identified fewer homes than are projected to be accommodated and planned for in the 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2020 for Sevenoaks District.

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. These are shown on MAP 5.



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| TABLE 1 Population totals and gender (2021 Census TS008) for the Neighbourhood Plan area | | | |
|---|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Ward | Total Population (No) | Females | Males |
| Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village | 6,355 | 3,262 | 3,093 |
| Swanley St Mary's | 4,856 | 2,505 | 2,351 |
| Swanley White Oak | 6,610 | 3,532 | 3,078 |
| TOTAL | 17,821 | 9,299 | 8,522 |

| TABLE 2 Population by age (2021 Census TS007) for the Neighbourhood Plan area | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| Ward | 0-15 years | 16-64 years | 65+ years |
| Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village | 1,255 | 3,900 | 1,199 |
| Swanley St Marys | 1,099 | 3,053 | 706 |
| Swanley White Oak | 1,361 | 3,925 | 1,324 |
| TOTAL | 3,715 | 10,878 | 3,229 |

| TABLE 3 Households 2021 Census TS041 for the Neighbourhood Plan Area | |
|---|-------------------------|
| Ward | Households (No.) |
| Swanley Christchurch and Swanley Village | 2,521 |
| Swanley St Mary's | 1,877 |
| Swanley White Oak | 2,792 |
| Swanley TOTAL | 7,190 |

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, though originally the date of 2037 was used to align with the SDC Local Plan period which has now changed to 2040.

Swanley will accommodate change up to 2040 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 December 2023 (para 7) As a result, the following objectives for the NP and their relevant UNSDG were agreed by the Steering Group.

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| SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| OBJECTIVES | | UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL | |
| O1 | 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. | <i>Goal 3 - Good health and well-being Goal -4 Quality Education Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O2 | To enable development in Swanley that is appropriate to its location, character, history and built form. | <i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production</i> | <i>Goal 17 - Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O3 | 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> | |
| O4 | To enable where appropriate the generation of affordable and clean energy from development | <i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O5 | To enable development in Swanley that creates minimal negative impacts | <i>Goal 3 - Good health and Well-being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O6 | To provide spaces and support for employment that are relevant to and accommodate the needs of businesses, investors, and entrepreneurs. | <i>Goal 1 - No poverty Goal 2 - Zero Hunger Goal 4 – Quality Education Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth</i> | <i>Goal 9 - Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O7 | To enable improvements to the Town Centre, public realm, and open spaces of Swanley that respect and reinforce their character and results in the net gain of trees and biodiversity | <i>Goal 3 - Good health and Well-being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 15 - Life on land Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O8 | Wherever appropriate, to protect the heritage, wildlife, and Green Belt of Swanley and their contribution to the health and well-being of its residents. | <i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities Goal 15 - Life on land</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O9 | 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. | <i>Goal 3 - Good health and well-being</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |

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| SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OBJECTIVES | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| OBJECTIVES | | UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL | |
| | | <i>Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | |
| O10 | To enable personal mobility and active travel within Swanley and to the wider Sevenoaks District and beyond | <i>Goal 3 Good health and well-being Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |
| O11 | To propose specific projects to improve the community infrastructure of Swanley e.g. <i>New or safer roads and other transport facilities Flood defences Schools and other educational facilities Medical facilities Sporting, recreation, and leisure facilities Open spaces</i> | <i>Goal 9 Industry Innovation and Infrastructure Goal 11 – Sustainable cities and communities</i> | <i>Goal 17- Partnerships for the Goals</i> |

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| SUMMARY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN POLICIES | | | |
|---|---|--|--------------|
| Neighbourhood Plan Chapter | Neighbourhood Plan Policies | | Page |
| Sustainable Development Strategy for Swanley | SwSD1 | Green Belt | 26 |
| | SwSD2 | Swanley Town Centre | |
| | SwSD3 | Prevention of merging of Swanley Town with Swanley Village | |
| Community Infrastructure | SwC1 | Health Facilities | 38 |
| | SwC2 | Open Space and Biodiversity | |
| | SwC3 | Community Buildings | 39 |
| | SwC4 | Sustainable Urban Drainage | |
| Conservation Design and Heritage | SwCD&H1 | Tall Buildings | 49 |
| | SwCD&H2 | Swanley Village Design Guide | 50 |
| | SwCD&H3 | Heritage Asset Protection | |
| Housing | SwH1 | Energy Efficient and Healthy homes | 63 |
| | SwH2 | Housing Space Standards | 64 |
| | SwH3 | Private Amenity Space for New Homes | |
| | SwH4 | Homes for Work and Study | |
| | SwH5 | Housing Density | |
| | SwH6 | Public Amenity Space | |
| | SwH7 | Children and Young People's Play Space | |
| The Economy and Employment | SwEE1 | Improving and increasing employment on existing employment sites | 74 |
| | SwEE2 | Loss of existing employment space | 75 |
| | SwEE3 | Small Employment sites | |
| | SwEE4 | Hotel and Visitor Accommodation | |
| Transport | SwT1 | Tree Planting | 92 |
| | SwT2 | Cycling | |
| | SwT3 | Walking | 93 |
| | SwT4 | Access for Vehicles Pedestrians and cycles | 94 |
| Aspirational Proposals That May Contribute to Achieving the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Vision and Objectives | Indoor Multi-Function Sports Facilities, Air Quality, Road Improvements, Transport, Access, Cycling | | 95-99 |

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SWANLEY

The National Planning Policy Framework 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 December 2023 Paras 7 and 8

Planning Policy Background for Sustainable Development in Swanley.

For Swanley, achieving sustainable development including economic, social, and environmental objectives presents challenges since there is so little developable land that does not fall within the Green Belt, which is protected by the NPPF of December 2023 (para 152). This is part of the reason that SDC have struggled to update their Local Plan. In addition, open space is limited and precious.

Current Local Plan policy for the District is the Core Strategy (2011) and Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015). The 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 has commitments to securing sustainable development across the district from an economic, environmental, and social perspective. The current Local Plan policy includes both allocations for development of housing and employment sites within the Neighbourhood Plan area and site assessments related to the SHELAA for the district of sites that are considered by SDC to be

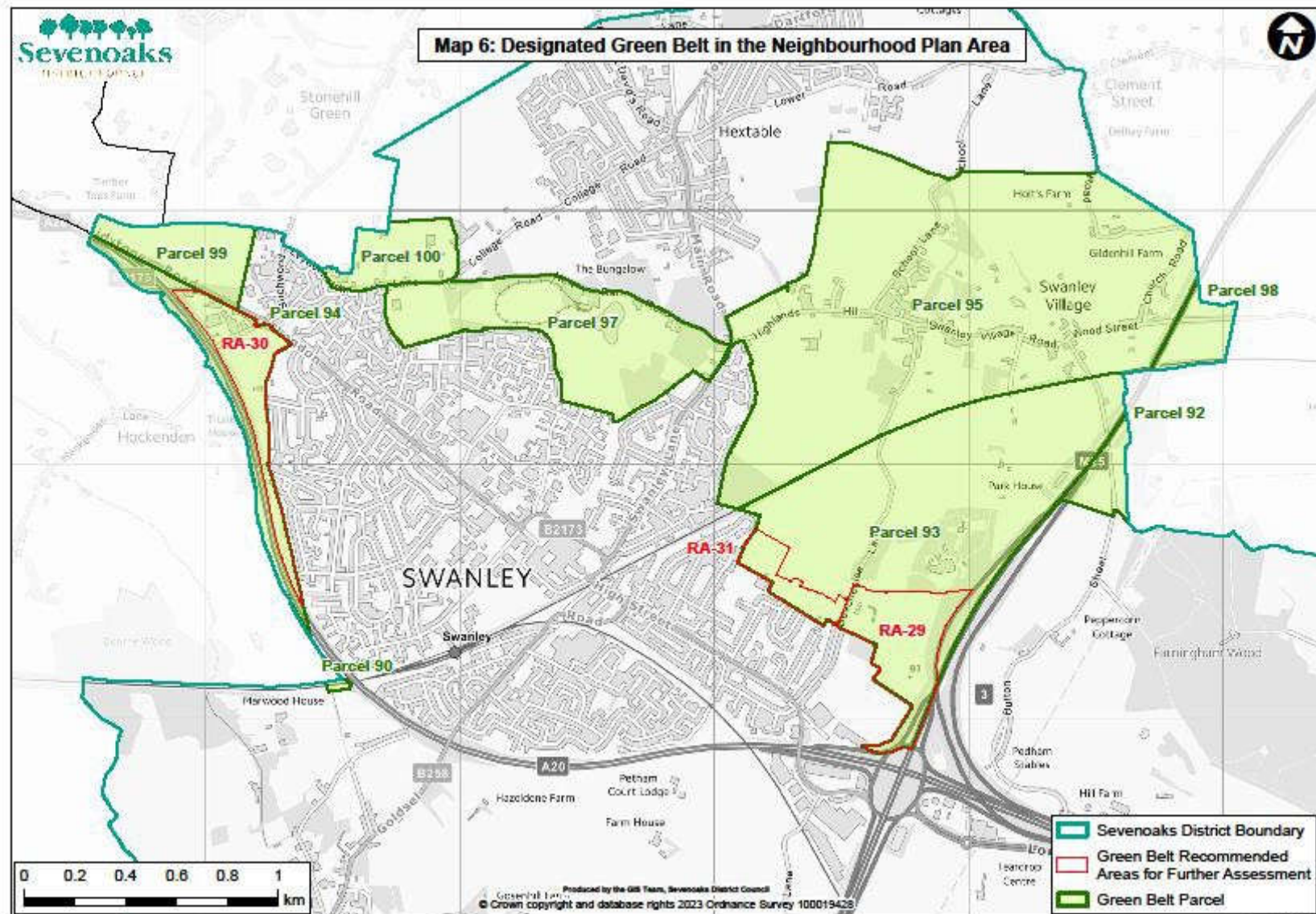
available and suitable for development. These are included in the Neighbourhood Plan analysis related to housing as they represent potential development in the Neighbourhood Plan area in the future. There has also been development coming forward in the Neighbourhood Plan area that does not form part of current Local Plan allocations and it is the intention of policies in the Neighbourhood Plan that all sites, when they come forward for development, be guided by the 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 minimal development on Green Belt land to prevent the enlargement of Swanley as a settlement and its coalescence with other settlements in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

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.



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The views of residents in relation to the Green Belt are also supported by a Green Belt Assessment report undertaken by Ove Arup for SDC in 2017. This assessed existing Green Belt parcels of land across the Sevenoaks District. The Green Belt land around Swanley was identified as five parcels and were designated numbers 93, 94, 95, 97 and 99. All parcels performed very well against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt, with 4 summarised as performing strongly apart from parcel 94 which was identified as moderately performing. The Green Belt parcels 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 | | |
| 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 District is performing an important role in terms of the NPPF purposes, a number of areas have been identified which may warrant further consideration”.

The areas referred to in the assessment related to the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area are shown in the table below:

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

Two parcels recommended for further assessment in Swanley lie to the northeast of the town and one to the northwest. All parcels are at the extremities of the built-up area of Swanley Town.

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

Adjacent Parishes at Crockenhill and Hextable are also concerned about merging with Swanley because 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 to help achieve all the Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan (O1-O11).

| |
|--|
| NP Policy SwSD1 – Green Belt |
| SwSD1 The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that there are Green Belt sites in the Neighbourhood Plan area which may be removed from the designation by Sevenoaks District Council in order to meet its development needs. The NPPF requires these new boundaries to be permanent and therefore any further removal of strongly performing Green Belt land during the Local Plan period is not supported. The Neighbourhood Plan supports developments on brownfield sites within the Green Belt. |
| NP Policy SwSD2 – Swanley Town Centre |
| Development proposals that result in a net loss of commercial, business and service uses (use class E) on sites in Swanley Town Centre (see Swanley Town Centre MAP 4), other than those which are permitted development will not be supported. Proposed changes of use from Class E will need to be justified with evidence of their non viability and demonstrate that every effort has been made to market them in their current use. |
| 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 and indoor sports facilities, and growing population have a major impact on the health and well-being of its population.

The Neighbourhood Plan objectives relevant to the planning of Community Infrastructure are O5, O7, O8 and O11, shown in full in Chapter 3.

Planning Policy background for Community Infrastructure in Swanley

The NPPF (December 2023) encourages (paras 96 and 97) creation of healthy inclusive and safe communities which have access to high quality open space and facilities for sports cultural activities.

The current SDC Local Plan documents are the Core Strategy of 2011, and the Allocations and Development Management Plan of 2015 also have strategic policies related to infrastructure including green space, sports, and other facilities.

Account has been taken in developing policies towards Community Infrastructure in the Neighbourhood Plan of both these current Local Plan documents and the 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040.

The policies and allocations of the 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 are based on evidence related to Community Infrastructure comprising:

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan March 2019
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan Statement (December 2022)
- Playing Pitch Strategy (2018)
- Open Space Sports and Leisure Study 2017
- Open Space Study – Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities Assessment 2009 (plus appendices)
- Open Space Study 2018

Community Infrastructure in Swanley: Current Provision and Issues

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 Health Care Partnership (HCP) have identified that the Oaks and Cedars Surgeries serving the town are currently over capacity. They state that the space needed will have to significantly increase. 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 is provided to meet the population growth brought about by new development both in the town and surrounding areas. 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. 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.

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 now, with 44% considering it was not a concern.

During production of the Neighbourhood Plan the new health provision required in Swanley was 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 by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as secondary to the need for a central location for any new health facility. In the event SDC as the Local planning authority and owner of the site rejected this option (which is reflected in the AECOM assessment), 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 HCP 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 in the defined Town Centre.

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 Local Plan and SDC SHELAA sites assessed by SDC as suitable for development (see Chapter 8 Housing). This assessment shows a total of 528 homes are planned for Swanley. The UK 2021 Census data indicates an average of 2.4 people per household and, using this figure, 1267 extra people may need to be catered for by the end of the plan period.

This background underlines the need for a new Health and Wellbeing Hub in a central location. 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.

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.

