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# Swale Borough Council New Garden Communities

A bid to join the Government's  
Garden Communities Programme

November 2018

# Supporting note for Swale Borough Council bid to join the Government's Garden Communities Programme

## Introduction and purpose of note

1. This note is intended to provide context and background to the assumptions used by the Council in support of its bid. The note is necessary because:
  - 1) As discussed with MHCLG, the Council's bid is not related to a specific scheme (although it draws upon known schemes), but support for a process that has already commenced with the aim of determining whether new garden community schemes should form part of the Council's commenced local plan review; and
  - 2) Elements of the online DELTA form require site-based information and, given the scope of this bid, this note may assist with the online answers provided.

## Scope of proposed bid

2. Swale Borough is one the fastest growing Council areas in England, with an estimated population (2017) of 146,700. The 2016 household projections show Swale as the fastest growing Council area in Kent with unadjusted demographic need around 800 dpa.
3. On a national scale to meet our 'trend based' dwelling growth we need to accommodate 50% of the growth shown for many large cities; including Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Sheffield. Our expected demographic growth is also roughly 50% that of many English Counties including Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire.
4. Despite this fast pace of growth Swale is not a large local authority. We lack a settlement structure which can absorb this scale of growth with ease. Previously, and reflecting our network of small towns and largely rural villages, we promoted growth via a number of smaller and medium sized schemes of up to circa 1,500 dwellings, delivered as urban extensions to our towns and larger villages.
5. Reflecting these potential strategic constraints, the Council has chosen, via its Local Plan review, to explore the potential for new communities as an alternative model to deliver sustainable and community led development. This takes both officers and Members outside and beyond their established expertise. The Council has limited capacity and resources to undertake the extensive and much more proactive 'front loading' of technical evidence and engagement needed to proactively deliver new communities of a significantly larger scale.
6. We are also facing some unique technical challenges. One of the schemes being promoted to the Council includes the UK's first privately funded and delivered new Motorway junction. This is a totally untested model of delivery with no parallels in the UK. Continuing to explore such a new delivery model, in the absence of precedent or the detailed involvement of Highways England, places a considerable burden on the Council.
7. It is on this basis that this bid has been discussed with MHCLG to support two, partially overlapping stages, as follows:
  - 1) Whether and which new community scheme(s) should be taken forward into the local plan review process – ongoing until the Publication version of the Local Plan (September 2020); and

- 2) If agreed, to masterplan the scheme(s) and to put in place the structures and support necessary to move them through the local plan and development management processes – from April 2019 till 2022 and beyond.
8. Where the Council has used site specific based information, it has drawn upon ‘real’ schemes from its New Garden Community Prospectus process (see below), but due to the stage it has currently reached, for purposes of the DELTA form it has hypothesised a development strategy scenario. This should not be read as implying Council support for the said scenario ahead of decisions to be taken as part of its Local Plan review process.

### The Planning Context

9. The Council adopted its Local Plan in July 2017. It has commenced a Plan review, following a recommendation by the adopted Local Plan Inspector.
10. The Plan had been submitted with a spatial strategy whereby the Council continued to focus growth on its main towns over the whole plan period (to 2031). As part of the examination, the Inspector became concerned that this was not feasible given emerging strategic transport and air quality constraints. An early review was advised so that the Council could look at how to mitigate these constraints, giving also the Council the opportunity to now perhaps explore a new development strategy to deliver new homes over the whole plan period and beyond. Without exploring such an option, it could be the case that our ability to deliver additional rounds of ‘business as usual’ medium sized urban extensions could be limited with a risk of constraining housing delivery overall.
11. Since the Inspectors findings the pressure to deliver more housing has only increased. With the introduction of the Government’s standardised approach to housing targets, the new local plan will also need to address the implications of an increase in its annualised housing rate from 776 dpa to circa 1,050, although the final numbers will be subject to MHCLG changes to the standardised methodology.
12. The settlement strategy of our adopted local plan reflects a long-standing approach dominated by greenfield urban extensions focused at the Borough’s three principle urban areas. The majority of this growth relies heavily upon the capacity of the local and strategic highway network around Sittingbourne, notably the A2 corridor (Kent County Council) and A249 (Highways England).
13. Since our local plan examination, Highways England (HE) have committed to detailed designs to reconfigure junction 5 of the M2 with the A249 to the west of Sittingbourne. Despite this, the transport conditions of concern to the local plan Inspector remain.
14. There is, as of yet, no commitment to make similar improvements to the capacity of Junction 7 of the M2 which effectively constrains growth at the second of our main towns – Faversham. There is also no programme to mitigate the long term air quality constraints across several A2 AQMAs. Due to the geography of the Borough, and the location of existing Motorway junctions – these severely limit our ability to grow both Sittingbourne to the east, Faversham to the west, and a significant amount of potential development land between the two towns.
15. It appears highly probable that long-term solutions for transport and air quality conditions within the A2 corridor between Faversham and Newington will not be achievable without radical options being considered. Without such transport changes, the Council could well

be unable to continue with its current settlement strategy or have the ability to consider radical new strategy alternatives. Their absence has the real potential to frustrate delivery of both existing and future housing targets.