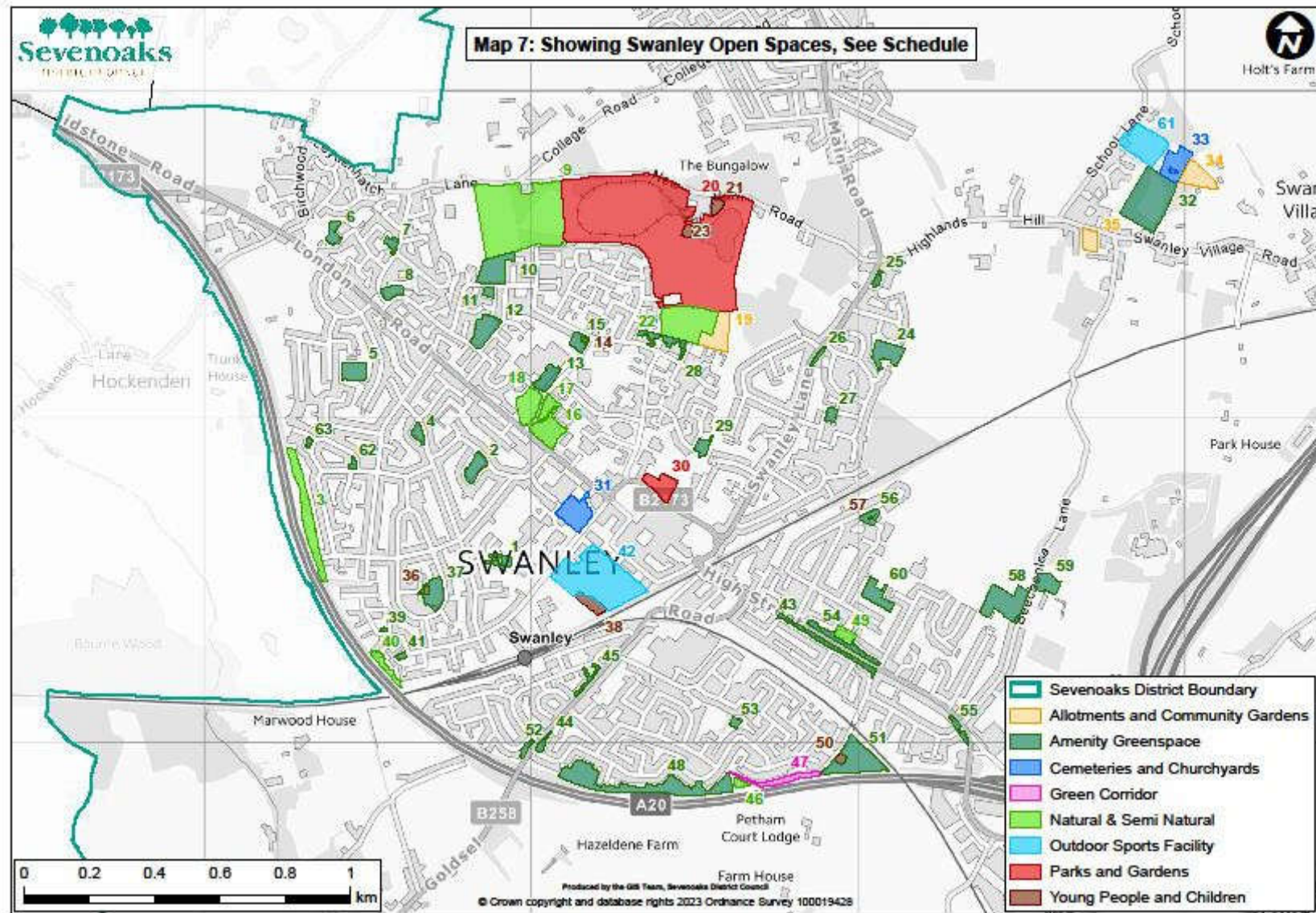
As a result, the NP Steering Group conducted its own survey and assessment of the open spaces in Swanley. This included a detailed assessment of the features of the spaces and their overall quality as well as size. MAP 7 below shows the open spaces in Swanley included in this assessment based on the 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 [Neighbourhood Plan Evidence base](#)). As this is the most up to date assessment of their type and location it differs from those identified by policies in the 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 and as a result the policy for protection in this plan uses MAP 7 to protect them.

The issues of quality were considered important as meeting the Fields in Trust standards for provision of space per 1000 population was a useful way to identify overall deficiency, but they give no indication of the facilities available (seating, play facilities, biodiversity, and wildlife). Some open spaces and outdoor facilities in Swanley are also subject to waterlogging limiting their use. It is partly for this reason as well as its general contribution to mitigating climate change (by preserving water and cooling temperatures), that the NP includes a policy on Sustainable Urban Drainage² since development of all kinds can increase surface water runoff and pool in unsuitable places, including green spaces used for leisure, sports, and play (see [Policy SwC4](#)).

Swanley Town Council (STC) as Qualifying body for the Neighbourhood Plan has adopted its own Biodiversity Policy (see [Neighbourhood Plan Evidence base](#)) to address issues of quality of open space in relation to Biodiversity. As the manager of a significant number of open spaces in the Neighbourhood Plan area it has adopted a proactive approach to improving open space for wildlife. For example, STC sold land to Highways England to facilitate the extension of a balancing pond at Pinks Hill (which collects surface water to slowly release it to surrounding ground or a draining system) as a result, an extensive planting scheme is being implemented across Pinks Hill, Elephant Park and West View Park involving shrubs, trees and grasses which will improve the spaces for wildlife and public enjoyment.

To reflect the concern for Biodiversity across the total stock of open spaces in Swanley [Policy SwC2](#) includes requirements for biodiversity net gain in alignment with the Environment Act 2021.

² Sustainable urban drainage aims to capture, use, delay or absorb rainwater, rather than throwing it to the curb as a nuisance or issue.



Parks and Gardens

For Parks and Gardens, the Sevenoaks District Council Open Space Study dated June 2018 recommends 0.8 Hectare (ha) of area per 1,000 population. The current population for the three wards of Swanley is 17,821 according to the 2021 census. 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 2040. However, there is a further 5.12 hectares attached to Swanley park designated as semi-natural green space, MAP 7 reference number 9. The Housing section of the NP indicates potential new housing development for the new plan period amounting to 528 homes, which, at an average 2.4 people per household, could result in an increase in population of 1267, 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 provision (as opposed to Amenity Space) to the southwest of the railway line.

Amenity Green Space

For Amenity Green space the Open Space Study OS002 recommends 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population which for a current population of 17,821 shows a requirement for 10.67 hectares. The summary schedule shows a current total of 9.45 hectares and therefore a deficit of 1.22 hectares. This numerical deficit has been brought about by the decision to build on the Amenity green spaces at White Oak, MAP 7 reference 13 and Alder Way, MAP 7 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 7). It must be acknowledged that Alder Way is close to Swanley Park and adjacent to the semi-natural green space site, MAP 7 reference 9. This deficit underlines the view of the Neighbourhood Plan Group that 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 7 reference 61, which is available for use by St Paul's school and the public courtesy of the Church of England, Rochester Diocese. The main outdoor sports facility is the recreation ground in Swanley, MAP 7 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 7 reference 9 recently.

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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. This is difficult to achieve in a town location, but this means existing spaces are highly valued by residents. There is a large area of woodland between Swanley Park and the gardens of the houses in Haven Close and Swanley Lane. The woodland is privately owned, but there is an unofficial well-established footpath, used for almost 40 years, through from Woodger's Grove to Swanley Park. A footpath separates the woodland from the gardens and runs between Five Wents and the Town Centre. It would be beneficial if this could be made an official footpath and cycle route to Swanley Park (see Section 11). The woodland is an important natural space for wildlife. In Swanley Village, the village green is a permanent, semi-woodland and grassed area which is always open to the public and maintained by Swanley Village Trust for the benefit of local inhabitants.

Allotments

There is one allotment in Swanley Town adjacent to Swanley Park (MAP 7 reference 19) and two allotments in Swanley Village (MAP 7 references 34 and 35). One of these is owned by the Church of England Diocese of Rochester, the other by Swanley Village Trust. 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.

| Summary of Open Space Allocations by Purpose | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Population of Swanley: 17,821 2021 Census figures | | | | |
| Purpose | Provision in Hectares | FIT Recommendation | Total recommended area in Hectares | Comment |
| Amenity Green Space | 9.45 | 0.60 hectares/ 1000 population | 10.69 11.45 due to estimated population increase of 1267) | A deficit and poorly distributed around Swanley |

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION 2024

| Summary of Open Space Allocations by Purpose | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Population of Swanley: 17,821 2021 Census figures | | | | |
| Purpose | Provision in Hectares | FIT Recommendation | Total recommended area in Hectares | Comment |
| Parks and Gardens | 14.64 | 0.80 hectares/ 1000 population | 14.25 (15.27 due to estimated population increase of 1267) | Walking distance exceeded in parts of town |
| Young People and Children | 0.75 | 0.25 hectares/ 1000 population | 4.45 (4.77 due to estimated population increase of 1267) | Needs greater provision |
| Outdoor Sports Facility | 2.95 | - | - | - |
| Natural and Semi Natural | 9.62 | 1.8 hectares/ 1000 population | 34.35 (due to estimated population increase of 1267) | Difficult to achieve in a town and access to open countryside beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area mitigates this |
| 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 |

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

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 Orchard Academy school facilities in the Neighbourhood Plan area. There are plans to secure community use of some of these via Community Use Agreements, but this may still not provide access during daytime, which is the optimal time, particularly for older members of the community, to participate in sport suited to their needs. Community Users agreements are however an excellent way to ensure that full use of all facilities by residents if possible.

Community Buildings

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

The majority of these (7) 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 three 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 now, with 18% considering it was not a concern. 41% thought it was neither.

According to the UK Census 2021, TS007, Age by single year, there are 2,230 **11-18-year-old children** in the three wards of Swanley and wards of Crockenhill and Hextable. The only secondary school inside this catchment area is the Orchards Academy. However, the table below indicates that the number of 11-18-year-old pupils at the school is only 575 (capacity 828). This would indicate that 1,655 pupils are educated outside of the Swanley catchment area.

| TABLE 4: Secondary School Provision in the KCC Swanley and Dartford non-selective planning group | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| School | Straight line distance # | Date Nos. confirmed | Capacity ~ | No. of Pupils~ |
| The Orchards Academy BR8 7TE | 0.2 | 02/02/2023 | 828 | 575 |
| Wilmington Academy DA2 7DR | 2.36 | 17/11/2022 | 1,400 | 1,355 |
| Leigh Academy DA1 1QE | 3.92 | 24/01/2023 | 1,500 | 1,379 |
| Stone Lodge School DA2 6FY | 4.7 | 09/02/2023 | 420 | 418 |
| The Leigh UTC DA1 5TF | 4.89 | 10/10/2022 | 960 | 730 |
| Ebbsfleet Academy | 6.72 | 11/02/2023 | 210 | 229 |
| Dartford Science & Technology DA1 2LY Girls only. | 3.47 | 24/01/2023 | 950 | 860 |
| Totals | | | 6,268 | 5,546 |

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| TABLE 4: Secondary School Provision in the KCC Swanley and Dartford non-selective planning group | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| School | Straight line distance # | Date Nos. confirmed | Capacity ~ | No. of Pupils~ |
| # The distance in miles from Swanley Square, Swanley Town Centre, to the school. Source: Pupil count figures and capacities taken from www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk | | | | |

The Swanley Neighbourhood Plan supports reducing traffic congestion and pollution and the need to travel by car or public transport. The NP strongly supports walking and cycling. The number of pupils travelling to schools outside of the Swanley catchment area negates this aim. The closure of Hextable Academy has further exacerbated the problem and reduced local school competition and parental choice.

The KCC Commissioning Plan for Education 2023-2027 does not see any need for additional secondary school capacity for the Dartford & Swanley non-selective group until 2025/2026. The Plan states “However, forecasts do not take into account the housing development that Sevenoaks District Council has approved, prior to the publication of its new Local Plan, and that the new Sevenoaks District Local Plan is due.”

The number of households in the three wards of Swanley and wards of Hextable and Crockenhill amounts to 9,707, according to the UK Census 2021, TS041, Number of Households. This results in an average figure of $2,230/9,707 = 0.23$ 11-18-year-old children per household.

The current estimate of new dwellings for Swanley encompassing allocations in the current Local Plans and the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 is 528 dwellings. This gives rise to a potential additional number of 11-18-year-olds for Swanley alone of $528 \times 0.23 = 220$ pupils.

If the Pedham Place development were 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 $2,500 \times 0.23 = 575$ 11-18-year-old children which would need a new Secondary Education School on site.

KCC need to monitor developments in Swanley to be sure secondary school provision can accommodate new housing developments in Swanley. The proposed re-building of the Orchards Academy needs to accommodate more pupils than its current capacity of 830 pupils to avoid pupils travelling outside of the catchment area.

According to the UK Census 2021, TS007, Age by single year, there are 2,110 **4-10-year-old** children in the three wards of Swanley plus Hextable and Crockenhill. There are eight primary schools within the catchment area in the table 5 below five of which are in Swanley Table 6

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| TABLE 5: Primary schools in Swanley, Hextable and Crockenhill | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| School | Date confirmed | Capacity | No. of Pupils |
| St Bartholomew's Swanley | 03/02/2023 | 350 | 333 |
| High Firs Swanley | 13/01/2023 | 210 | 203 |
| Downsview Swanley | 28/02/2023 | 210 | 193 |
| Hextable Primary | 31/01/2023 | 630 | 580 |
| Horizon Primary Academy Swanley | 31/01/2023 | 210 | 199 |
| St Mary C of E Swanley | 27/02/2023 | 210 | 229 |
| St. Paul's Swanley Village | 29/11/2022 | 105 | 110 |
| Crockenhill Primary | 07/12/2022 | 210 | 205 |
| Totals | | 2,135 | 2,052 |
| Source: Pupil count figures and capacities taken from www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk | | | |

From the table above it can be seen that the school capacity meets current requirements although St Mary's and St Paul's schools are slightly oversubscribed. Using the current housing stock figure of 9,707 homes for the three wards of Swanley plus Hextable and Crockenhill, this results in a figure of $2,110/9,707 = 0.22$ 4-10-year-old children per household.

The current estimate of new dwellings for Swanley in the current local Plans and the 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 is 528 dwellings as shown in the Housing site summary in the Chapter 7. This gives rise to a potential additional number of 4-10-year-olds for Swanley only of $528 \times 0.22 = 211$. This additional number of pupils would exceed current capacity by 121 pupils without any allowance for new homes in Crockenhill or Hextable.

KCC need to monitor developments in Swanley to be sure primary school provision can accommodate the proposed new housing developments in Swanley.

| TABLE 6: Primary schools in Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | |
|--|-------|
| 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 |

TABLE 6: Primary schools in Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area

Source: Pupil count figures and capacities taken from www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk

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 **forty-five** 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 and Objectives O5, O7, O8 and O11 of the Neighbourhood Plan 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 (See MAP 4)
- b) Have adequate parking for visitors, patients, and staff.

NP Policy SwC2 – Open Space and Biodiversity

Development proposals that result in any loss of existing green spaces as shown on MAP 7, across all types of green space, 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.

All development proposals must demonstrate a measurable biodiversity net gain in alignment with the Environment Act 2021.

Ecological impact assessment must accompany relevant planning applications; and Statements for the protection/enhancement of protected/priority species and habitats must be submitted where relevant.

NP Policy SwC3 – Community Buildings.