16. The Council has resolved that funding should be sought to secure delivery of both a Sittingbourne northern and southern relief road, the latter element also comprising a new junction onto the M2 (known as junction 5A). This infrastructure is also identified as a priority by our own *2018 Economic Regeneration Framework*.
17. MHCLG will be aware that such an option is being promoted both to Government and Swale in the form of a privately funded, new M2 motorway junction for Sittingbourne (J5A), alongside the relief roads referred to above and also to be developer funded. Together, these have the potential to significantly alter vehicle flows and improve conditions on the A2 and A249.
18. In addition, alongside this transport infrastructure, some 11,500 new homes are proposed to the south east of Sittingbourne, together with an expansion of some 120,000 sq. m of commercial floorspace next to the Kent Science Park.
19. These matters will need to be the subject of much testing, but are relevant to this bid.
20. Whilst it is understood from the site promoters that this scheme is supported by Highways England (HE), the fact that HE will not be responsible for funding or delivering it, places an unusual technical burden on the Council, even if it were to work in Partnership with the developers and/or HE.

#### The Local Plan Review

21. From the start of its Local Plan review process in 2017, we have been focused on the need to explore all possible spatial alternatives to the delivery of housing, including new communities.
22. New communities have been seen as one possible way we could overcome some of our long standing constraints by promoting new development which provide both new homes, but also a complete 'package' of new community benefits. For Swale, one benefit is that this model of development may be less reliant on the already stressed social and physical infrastructure of our main towns.
23. Other strong influences upon the Council have been the:
  - 1) Challenges of delivering higher housing numbers and thereby the need to provide planning strategy solutions that will endure over several cycles of plan-making;
  - 2) Need for radical solutions to transport and air quality problems on the A2;
  - 3) Strong community views on urban and village edge proposals.
  - 4) Declining quality of life at the urban edge and between towns and surrounding villages;
  - 5) The poor viability of development in areas of current development focus leading to an inability to achieve adequate levels of affordable housing and community facilities; and
  - 6) An ad-hoc approach to physical and community infrastructure planning.

24. The Council recognises that new garden communities might represent one way to address these issues. As a result, we published [Choices for Housing Growth Peter Brett Associates February 2018](#). This study took a high-level analysis of physical, environmental and viability constraints to determine potential locations where new communities might be considered and how they might be delivered. It identified a less constrained area broadly comprising an east-west band of land north and south of the A2 corridor. Although other land on the Isle of Sheppey was identified, this was considered not to be a priority for new communities due to poor overall levels of viability.

25. Whilst we have some stocks of brownfield land, these are severely limited, both in terms of dealing with likely growth levels overall, but also as a means to deliver new communities. We have no former airfields or large scale derelict industrial areas that we can draw upon.

26. A key recommendation of the work was that Swale should further test the appetite for the delivery of new garden communities - in effect a call for sites. We have done this via a Prospectus – a process probably unique in terms of a local authority activity seeking new community sites.

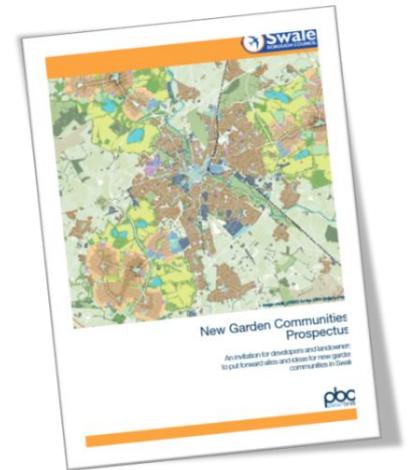


Figure 1 Swale New Garden Communities Prospectus April 2018

#### The Swale New Garden Communities Prospectus April 2018

27. Launched in April 2018, the Council’s own new garden community’s prospectus set out our ambitions. As well as highlighting TCPA Garden Community Principles, the prospectus provided a series of strong design principles and expectations that any new community in Swale should aspire to, including provision of 40% of dwellings as affordable. This latter aspiration reflected the likelihood that submissions were most likely to be located in areas most able to support this provision – a marked potential change for a Council that currently concentrates most of its development in areas less able to support this level of provision.

28. At the August deadline, four submissions had been received:

- 1) Scheme 1: Land at south-east Sittingbourne (Quinn Estates): 623 ha, circa 11,500 homes (inc. 10% affordable housing), 120,000 sq. m commercial space, community uses (local retail space within 4 district centres), GP surgeries, education (up to 4 primary schools, secondary school, possible FE), sport and leisure, natural and semi-natural open space and amenity greenspace. New privately funded and delivered motorway junction and M2/A2 link road.