Proposals that result in the loss of existing community buildings will not be supported unless there is clear evidence that the following two criteria have been met.

- 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 feasible, viable and justified alternative benefits to the community in terms of access to space to assemble, worship, participate in educational activities and personal or civic celebrations.

NP Policy SwC4 – Sustainable Urban Drainage

The surface water discharge rate for new development proposals (including hard landscaping) in the Neighbourhood Plan area should match or be less than the Existing Greenfield run off rate.

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 December 2023 paras 195-196).

The objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan are shown in full in Chapter 3 and those related to Design Conservation and Heritage are O2 and O3.

Planning Policy Background for Design Conservation and Heritage in Swanley

National Policy (NPPF December 2023 paras 131 to 141 and the National Design Code 2021) and current SDC planning policy (Current Core Strategy 2011, ADMP 2015) and the SDC 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 is relevant to design and conservation issues in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area and emphasizes the need for superior 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.

There are some local issues which are currently not addressed within National and District wide policy that are specific to the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area, particularly tall buildings. The current SDC Core Strategy (2011) Allocations and Development Management Plan (2015) and 2022 Regulation 18 consultation version of Plan 2040 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 National Planning Policy Framework (2023) does however provide relevant guidance. It sets out several more general design and planning principles which are relevant to the development of tall buildings.

Good design is a key requirement of the NPPF (section 12). It 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 135 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 because 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 109 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.’

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Design, Conservation and Heritage in Swanley – Current Provision and Issues

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

Swanley Town 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 rest of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls into the two landscape character areas. 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 |
| <i>Key characteristics</i> | |
| 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 of arable, pasture and horticulture |
| Land used for arable crops and horticulture, mixed in with suburban land uses including horse paddocks and plant nurseries | Horticulture on rough grass paddocks |
| 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 |
| <i>Condition</i> | |
| 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. |
| <i>Key sensitivities</i> | |

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| Landscape Character Areas – Settled Farmland | |
|--|--|
| Hextable | Crockenhill |
| 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 patters 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 northwest 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: SDC 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 Report and site appendix).

This was prompted by the overwhelming view of 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 because 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. In the end this approval lapsed but the approval for it at appeal demonstrated that policy was needed in relation to taller buildings that may be proposed to increase town centre densities of in excess of 150 dwellings per hectare.

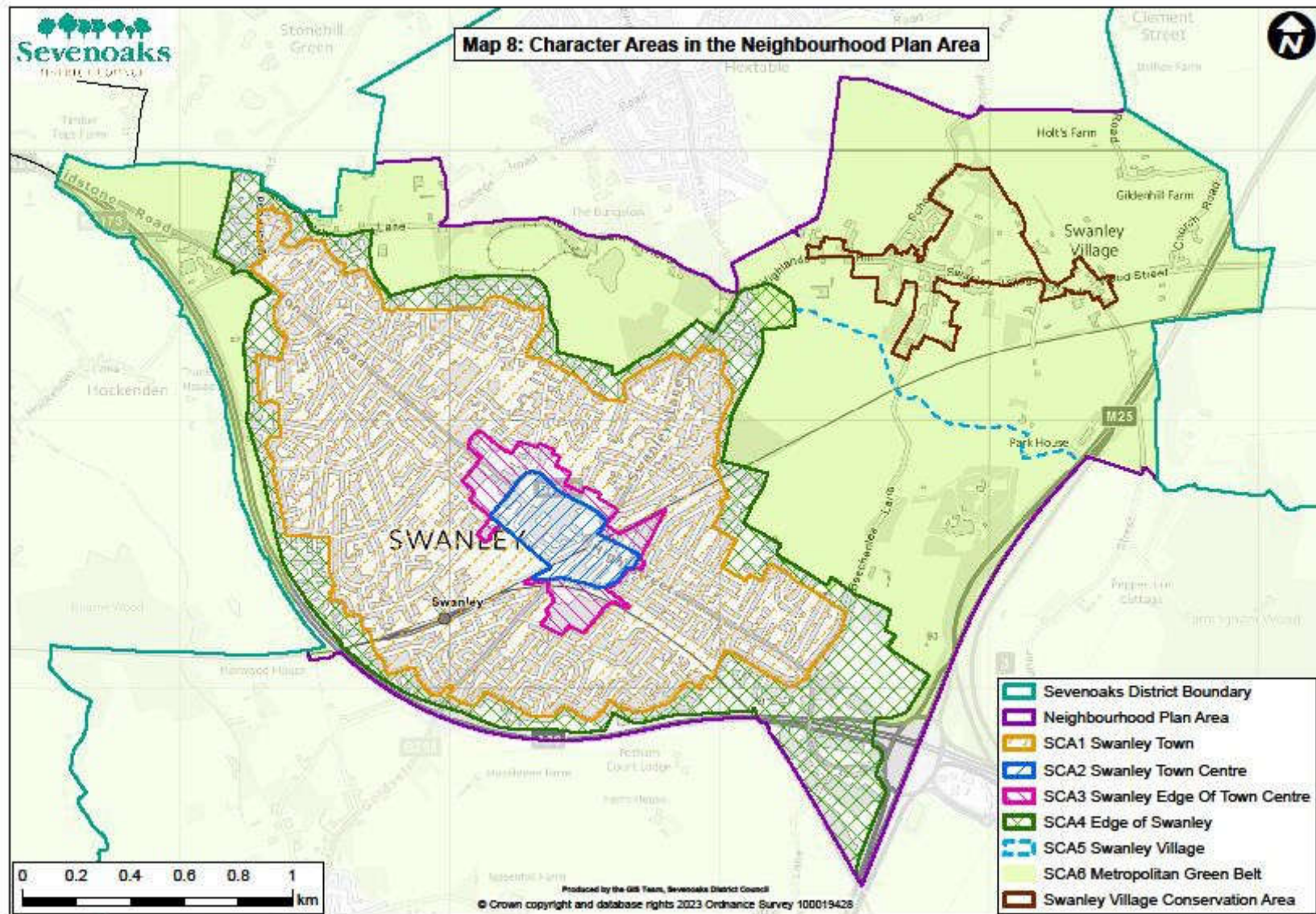
The Character Assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan addresses these issues for the Neighbourhood Plan area and forms the basis for its policy in relation to protection of the Green Belt and the sustainable development of the Neighbourhood Plan area included in

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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 numbers of new homes in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Character Assessment identifies six-character areas in the Neighbourhood Plan area, summarised in Table 7 below and shown on MAP 8.

| TABLE 7: Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Character Areas 2022 | |
|--|--|
| Character Area | Key Characteristics |
| SCA 1 Swanley Town | 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 |
| SCA2 Swanley Town Centre | Characterised by a predominance of employment and service uses (retail and other Town Centre uses) with some mixed use including residential |
| SCA3 Edge of Town Centre | Characterised by commercial and industrial uses of 1 to 2 storey building with large footprints |
| SCA4 Edge of Swanley | Characterised by a mix of uses abutting open countryside and farmland designated as Green Belt |
| SCA5 Swanley Village | A historic hamlet washed over by the Green Belt with a conservation area and 15 listed buildings |
| SCA6 Green Belt land | Characterised by open countryside and farmland |
| Source: Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Area Character Assessment (see Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base) | |



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, either as a place with consistent / homogenous height (coherent context) or varied height (varied context).

The character areas of Swanley Town, 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 over 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 as higher density proposals come forward.

Even within these definitions it will be important that all development proposals that propose tall buildings in the relevant character areas consider 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 7 housing) can be achieved in low or medium rise forms that still provide high densities as illustrated in the Report of the Urban Task Force 1999 and other research and case studies which can be found in the *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*). These have the advantage of making best use of land available, with recognisable street patterns that accommodate the current character of Swanley.

Heritage assets and the built environment

Swanley Village is the other main settlement in the Neighbourhood Plan area. 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 ten hectares and contains listed buildings. It was first designated in 1984 and was 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 northeast, 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 triangular with linear extensions to the east and west along Swanley Village Road and Highlands Hill.

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

In addition to the village, Swanley Town also has several 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 are in the form of the fifteen listed buildings in Swanley Village there are also listed buildings which are important to the history of Swanley Town as shown in the table below:

| TABLE 8 - Listed Buildings in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area (excluding Swanley Village) |
|---|
| Coal Duty Boundary Marker Swanley Swanley, SDC, Kent |
| Coal Taxpost (Obelisk) on North Side of Railway 500 Yards West of Swanley Station Swanley, SDC, Kent, BR8 |
| Swanley War Memorial Swanley, SDC, Kent, BR8 |
| Source: Historic England https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/ |

This list is not comprehensive since it includes only those which meet requirements for listed status. For the whole of the District, Local listed buildings (which do not enjoy listed status) all buildings on that list are in Sevenoaks Town. As part of the Character Assessment undertaken for the Neighbourhood Plan, several features of heritage value were identified in Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Area which are well known to residents and could gain further protection as non-designated heritage assets. These include:

- The gates to the former White Oak Hospital.
- The Keston – a detached house of character on Swanley Lane
- The William Mitchell exterior panels
- St Marys the Virgin Church

Details of these assets can be found in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Area Character Assessment 2022 in the [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base](#).

Swanley Town Council made an application for listing of the William Mitchell Murals since they are a feature of more modern development in Swanley which from the perspective of the built environment, art and architecture 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 unusual panels that are an example of his abstract and stylised work in concrete, which are the only examples of his work in Kent.

The murals were not listed but Historic England suggested that they are of local value (see Report in [Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base](#)) and so 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, their consideration against national policy and local policy on NDHAs.

The Views of Swanley People

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' views 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 Consultation 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

To conserve and enhance the heritage assets of 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 SDC 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 Swanley Village as it is the most sensitive place in the Neighbourhood Plan area, being washed over by Green Belt and partly covered by a Conservation area. It is a separate document to the Neighbourhood Plan but forms part of it for development management purposes.

The policies set out below seek to protect 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.

NP Policy SwCD&H1 Tall Buildings

Development proposals for tall buildings (A tall building for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area is defined as a building that is over 4 storeys or 12 metres in height) should take account of the definitions provided in the Neighbourhood Plan for the different character areas of Swanley (See TABLE 7 and MAP 8). Such proposals should take account of their impact on the different character areas of Swanley, and proposals should:

NP Policy SwCD&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 and play space within the site area wherever possible.
- 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 specific 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.

NP Policy SwCD&H2: Swanley Village Design Guide

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

NP Policy SwCD&H3 Heritage Asset Protection

The following have been identified as non-designated heritage assets and should be assessed against relevant local and national policies in planning applications that affect their significance.

- The gates to the former White Oak Hospital.
- The Keston – a detached house of character on Swanley Lane.
- The William Mitchell exterior panels.
- St Marys the Virgin Church.

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. It is important to the long-term sustainability and viability of the Neighbourhood Plan area for residents to be happy with their homes and stay in the area. 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 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 can 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 requires that SDC, across the District makes provision for housing need and in turn Swanley must accommodate new homes and residents as a result.

Climate change and the 2020/2021 global pandemic will lead to 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 vision and objectives for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan are in Chapter 3 and in relation to Housing particularly address Objectives O1, O2 O4 and O5.

Like the other objectives these have been based on the original survey of residents that took place in 2018 and have been developed to make sure that Swanley can welcome new residents to the Town, but also mitigate the inevitable impacts that such development may bring.

Planning Policy Background for Housing in Swanley

The current SDC 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 the 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 2020 to 2040. 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 and the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040.

The policies and proposed sites for development in the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 are based on evidence related to housing comprising:

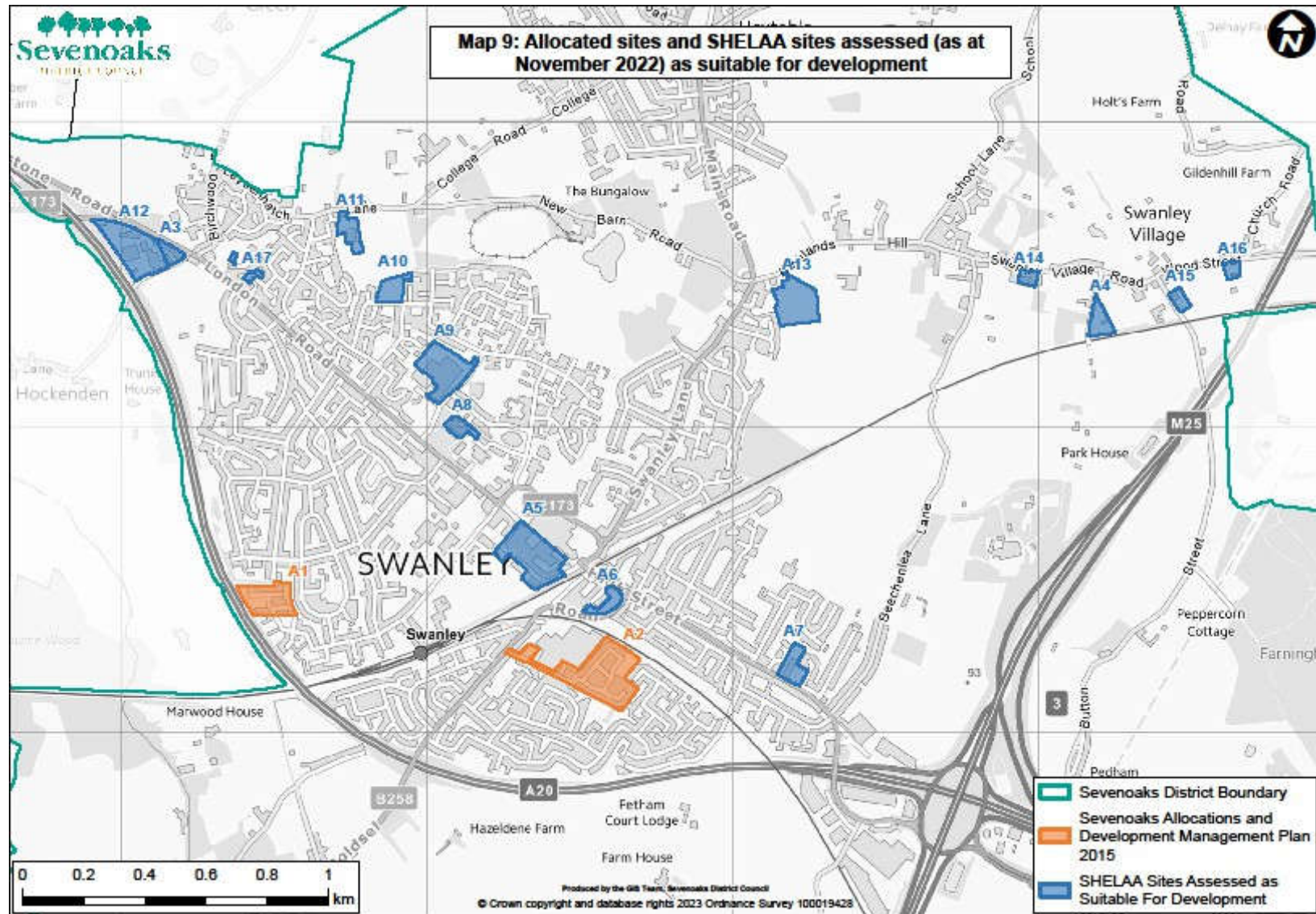
- The Strategic Housing Market Assessment of 2015 (produced for the ADMP of 2015)
- Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs Analysis of Jan 2022
- The Brownfield site register of 18th December 2019
- The Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment of 2018 (SHELAA) and appendices 1-7
- Green Belt Assessment Report of 2017
- Settlement Capacity Study 2022
- A Vision for Swanley and Hextable 2016
- Site Appraisals – Sites not included in the Local Plan
- Site Appraisals – Sites included in the Local Plan

The 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 proposes a total of fourteen sites in Swanley (including pitches for traveler accommodation, mixed use development and residential sites). In addition to the sites agreed and allocated in the current Sevenoaks Local Plan (ADMP) and the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040, some sites come forward when owners of land and buildings decide to redevelop them. In Swanley a total of 20 sites have come forward in this way and 18 of these have been given planning consent providing 230 homes in addition to those that have been allocated for housing or mixed housing/other uses. The SDC 2022 housing capacity study also indicates that in addition to windfall assumptions over the emerging Local Plan 2040 period a further 19 sites could come forward with a mid-point estimate of dwellings that may be achieved for a further 294 homes in the three electoral wards of the Swanley Neighbourhood plan area. These have not been included here as they are subject to further study and discussion with landowners over their availability.

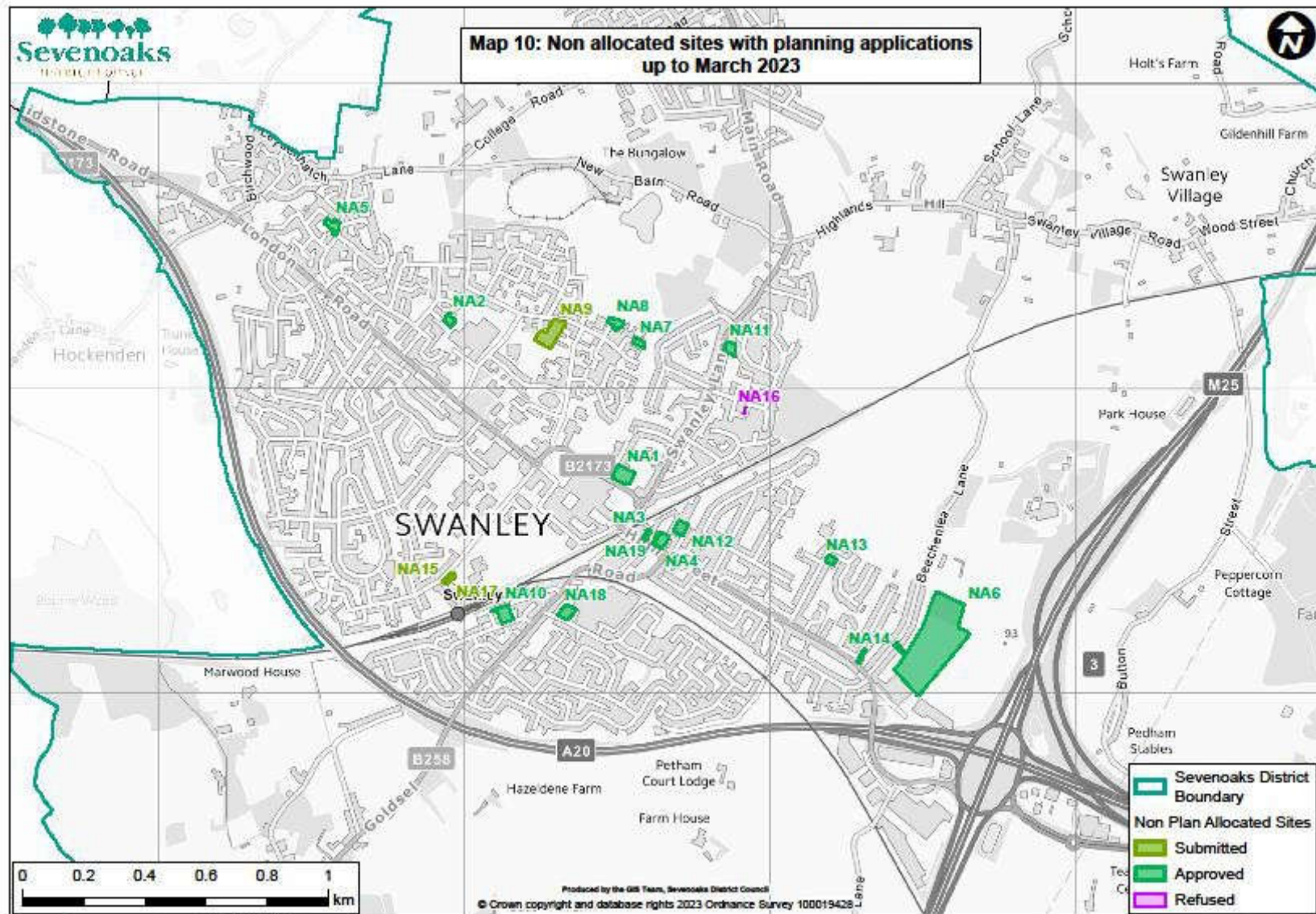
As part of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan a survey of all the sites, both allocated or proposed and non-allocated (those that have come through the planning application process) has been undertaken (see [Neighbourhood Plan evidence base document – Swanley Housing Site Schedule](#)). A summary of the sites is shown in Table 9 and MAP 9 and 10 below.

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| Table 9 Housing Site Schedule | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|---|
| SITE TYPE | SITES | NUMBER OF HOMES | Estimated Population (at 2.4 persons per home) |
| Allocated current sites with planning approval | A1, A2, A5, A8, A9, A10, A13 | 441 | 1058 |
| Allocated current sites planning application submitted | | 0 | 0 |
| Non-allocated sites not included in current Local Plan with planning approval | NA1 – 8 NA10 – 15 NA17 – 19 | 214 | 552 |
| Non-allocated Sites not included in current Local Plan planning application submitted | NA9 | 17 | 46 |
| Current Local Plan sites planning application refused | A6, A15, A16 | 111 | |
| Non-allocated sites refused | NA16 | 1 | |
| Sevenoaks District Council estimates of number of homes (including pitches) either not yet the subject of planning applications or have been refused. Estimates based upon the ADMP and on SHELAA guidance. | A3, A4, A6, A7, A11, A12, A14, A15, A16, A17 | 205 | 646 |
| TOTAL (excludes refusals) | | 877 | 2,105 |
| Homes not started or to be completed since the UK census 2021 population figures | A3 – A7, A9, A10, A13, A14, A17 NA4 – NA15 NA17 – 19 | 528 | 1,267 |



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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 the District, 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 residents.

We have used this analysis to estimate the increase in population that will result if they are all implemented over the Neighbourhood Plan period based on the current average of people in each household from the 2021 census. We have used the figure of 528 homes and resulting population increase of 1267 people in the Neighbourhood Plan to estimate the likely impact on the need for infrastructure to support residents and businesses in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Housing in Swanley – Current Provision and Issues

Housing Character

Swanley is characterised by suburban development that is low rise, mainly family homes with gardens. This in contrast to the rest of Sevenoaks District at the time of the 2021 census.

| TABLE 10 - Housing Types in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | | | |
|--|----------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| | Swanley | % | District | % |
| Total household spaces | 7,190 | 100 | 49,013 | 100 |
| Detached houses | 812 | 11.29 | 16,223 | 33.1 |
| Semi-detached houses | 2,991 | 41.6 | 14,044 | 28.7 |
| Terraced houses | 2,068 | 28.76 | 10,962 | 22.4 |
| In a purpose-built block of flats or tenement | 1,161 | 16.15 | 5,745 | 11.7 |
| Part of a converted or shared house, including bedsits | 81 | 1.13 | 780 | 1.6 |
| Part of another converted building, for example, former school, | 17 | 0.24 | 301 | 0.6 |
| In a commercial building, for example, in an office building, hotel or over a shop | 41 | 0.57 | 373 | 0.8 |
| A caravan or other mobile or temporary structure | 19 | 0.26 | 585 | 1.2 |
| Source Census 2021 TS044 | | | | |

The exception to this will be Swanley Town Centre shown on MAP 4, which is the commercial and civic core of Swanley Town where development may be denser and potentially higher as a result. A hybrid development in the Town Centre which was intended to provide both a refreshed retail

offer as well as housing was submitted to SDC³ 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 but so far, the plans have not been implemented and the approval has expired, though permitted development for some residential properties has been approved.

Proposed densities in the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 site allocations are also higher in the Town Centre at more than 150 dwellings per hectare.

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 studies⁴ of such conversions these dwellings are of low quality with very limited amenity and play space and lack of natural daylight to habitable⁵ rooms.

The main feature of the housing in Swanley is that it is low rise, with most of the 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.

The other settlement of homes that forms part of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area is Swanley Village (See MAP 3 – 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 by countryside – principally designated Green Belt.

Housing Need

The need for housing of all types across the District has been quantified by SDC in Jan 2022 as part of its Targeted Local Housing Needs Study. This study includes Swanley as part of the Northwest Place making area of the District which includes Hextable, Crockenhill and Well Hill, Halstead Knockholt and Badgers Mount. The table below, extracted from the study (Table B.10) is based on the household need by age group, number of bedrooms (based on the minimum bedroom need) and placemaking area.

³ See Application 17/02279/FUL.

⁴ Town and Country Planning Association (2020) "No Place for Place Making"

⁵ A room used for dwelling purposes, but which is not solely a kitchen, utility room, bathroom, cellar, or sanitary accommodation.

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| Age Group | Bedrooms Needed | Current Placemaking Area (base 889 households on housing register) | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|--|------------|------------|----------------------|-------|-----------------------|-----------|
| | | Darent Valley | North East | North West | Sevenoaks Urban Area | South | Upper Darent Corridor | Sevenoaks |
| Under 65 | 1 | 17.2 | 32.0 | 26.3 | 34.2 | 28.6 | 20.7 | 32.4 |
| | 2 | 39.7 | 33.3 | 34.9 | 30.7 | 41.0 | 41.4 | 33.1 |
| | 3 | 15.5 | 14.7 | 17.3 | 16.4 | 13.3 | 10.3 | 14.8 |
| | 4 | 5.2 | 2.7 | 7.8 | 4.4 | 6.7 | 13.8 | 2.1 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.9 | 0 | 0.7 |
| 65 and Over | 1 | 19.0 | 14.7 | 11.0 | 12.9 | 7.6 | 10.3 | 14.1 |
| | 2 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 0.9 | 1 | 3.4 | 2.8 |
| | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| All Age Groups | 1 | 36.2 | 46.7 | 37.3 | 47.1 | 36.2 | 31.0 | 46.5 |
| | 2 | 43.1 | 36.0 | 37.3 | 31.6 | 41.9 | 44.8 | 35.9 |
| | 3 | 15.5 | 14.7 | 17.3 | 16.4 | 13.3 | 10.3 | 14.8 |
| | 4 | 5.2 | 2.7 | 7.8 | 4.4 | 6.7 | 13.8 | 2.1 |
| | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.9 | 0 | 0.7 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | Base | 58 | 75 | 255 | 225 | 105 | 29 | 889 |

This shows significant need across the district but in the Placemaking area where the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area is located, the need for two-bedroom properties for the under 65s outstrips those of Sevenoaks Urban area.

Work done specifically on housing need in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area, 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.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION 2024

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 has housing needs.

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. Most of the social housing in Swanley is provided by West Kent Housing Association.

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 homeowners, but with a significant number of people in rented accommodation as shown by the table below.

| TABLE 11 - Housing Tenure in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Tenure | Parish | % | District | % |
| Total all households | 7,190 | 100 | 49,014 | 100 |
| Owner occupied households | 4,628 | 64.37 | 35,979 | 73.41 |
| Owned | 4,510 | 62.73 | 35,066 | 71.5 |
| Shared ownership | 118 | 1.64 | 913 | 1.86 |

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| TABLE 11 - Housing Tenure in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Tenure | Parish | % | District | % |
| Owens with a mortgage or loan or shared ownership | 2,460 | 34.21 | 17,210 | 35.11 |
| Rented Households | 2,554 | 35.52 | 13,013 | 26.54 |
| Social rented | 1,840 | 25.59 | 6,465 | 13.19 |
| Private rented | 714 | 9.93 | 6,548 | 13.36 |
| Private rented or lives rent free | 722 | 10.04 | 6,570 | 13.4 |
| Lives rent free | 8 | 0.11 | 22 | 0.05 |
| <i>Source Census 2021 TS054</i> | | | | |

Housing Affordability

The Housing Need Studies for SDC of 2017 and 2022 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.

Housing Density

The most recent Authority Monitoring Report for SDC 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. Outside Swanley Town Centre some sites have achieved 150 Dwellings per hectare (Woodlands at Hilda May Avenue) and in Swanley Town Centre, which has a current Local Plan policy target of 75 DPH, this target has been exceeded with some schemes approved at 240 dwellings per hectare (11-13 High Street) - see *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base*. The Town Centre, with good design can achieve higher densities and the Neighbourhood Plan policies proposes to increase density guidance in the Town Centre (see MAP 4) to help achieve effective use of the limited land available in the Neighbourhood Plan area for development. At the same time Swanley Town Centre is also better provided with transport and other facilities which will support new residents.

SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION 2024

| Table 7.3 Gross Housing Units Completed at Different densities across the District | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| | Main Settlements | SDC 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 SDC | | | | | | | |

Housing Quality and Sustainability

The quality of existing and new homes in terms of space standards and energy efficiency have been identified as an area of concern for the future. Currently there is a cost-of-living crisis and energy costs are creating pressure on all households in the UK. The energy efficiency of properties is measured by central government currently on an annual basis. This data covers the median energy efficiency scores for new and existing homes and by housing type. This is expressed by a score that can then be expressed as an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating that is a good measure of a home's cost efficiency for a householder.

This data for 2021 and 2022 for the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan Area shows that existing dwellings have an EPC rating of D and new homes a rating of B, reflecting better standards of construction and building regulation requirements. However there does seem to be a lack of ambition with new development as in two years there has been no real improvement in efficiency with scores being at the lower end of the B rating for new development of both houses and flats. Given the need for increased densities across the District, particularly in Town Centres, a minimum rating for new development would appear to be one way of ensuring that new homes are cheaper to run and the potential for higher standards of insulation than those required by the Building Regulations, or new energy generation as part of new developments, could be encouraged further.

Similarly on housing space standards and access to outdoor space either as part of the home or within new development sites have emphasised the way that space standards can improve the health and well-being of adults and children and accommodate the different needs that a home may have to fulfil for its occupants, including their relationships with each other. The COVID pandemic highlighted these issues when adults and

children had to stay at home to study or work. Similarly new working habits have encouraged people to work from home (Swanley has seen an increase in numbers working from home between the two censuses of 2011 and 2021. Research by Local Authority Building Control (LABC) in 2019 has indicated that homes have got smaller over time.

This has resulted in a range of new standards that can be applied – Homes Plan (NHS England Healthy New Town Programme) and the new Building for Life toolkit for design (2020). These standards emphasise the need for access to the open air and some recommend the adoption of the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). Central government guidance emphasises the need to consider issues of viability, and what is currently being achieved in terms of homes being built. Adoption of a policy to use the NDSS, subject to feasibility and viability may make a significant contribution to ensuring that new homes are desirable – importantly in terms of their long-term occupation – which will help to ensure that new residents in the Neighbourhood Plan area stay in the area. This will make it more possible to achieve viable services and facilities that will benefit everyone and prevent longer term trends for homes becoming smaller.

The Views of Swanley People

A resident questionnaire survey undertaken in 2018 asked for resident's views on several 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 is 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 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 current SDC Local Plan in securing higher density development in Swanley Town Centre to address the shortage of suitable development land across the district.

Good housing design that enhances Swanley as a place is 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 Local Plan and the 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 for SDC 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.

NP Policy SwH1 Energy Efficient and Healthy Homes

All new homes should as far as possible, be designed to meet a minimum Energy Performance Certificate rating of B to reduce costs in use and contribute to reducing climate change impacts associated with the use of energy.

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| NP Policy SwH2 Housing Space standards | |
|---|---------|
| <p>Homes should meet the Government's nationally described space standards (NDSS) guidelines as a minimum. Designs should be inclusive for all members of society and cater for those with disabilities and the infirm wherever feasible.</p> <p>Housing layouts must demonstrate how homes meet the storage requirements in the NDSS. Proposals that would result in a reduction in the overall storage space caused by the need to accommodate plant for mechanical ventilation and heating kit, will not be supported.</p> | |
| NP Policy SwH3 Private Amenity Space for New Homes | |
| <p>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.</p> | |
| NP Policy SwH4 Homes for Work and study | |
| <p>All homes should, where feasible, have dedicated working space with natural light</p> | |
| NP Policy SwH5 Housing Density | |
| <p>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 and ensuring that the distinctive character of the area is not compromised.</p> | |
| Location | Density |
| Swanley Town centre (see MAP 4) | 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 | |
| <p>New housing developments of ten dwellings or more should, wherever feasible, include public Amenity Green Spaces based on 0.60 Ha of area per 1000 new residents to be accommodated within the development. Amenity green spaces/roofs should be provided for wherever possible in developments of commercial and community infrastructure.</p> | |
| NP Policy SwH7– Children and Young Peoples Play Space | |
| <p>All new developments of 10 dwellings or more which are not within 400m of an existing play space should, where feasible, include a Play area for children of at least 100 sq. m within the site.</p> | |

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 2021 shows that car ownership levels are high and that most 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. SDC Monitoring Reports from 2015 to 2019 show significant losses of what was previously classified as B1 uses and little new provision in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area. The main exceptions to this are two approvals for planning consent for new employment space. One at Broom Hill which had been allocated in the current SDC Allocations and Development Management plan. This will provide 14,496 square metres of new employment space in four buildings which will be warehousing with small ancillary offices. The other is the approval of the Swanley Town Centre development which was to provide 1,457 sq. metres of mixed retail and employment space. As this approval has now lapsed it is now uncertain how much employment space will be provided though 47 residential properties have been achieved. The type of employment in the Broom Hill development will be low density given its focus on storage and distribution.

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

Consultations with residents of Swanley for the Neighbourhood Plan show that they are concerned about jobs and employment and their connection to contributing to community and individual well-being. This is reflected in the Vision and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan shown in Chapter 3 and particularly relate to objective O6.

Planning Policy background for Employment and Economy in Swanley

The policies in the Neighbourhood Plan for employment are informed by the following studies prepared for the SDC 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040

Town Centres Strategy 2022
Economic Needs Study 2016

SDC Economic Needs Study 2022
Tourist Accommodation Needs Study 2015

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 of new businesses. For existing sites, it is also important that employment spaces are not lost, and time is dedicated to ensuring that they are marketed effectively to prospective new users.

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 environment, 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 7 (**NP Policy SwH4**).

Employment In Swanley – Current Provision and Issues

The current stock of employment space is focused in the ten employment areas included in the current and emerging (2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040) SDC local plan and the need to designate further sites. As part of the work on the Neighbourhood Plan 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 550 sq m plus a yard

All 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 residents. These sites are shown on MAP 11 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.

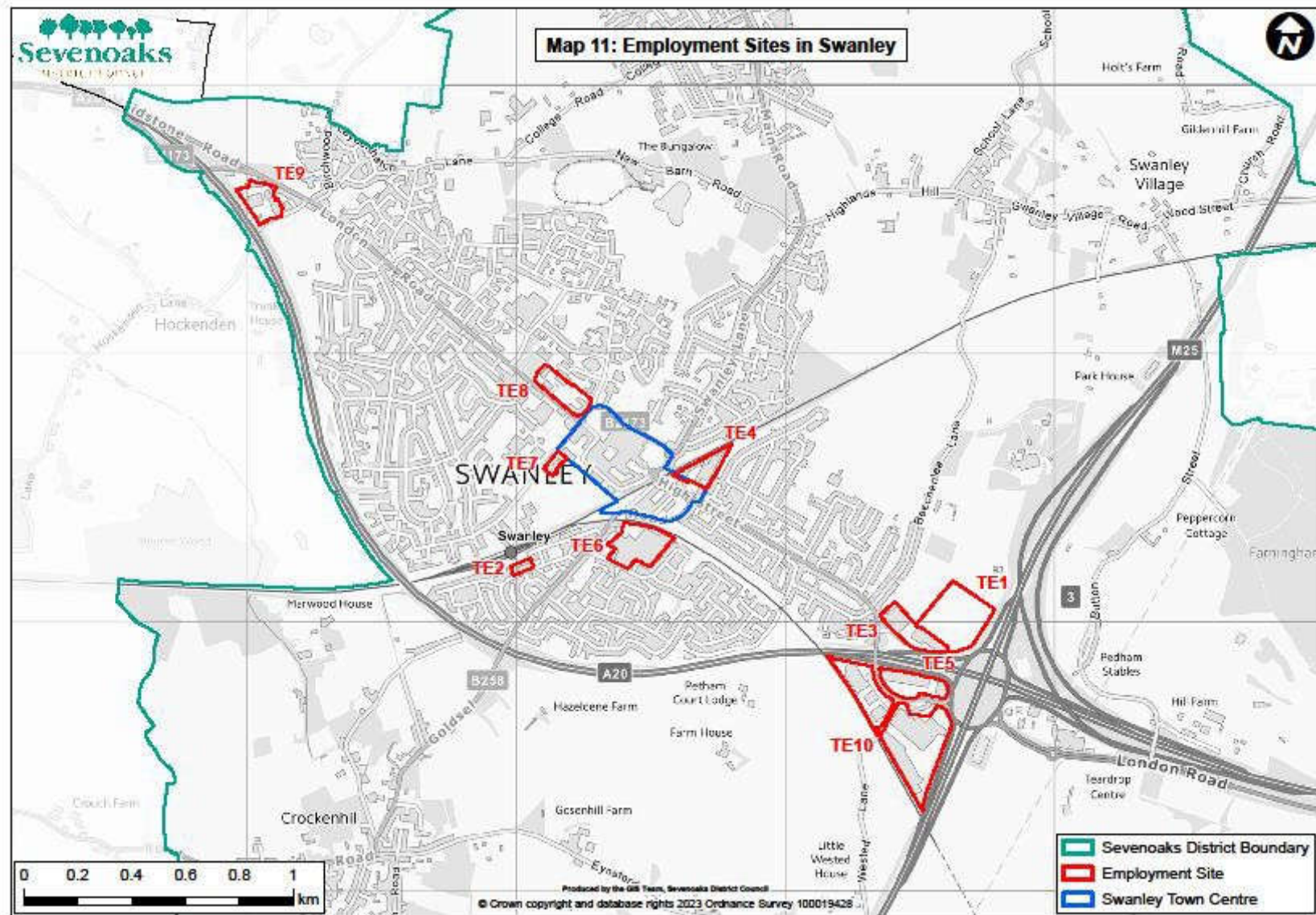
All the sites are shown in Table 12 and on MAP 11 below.

| Table 12: Employment sites in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Site Address | Size (ha) | Map 11 Ref |
| Broom Hill Swanley | 4.3 | B1 |

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| Table 12: Employment sites in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Site Address | Size (ha) | Map 11 Ref |
| Gateway Trading Estate | | B2 |
| Media House Azalea Road Swanley | 0.3 | B3 |
| Moreton Industrial Swanley | 1.8 | B4 |
| Park Road Industrial Estate Swanley | 1.3 | B5 |
| Southern Cross Industrial Estate | 1.9 | B6 |
| Swan Mill Goldsel Road Swanley | 2.6 | B7 |
| Swanley Town Council Offices | 0.4 | B8 |
| The Technology Centre Swanley | 1.8 | B9 |
| Upper Hockenden Farm | | B10 |
| Wested Lane Industrial Estate | 8.2 | B11 |

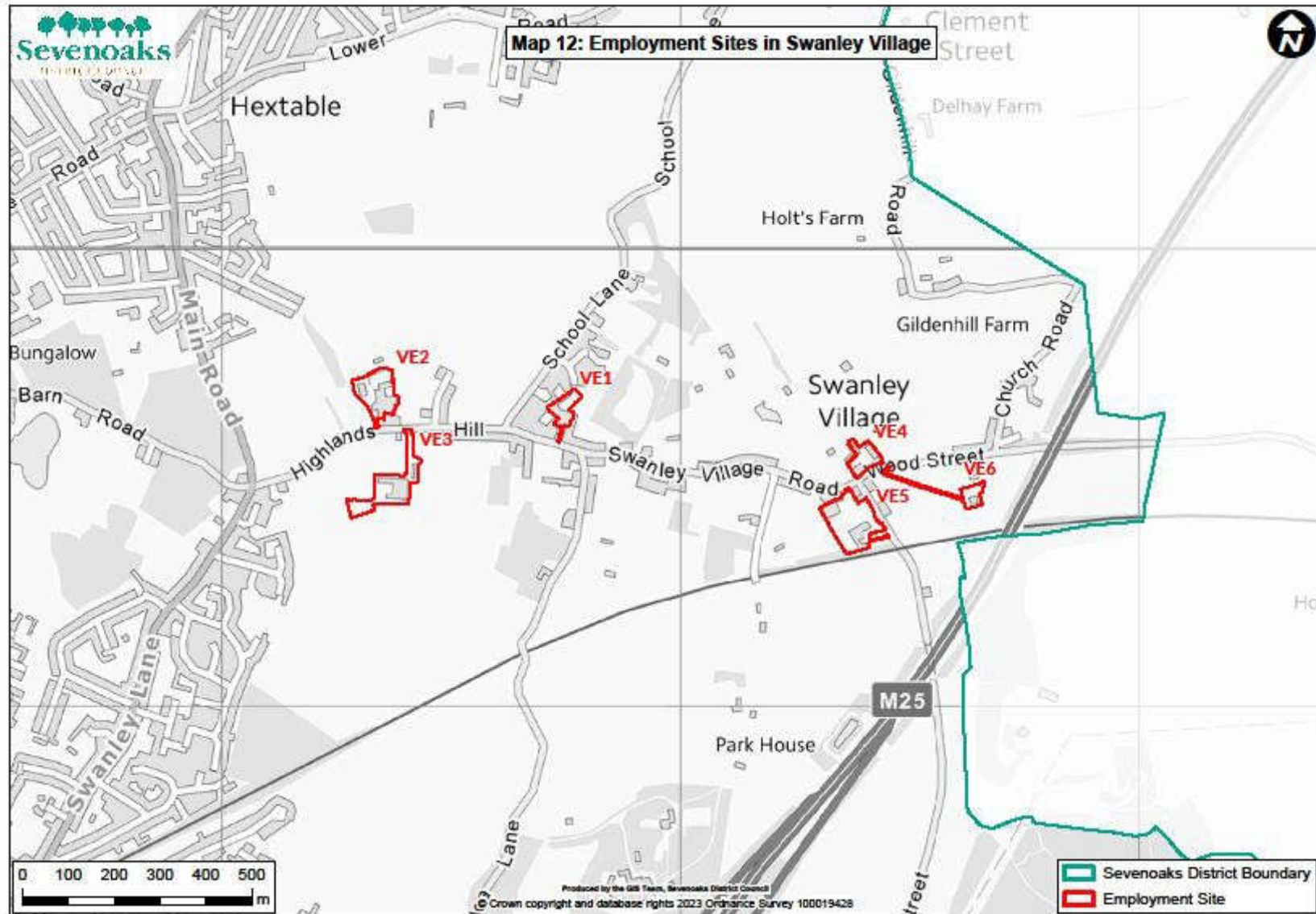
SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION 2024



There are also small sites in Swanley Village.

| TABLE 13 - 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 12 below as they need 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.



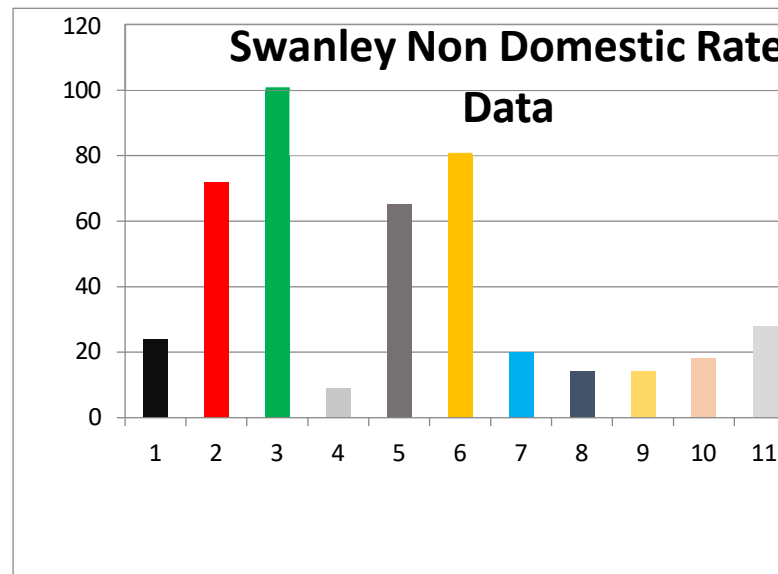
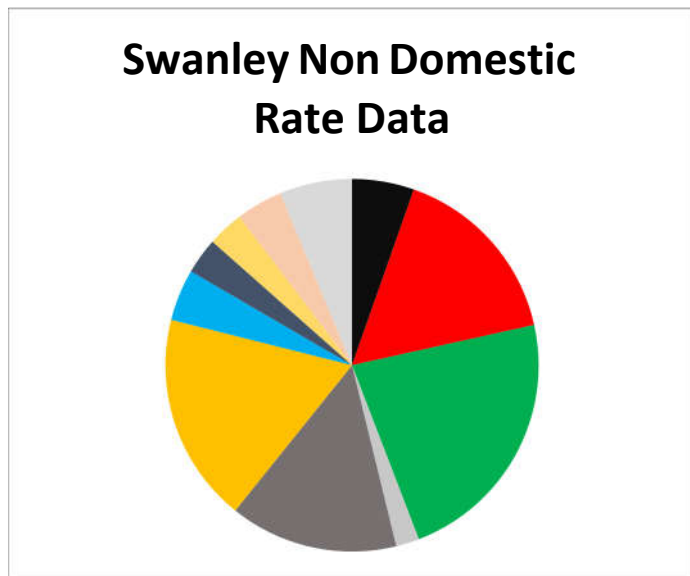
SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2020-2040 REFERENDUM VERSION 2024

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). Although these figures are now likely to have changed considerably since the pandemic, they nevertheless show the focus on retail and small employment uses which will become more vulnerable to change away from employment use and their protection will need to be achieved where feasible to ensure that the Town Centre continues to provide services to residents and other businesses in the Neighborhood Plan area.

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 because of loss to residential.

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

| TABLE 14- Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area types of non-domestic premises | code | no. |
|---|-----------|-----|
| Statutory Services (schools, libraries, fire stations, doctor’s 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: Valuation Office Agency web site downloaded in 2019 | | |



Some of these businesses are in the ten designated employment areas included in the SDC 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040 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.

| TABLE 15 – Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area Employment | Parish (NP Area) | % | District | % |
|--|------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| Total all usual residents aged 16 years and over | 14,104 | 100 | 96,603 | 100 |
| Total Economically Active - % of population aged 16-74 | 8,667 | 61.45 | 58,728 | 60.8 |
| In Employment | 8,031 | 56.9 | 55,457 | 57.4 |
| Part-time | 1,668 | 11.8 | 10,868 | 11.3 |

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| TABLE 15 – Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area Employment | Parish (NP Area) | % | District | % |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Full-time | 4,968 | 35.2 | 32,518 | 33.7 |
| Self-Employed | 1,194 | 8.5 | 10,173 | 10.5 |
| Full-time Student | 207 | 1.5 | 1,201 | 1.2 |
| Unemployed | 429 | 3.0 | 2,070 | 2.1 |
| Total Economically Inactive | 5,437 | 38.5 | 37,875 | 39.2 |
| Retired | 3,075 | 21.8 | 24,163 | 25 |
| Student | 515 | 3.7 | 3,815 | 3.9 |
| Looking after home/ family | 800 | 5.7 | 5,153 | 5.3 |
| Permanently sick/disabled | 622 | 4.4 | 2,431 | 2.5 |
| Other | 425 | 3.0 | 2,313 | 2.4 |
| <i>Source Census 2021 TS066</i> | | | | |

The education and skills of people in Swanley is less than that of the District overall with many people having no qualifications at all.

| TABLE 16 Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area Education/Skills % of population aged 16+ | Parish (NP Area) | % | District | % |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Total all residents aged 16 years and over | 14,104 | 100 | 96,603 | 100 |
| No qualifications | 3,217 | 22.8 | 15,087 | 15.6 |
| Level 1 qualifications | 1,755 | 12.4 | 9,281 | 9.6 |
| Level 2 qualifications | 2,174 | 15.4 | 14,060 | 14.6 |
| Apprenticeship | 779 | 5.5 | 4,641 | 4.8 |
| Level 3 qualifications | 2,180 | 15.5 | 15,101 | 15.6 |
| Level 4 qualifications and above | 3,627 | 25.7 | 36,073 | 37.3 |
| Other qualifications | 372 | 2.6 | 2,360 | 2.4 |
| <i>Source Census 2021</i> | | | | |

Planning control is limited in what it can do to improve education and 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 People

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.

Most 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)
- Addressing the 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 sites

Proposals to upgrade or intensify the employment sites on MAP 11 will be supported in principle.

NP Policy SwEE2: Loss of sites in Employment Use.

Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of land or buildings in employment use shown on MAPs 11 and 12 to non-employment uses, other than those which are permitted development, will only be permitted when:

- a) The site has been registered with an agent, including notices on site.
- b) Marketing of the site over a period of a minimum of 6 months demonstrates that there is no realistic prospect of the use of the site for employment purposes,
- c) 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': (sites of less than 1ha in area or less than 1,000 sqm of employment space) 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, particularly in Swanley Town Centre (see MAP 4).
- d) Protect any neighbouring residential amenity.
- e) Do not adversely impact upon road safety.
- f) Enhance the overall development and provision of employment, including self-employment space.
- g) Do not adversely affect the attractiveness of the local countryside.

NP Policy SwEE4: Hotel and Visitor Accommodation

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

TRANSPORT

Consultations for the Neighbourhood Plan showed that transport is a big concern for people in Swanley. Addressing congestion, pollution, safety, and poor public transport was important to them and this is reflected in the Vision for the Neighbourhood Plan and its objectives are shown in full in Chapter 3 but Objectives O9 and O10 particularly relate to transport.

Planning Policy Background for Transport in Swanley

National, County wide 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 and safety of the highway network, and to promote sustainable low impact modes – cycling, public transport, walking and cycling.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023) Promoting Sustainable Transport

- *The NPPF (section 9) 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.*

Kent County Council

The role of the County in relation to transport means that its work on walking, roads and cycling is of important relevance to the neighbourhood plan. In particular:

- *The Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) which seeks to protect and improve Public Rights of Way*
- *Framing Kent's future 2022-2026 which seeks to take an "Infrastructure First" approach to development, manage climate change impacts and protect the natural environment.*
- *The production of the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (KCWIP) which seeks to provide a strategic framework for improving walking and cycling infrastructure in Kent.*

Sevenoaks District Council Current Local Plan (Core Strategy 2011 and ADMP 2015)

The SDC Core strategy Policy SP2 Sustainable Development sets out that SDC will support and promote measures to reduce reliance on travel by car both in providing for new development and in supporting measures promoted through the Transport Strategy.

The SDC Allocations and Development Management Plan includes policy T1 which commits to development management which mitigates any adverse travel impacts, including their impact on congestion and safety, environmental impact, such as noise and tranquillity, pollution and impact on amenity and health. This may mean ensuring adequate provision is made for integrated and improved transport infrastructure or other appropriate mitigation measures, through direct improvements and/or developer contributions.

Policy T2 on parking acknowledges the need for development to follow Kent County Council guidelines on its provision but also the need to depart from these standards where local circumstances require.

2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040

The strategic objectives in this version are:

Objective 17 – Work with stakeholders to address barriers that prevent residents from making sustainable transport choices.

Objective 18 – Support equal access to public transport services to all residents.

Introduction

This chapter outlines policies and proposals related to the impact of development on air quality which is regarded as a key factor in achieving the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan related to Health as well as those related to Transport.

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 SDC is from June 2022, with the measured figures for 2021. Based on this report air pollution at Jessamine Terrace and London Road is of particular concern and may understate the problem because 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 as well as the impact of COVID in recent years.

The Swanley Transport Study of 2018 was carried out on behalf of SDC 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. This is no longer included by SDC

as part of the evidence base for its 2022 Regulation 18 Consultation version of Plan 2040, but it remains the only piece of work which considers the detail of Swanley's transport needs. The SDC Local Plan Initial Baseline Transport Assessment (2022) which supports the 2022 version of the local plan indicates that hotspots in Swanley at the B258 and B2173 High Street and B2173 London Road in Swanley Town related to congestion are still an issue.

The report forecasts the traffic growth rates for what was then planned as a Local Plan period up 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. 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 **Chapter 11**.

Transport in Swanley – Current Provision and Issues

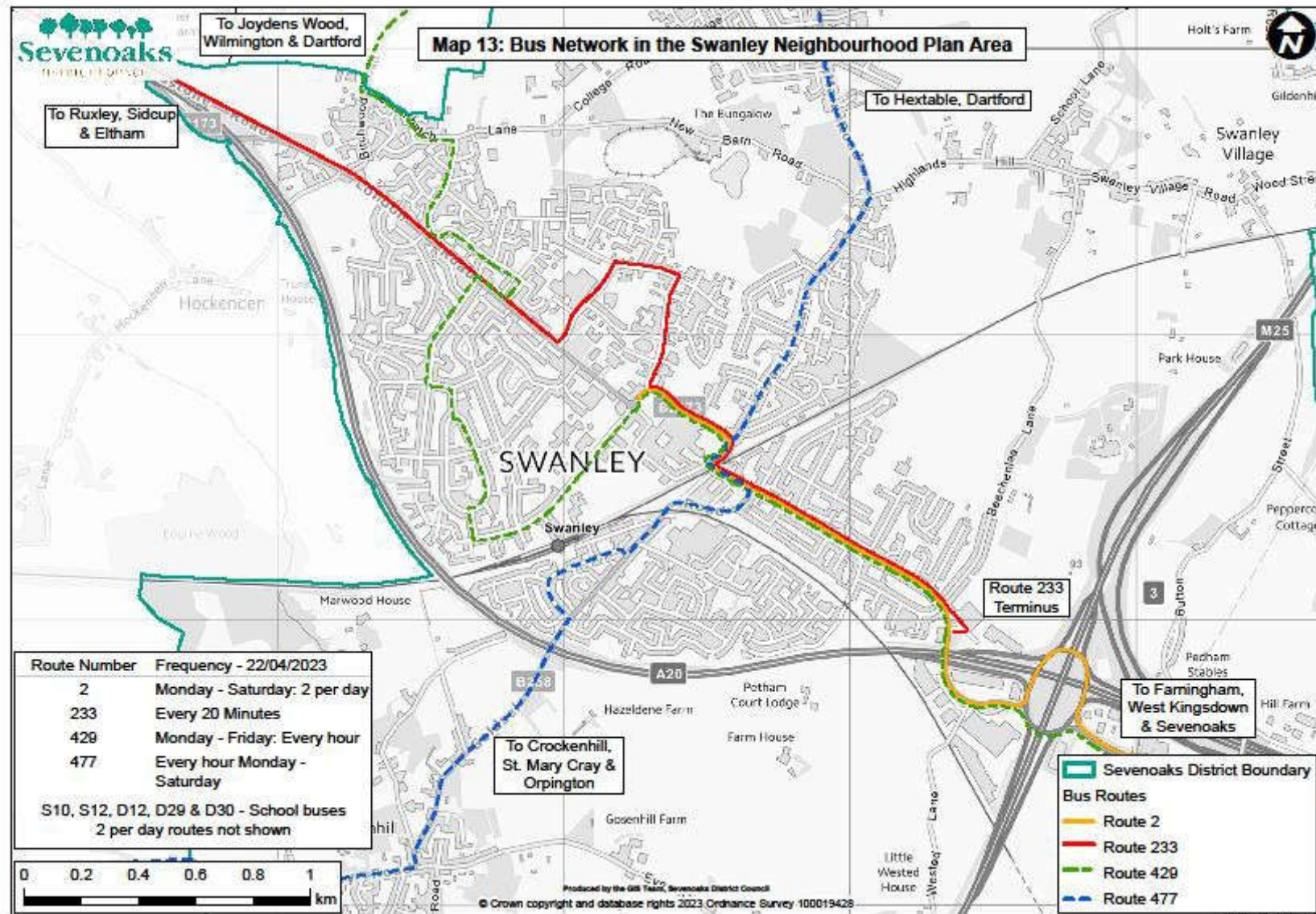
Swanley is the second largest town within Sevenoaks District and lies in the north-western section of the District with a population of 17,821 inhabitants (Source: Census 2021).

Bus

Public transport provision within Swanley is limited. According to the 2021 census the use of buses in Swanley as a mode of travel to work is very low at 2.79% of residents for travelling to work. The reasons are probably the limited directions of travel, restricted times of operation, frequency, and cost.

Currently two main bus routes serve the town, Swanley to Orpington, and Dartford 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 20-40 minutes to hourly (or longer) services (see MAP 14 below). Provision is particularly poor at the weekend and recent cuts means that the 477 will no longer go beyond Swanley Station in either direction after 18:24 hours Monday to Friday with no service at all on a Sunday. Frequency has been reduced to approximately hourly. Route 2, which connects Swanley with Sevenoaks, because of timing and frequency gives people very little time in Sevenoaks. This is particularly concerning as according to the 2021 census 18% of households in Swanley have no access to a car. If people are to be encouraged to use the bus service improvements to the service will be required.

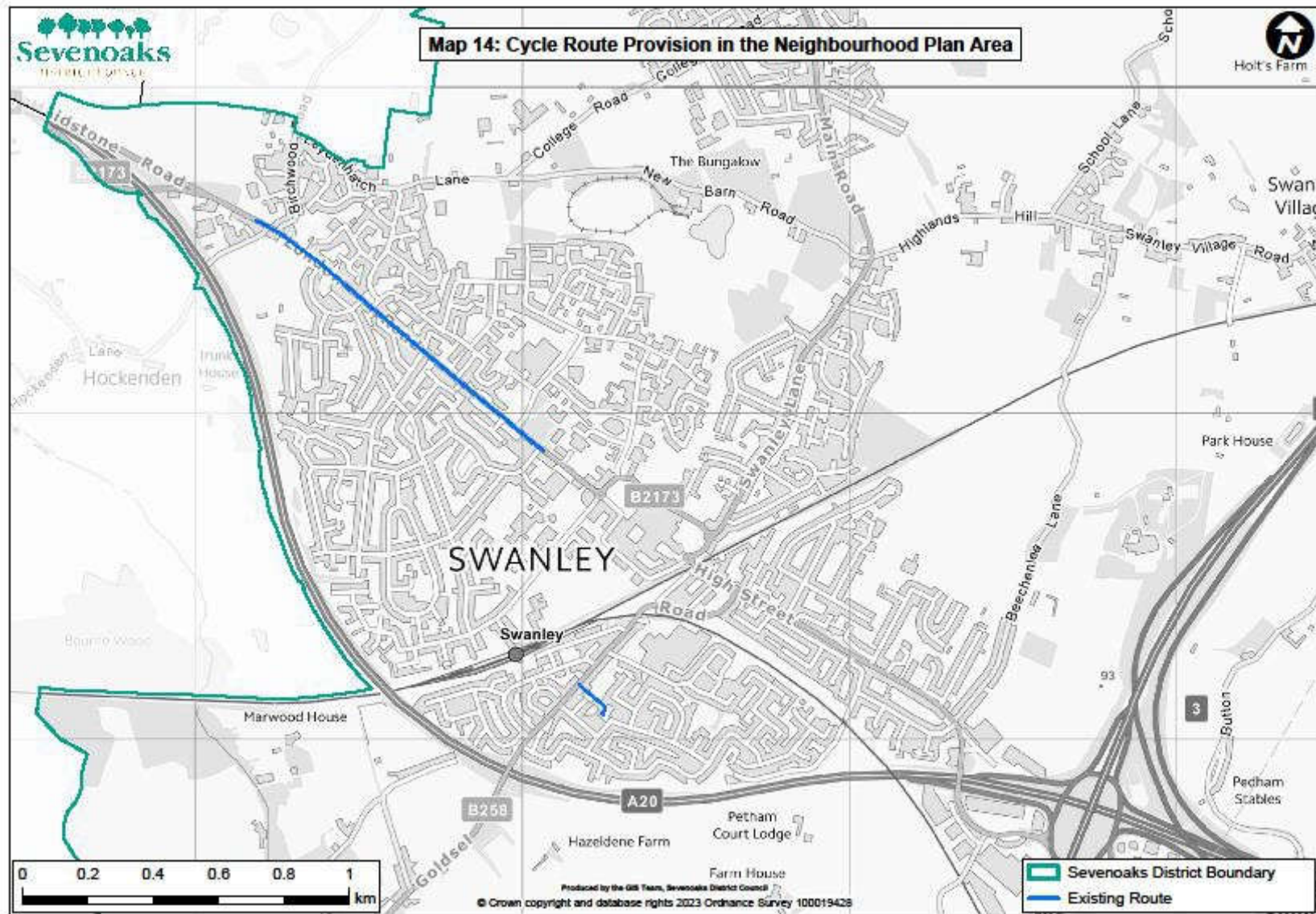
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Cycling

Current cycling route provision in Swanley is limited as shown in MAP 14 below. The Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy and SWECO Transport Study proposes further routes in the town to improve the current position where only two routes are provided (see MAP 17 in the next chapter).

Attention is drawn to the emerging Sevenoaks District Council's Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan which seeks to provide a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements needed at the local level.



Similarly, public cycle parking is limited as shown in Table 17.

| TABLE 17 – Cycle Parking Provision in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 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. |
| Source: Table 4 Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy | |

The evidence from the NP Questionnaire shows that cycling as a mode of transport in Swanley is poorly used. This may well be because 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. This is also confirmed by latest 2021 census Data that shows that less than 1% of residents cycle to work.

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 2021 Census indicates that 17% of the population is 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.

Train

The number of residents traveling to work by train according to the 2021 census is small at less than 13% despite the availability of Oyster cards. This may be due to the increase in working from home during the COVID pandemic, but car use for travel to work is still very strong with over 70% of residents choosing this mode.

Dropping off and picking up using motor cars at Swanley station causes problems of congestion, particularly at peak times when trains are often full and have standing room only.

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.

| TABLE 18 Travel to work in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area (TS061 2021 Census) | | |
|--|---------------|-------|
| Method of travel to work | Swanley Total | % |
| Total: All usual residents aged 16 years and over in employment the week before the census | 8,201 | |
| Work mainly at or from home | 2400 | 29.27 |
| Underground, metro, light rail, tram | 59 | 0.71 |
| Train | 660 | 8.05 |
| Bus, minibus, or coach | 229 | 2.79 |
| Taxi | 31 | 0.38 |
| Motorcycle, scooter or moped | 78 | 0.95 |
| Driving a car or van | 3826 | 46.6 |
| Passenger in a car or van | 310 | 3.78 |
| Bicycle | 47 | 0.57 |
| On foot | 488 | 5.95 |
| Other method of travel to work | 73 | 0.89 |

Cars and Roads

The level of car ownership in the three wards of Swanley according to the 2021 census show that 42% of households have access to at least one car and 37% have access to more than 2.

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.

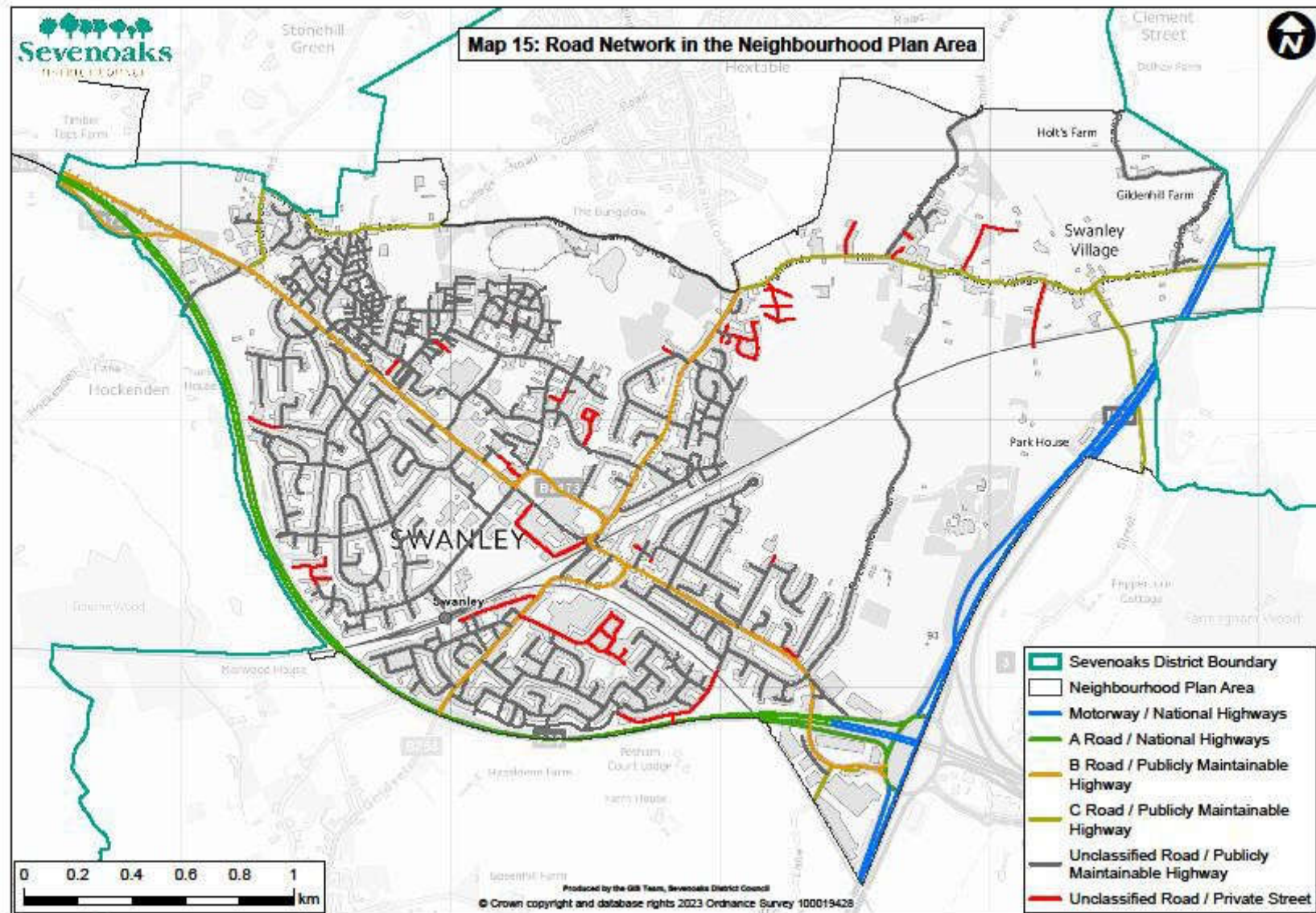
There are 656 homes proposed to be built in Swanley over the plan period which will result in an increase in vehicles on roads in the Neighbourhood Plan area. There will be additional congestion and further development will not be sustainable. There is a need to switch to self-charging hybrid cars or electric vehicles when the charging infrastructure becomes more available.

The motor car is by far the most used mode of travel in Swanley. 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 may not be achieved.

It will be important to encourage people to use active travel modes such as walking, cycling, buses, and trains whenever possible but with the current infrastructure available to support this, development will have to accommodate car use.

As can be seen on MAP 15, 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 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.



Parking

The NPPF (para 111) 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”. The use of the motor car is high especially in terms of social, domestic and pleasure purposes since the availability of public transport and infrastructure for active travel is limited. According to the respondents to the NP questionnaire 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 northwest 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 streets of the Town (see *Neighbourhood Plan evidence base: Parking and Traffic Congestion in Swanley*) illustrate the extent of the problems of idling traffic, illegal parking, full 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 demonstrates that there is a need to consider the local issues in Swanley to address issues currently being experienced by residents and businesses.

Air Quality

“Trees are like the vacuums of our planet” (One Tree Planted). 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). The SWECO Study of 2018 indicated air pollution and the planting of trees as a significant potential mitigator. They suggested locations specifically along the A20 and between Beechenlea lane and the M25.

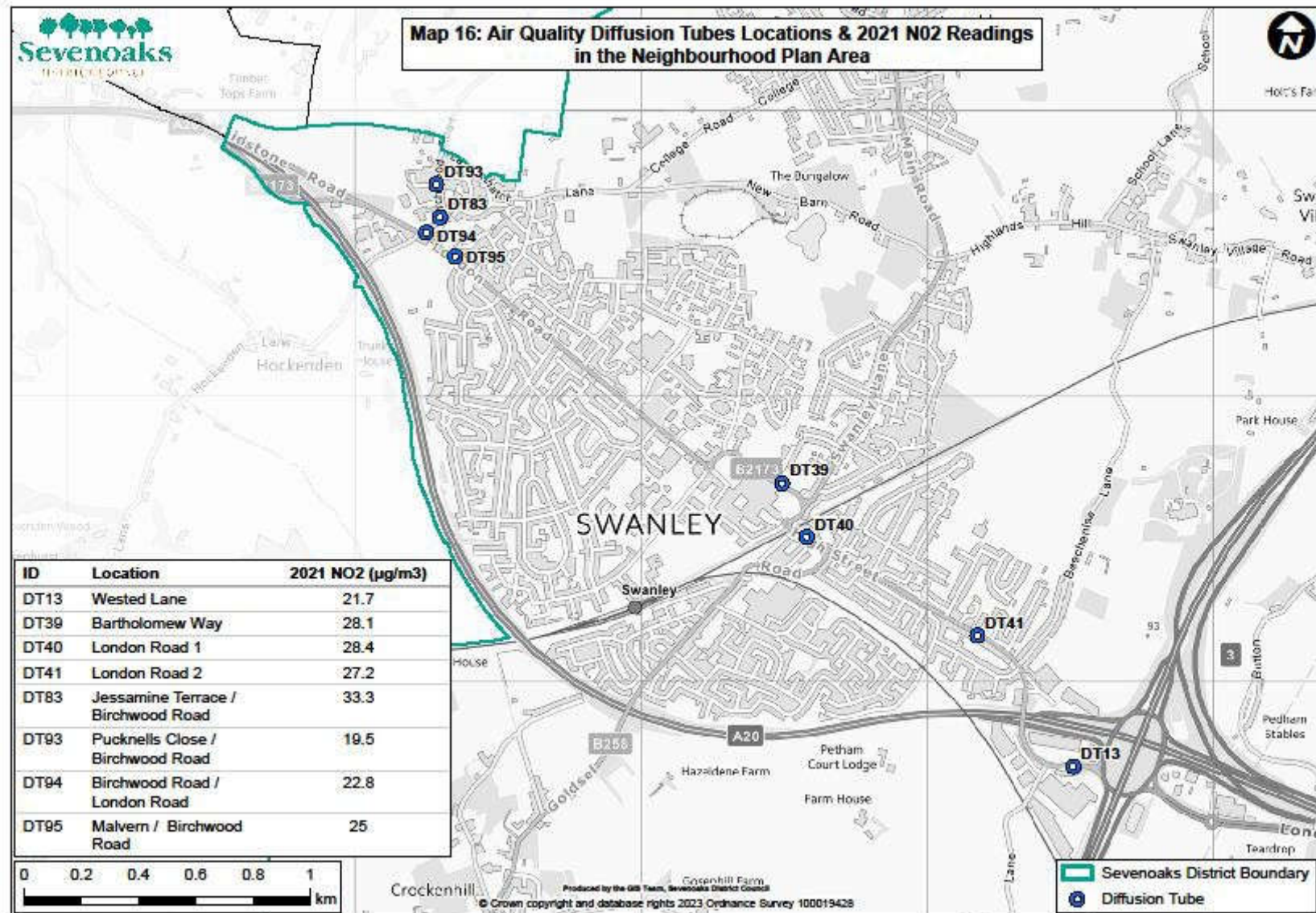
This confirms residents’ concerns about air pollution and their view that it is a negative feature of the town (see Table 19 “The Views of Swanley People” below).

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The figures in red in Table 18 below, are the values of Annual Mean Concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO_2 ⁶ 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”). The impact of the COVID pandemic is clear to see from 2020 onwards, skewing potential real levels in 2023.

| TABLE 19- Air Quality in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Measurement Points | | Valid data Capture 2021 (%) | Annual Mean Concentration $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ NO_2 ¹ | | | | | | | | | |
| Site ID | Location | | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
| DT13 | Wested Lane | 100 | | 40.7 | 36.5 | 31.4 | 36.5 | 30.5 | 32.9 | 27.7 | 21.7 | 23.1 |
| DT39 | Bartholomew Way | 92.3 | 42.3 | 42.4 | 38.4 | 34.7 | 40.9 | 34.5 | 36.4 | 34.8 | 28.1 | 29.4 |
| DT40 | London Rd 1 | 90.4 | 54.8 | 51.6 | 48.5 | 42.3 | 51.5 | 40.9 | 45.6 | 37.5 | 28.4 | 34.1 |
| DT41 | London Rd 2 | 100 | 45.7 | 43.5 | 43 | 37.5 | 42.7 | 40.1 | 38.6 | 32.6 | 27.2 | 29.5 |
| DT83 | Jessamine Terr | 92.3 | | 51.8 | 48.8 | 55.6 | 60.5 | 49.8 | 46.7 | 42.4 | 33.3 | 33.1 |
| DT93 | Pucknells | 100 | | 32.4 | 31.5 | 29.3 | 32.4 | 27.2 | 28.8 | 25.9 | 19.5 | 20.02 |
| DT94 | Birchwood Rd / London Rd | 100 | 37.6 | 36.5 | 35.1 | 33.7 | 36.9 | 32.2 | 33.8 | 28.6 | 22.8 | 22.7 |
| DT95 | Malvern Birchwood Rd | 100 | | 36.6 | 35.2 | 34.1 | 38 | 33.6 | 33 | 30.2 | 25.0 | 25.3 |

⁶ $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ 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).



The Views of Swanley People

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. |
|--|-------------|

Table 20, 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.

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| Table 20- Swanley People's 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

NP Policy SwT1 –Planting of trees

All new developments abutting the A20 and M25 corridors, and associated routes connected to them (Beechenlea Lane, Swanley Lane, B2173, B258) should provide tree planting along those routes to act as noise buffers, pollution, mitigation and provide visual amenity.

NP Policy SwT2 – 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, where feasible, viable and justified, incorporate *segregated* cycle access ways and adequate storage for bicycles.

Walking

Our NP Questionnaire shows that an impressive 33% of residents who responded to it walk to the shops in Swanley centre contrasting with the 6% who walk to work according to the 2021 census.

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.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to protect and improve public rights of way in the County. Swanley Town Council will work with the County Council to improve PRoW. Attention is drawn to KCC's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018-2026); the emerging Kent Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan; and the emerging Sevenoaks District Council Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan.

NP Policy SwT3 – Walking

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

NP Policy SwT4 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 developments of 50 or more dwellings should have a minimum of two access roads onto the main carriageways.
- b) All developments should be well-lit with 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 where feasible, viable and justified.

ASPIRATIONAL PROPOSALS THAT MAY CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING THE SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The process of developing the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan has highlighted the need to pursue ideas and proposals that are not necessarily achievable through planning control, but evidence collected in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan policies suggests that they are needed. In some cases, they require joint work between statutory authorities including Swanley Town Council and Sevenoaks District Council as well as health and transport service providers to develop them in detail. In others they require a commitment of funding to make them happen – this may include use of Community Infrastructure Levy funds or the main capital programmes of other statutory bodies like Kent County Council.

If progressed, they would be subject to the other policies in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan as part of the study of their feasibility. As part of consultations on the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan adjacent Parishes in Hextable and Crockenhill have also underlined the need for detailed consultation on their development. These are proposals based on their current form that may provide great benefits for people in the Neighbourhood Plan area, and they are supported in principle to achieve the vision and all the objectives of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan detailed in Chapter 3.

The proposals are shown below under the main chapter headings of the Neighbourhood Plan. Many of them need long term work and full assessments but could be pursued over the plan period up to 2040.

Community Infrastructure

The development of proposals for multi-function indoor dry sports facilities are needed, particularly those that can accommodate sports activities for older people and are available in the daytime.

Transport

The Swanley Transport Study by SWECO in 2018 recommended proposals for further work to investigate their feasibility, study their potential impacts and generate proposals for improvements for further consideration. The location of these proposals is shown on MAP 14.

Air Quality

AQ1 Stakeholder discussion for the 2018 SWECO study identified several locations for tree planting to mitigate air pollution, particularly between the A20 and B2073 from the B258 junction and between Beechenlea Lane and the M25.

Road improvements.

- HI1 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.
- HI3 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.
- HI5 General maintenance of existing hedgerows verges and provision of additional formal passing places
- HI7 Improve College Road/New barn Road junction.
- HI9 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.

Pedestrian Safety and Walkways

- IM2 All pedestrian crossings to be upgraded to meet all current DDA requirements in the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan area.
- PC2 Re-surface and improve the lighting and feel of Azalea drive as the gateway to Swanley station.
- PC3 Improve Pedestrian Crossing facilities on St Marys Road
- PC7 Upgrade/change pelican crossing facility on High Street
- PC29 Upgrade the pelican crossing to Toucan Crossing on B2173 London Road
- TM1 Make New Barn Road/College Road part of one-way system.
- TM2 Introduce physical measures on Salisbury Avenue to prevent through movement and thus rat running from B2173 London Road
- SRM1 Provide yellow box marking at the Goldsel Road/High Street roundabout junction.
- SRM2 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.

In addition to these proposals, there is a large area of woodland between Swanley Park and the gardens of the houses in Haven Close and Swanley Lane. The woodland is privately owned, but there is an unofficial well-established footpath, used for almost 40 years, through from Woodger's Grove to Swanley Park. A footpath separates the woodland from the gardens and runs between Five Wents and the Town Centre. It would be beneficial if this could be made an official footpath and cycle route to Swanley Park through joint work on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) with Kent County Council and SDC.

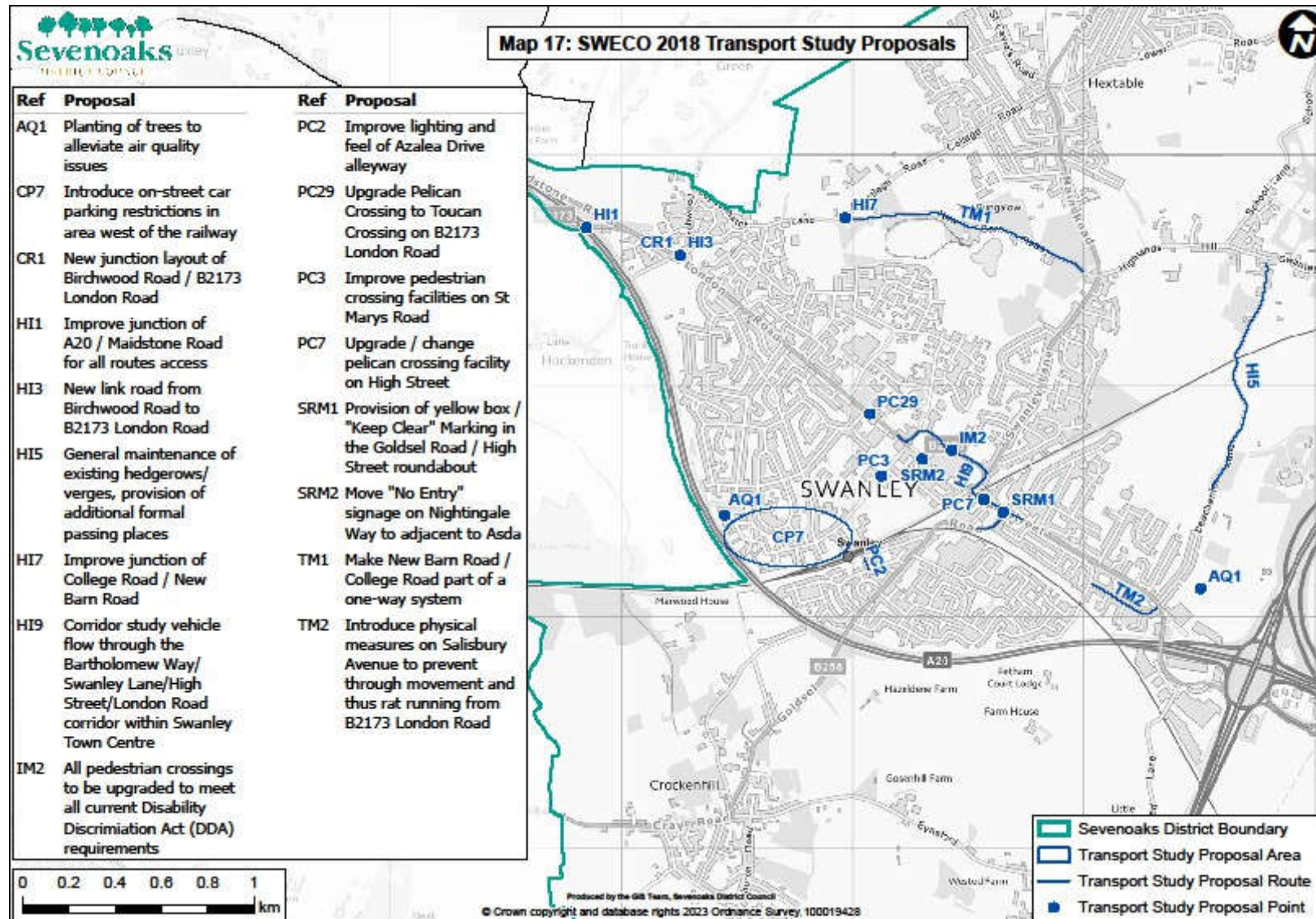
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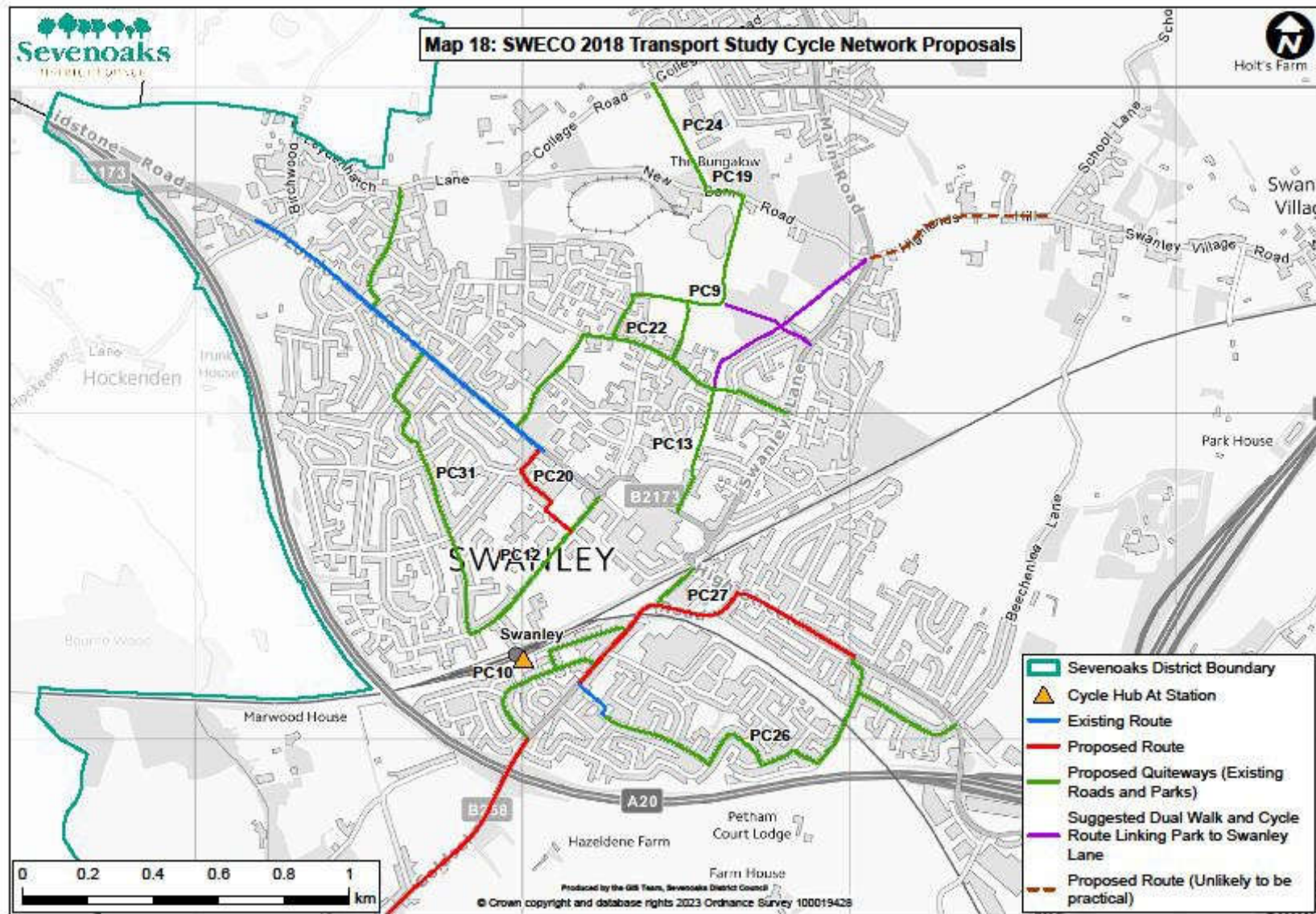
Though not a proposal from the SWECO 2018 report, Neighbourhood Plan consultation indicated a need to improve wayfinding including signing to car parks, Swanley Park and other key attractions (library, churches).

Cycling

Policy SwT3 in the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to ensure that cycling is provided for in new developments. In addition, there is clearly a need for new high quality cycle lane provision. This was studied as part of the work on the Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy (undated) and in the 2018 SWECO report and the following proposals were made and are supported to achieve the vision and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1. Cycle link from existing London Road cycle lane to St Mary's Road (along Oliver Road, Ruxton Close and existing path) - Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy Route 14
2. West-east cycle route to the north of the town centre (along Hilda May Avenue, Northview, and Woodlands Rise) - Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy Route 16
3. Cycle link between Woodlands Rise and town centre (upgrade existing public footpath 0262/SD81/2) - Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy Route 17
4. Cycle link from Swanley to Hextable (through Swanley Park and along existing footpath 0305/SD69/1) - Sevenoaks 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) - Sevenoaks 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) - Sevenoaks Cycling Strategy Route 21
7. A new Cycle hub at Swanley station





MONITORING SWANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The preparation of the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken by a Steering Group of local residents and some Town Council and District Council Councillors.

It is proposed for the future that to monitor the Neighbourhood Plan changes will be made to the way in which Swanley Town Council considers planning applications sent to it by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) for comment and any subsequent decisions made by SDC and notified to the Town Council.

Town Council comments on planning applications

Town Council comments on applications are considered by the Swanley Town Council Development Control Committee. This will continue but future reports on applications received will be formulated by STC staff or contractors based on the Swanley Neighbourhood Plan policies which are relevant to the application in addition to any comments on other relevant planning material considerations:

- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of light or overshadowing
- Parking
- Highway safety
- Traffic
- Noise
- Effect on listed building and conservation area
- Layout and density of building
- Design, appearance, and materials
- Government policy
- Disabled persons' access
- Proposals in the Development Plan
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Nature conservation

Monitoring the Neighbourhood Plan

In future, data will be collected on the following in order that a report can be collated twice per year for discussion with Sevenoaks District Council for the purpose of improving Neighbourhood Plan policies in any future iteration of it and providing feedback to SDC on its application of Neighbourhood Plan policy for development management:

- a) Policy compliance: Are planning applications being determined in accordance with neighbourhood plan policies?
- b) Reasons for departing from policies: If decisions depart from neighbourhood plan policies, are clear and valid reasons for doing so being described in officer reports (e.g., changes to National Policy)?
- c) Effectiveness: Are policies proving to be effective in shaping local authority decisions and appeal decisions?
- d) Ineffectiveness: If policies are proving to be ineffective, then why?
- e) Matters not addressed by policies: Are there any significant issues arising that are not covered by neighbourhood plan policies?