*NB: Excluded currently from the submission is 92 ha of further land in the control of the master developer promoted for other development opportunities intended to bring forward a further link road proposal between the A2 and A249 (The Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road). The Council will be taking this area into account in its assessment work, but the area is excluded from the bid at the present time.*

- 2) Scheme 2: Land at Bobbing (Crabtree & Crabtree Ltd.): 226 ha, circa 2,800 homes (inc. 40% affordable housing), 100 ha of open space, community facilities including primary school, health centre, local centre, village hall and sports pitches, 3 ha of employment floorspace, stopping up/re-alignment of Sheppey Way.

- 3) Scheme 3: Land at south-east Faversham (Duchy of Cornwall): 131 ha, circa 2,500 homes (inc. 40% affordable housing) and commercial space, community uses (4 local centres, health centre), education (primary school), sport and leisure (inc. possible relocation of cricket club and football ground), network of habitats and spaces.
  - 4) Scheme 4: Land at Ashford Road, North Street, Faversham (Gladman Developments Ltd.): 317 ha, circa 5,000 homes (inc. 40% affordable housing). Employment provision, a High Street for retail/mixed use and market hall, primary and secondary school, community uses, allotments, community orchard, playing fields and areas, together with open space and woodland. Re-alignment of the A251 through the site, together with improvements at J6.
29. Although addressed elsewhere in the bid, it is likely that schemes 2 and 3 could be delivered wholly within the Local Plan period to 2038, whilst schemes 1 and 4 could be reasonably be expected to deliver around 50% of their housing provision and all their commercial elements within the plan period. In the case of scheme 1, transport infrastructure would be delivered in the plan period, potentially as early as 2022/23.
  30. We have followed up the submissions with further questioning and clarifications from the scheme promoters and this has included both an interview process and presentations and Q&A with Council Members. Council Members and officers have also visited new community examples in Cambridgeshire in October.
  31. The schemes are being assessed for their adherence to Garden Community Principles and to the Council's Prospectus. Strengths and risk will be identified and we are following up potential delivery models and visiting best practice examples.
  32. If successful, the bid proposals will support this process and beyond.
  33. To assist MHCLG Appendix 1 includes further detail of the assumptions applied.

## Appendix 1 Assumptions/ used for completion of online DELTA form

*NB: In a small number of some cases, given the non-site specific nature of the bid, it has not been felt appropriate to put actual numbers or actual infrastructure provision on the DELTA form. In these instances, and to enable the form to be submitted, a 'zero' has been entered.*

### Housing

1. Based on a potential new Local Plan housing target of circa 16,480 (2022-2037/38), after taking into account an assumed delivery of all current adopted Local Plan allocations, some 8,126 dwellings need to be addressed by the Local Plan review. To provide for the majority of these, the Council may need to consider the potential allocation of one or more locations for new communities.
2. Total figures of housing delivery are assumed to be up to 2038 (the end of the Local Plan Review period) and the housing trajectory is provided on this basis; however, delivery of a number of the new community submissions would extend beyond the plan period. For example, if the two largest schemes were selected, this could lead to 16,500 homes being delivered from new communities across several cycles of plan making. It is possible that the largest of the four schemes could still be delivering in 2050.
3. Affordable housing is assumed at the Council's Prospectus standard of 40%. Three of the four submitted schemes are committed at this level.

### Employment

4. The Council's Employment Land Review 2018 indicates that some 10,500 jobs could be provided, although a significant proportion of this growth is in the non-B -class sectors. Again, for purposes of the bid, it is assumed that significant elements of this job growth could occur within the new communities, although it is not known with certainty as to how many.
5. For purposes of floorspace and use class needs, the Employment Land Review 2018 indicates that some 15 ha (60,000 sq. m) of land is required for offices (B1a) and 41 ha (164,000 sq. m) of industrial and warehousing (B2 & B8). Within the development scenario, it is assumed that most of this provision would be made within the new communities. If HCA density guidance were applied, taking the average density across all B1 uses (1 job/35m<sup>2</sup>) would generate 6,300 jobs out of 224,000m<sup>2</sup> of B1 employment space.
6. The promotor of scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne advocates that some 10,500 jobs could be created, whilst scheme 3 at SE Faversham indicates a 1 job per home ratio (i.e. 2,500 jobs) in accordance with TCPA garden community principles. These figures are not calculated on the same basis as the forecast for the Council's Employment Land Review as it is not a 'net' jobs figure. However, the Council wishes to test these aspirational levels further. Were these jobs to be successfully delivered this could help the Borough to become more self-contained. At the moment Swale is a net exporter of labour to neighbouring areas where most travel is car dominated. Increasing the number of jobs available locally could help to offer a wider range and choice of employment locally – so reducing the need for existing and future residents to travel. These aspirational figures of job generation (i.e. 13,000) are therefore used for purposes of the bid.
7. Of the submitted schemes, in recognition of their location close to other business hubs, two - land at Bobbing (scheme 2) and land at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham (scheme 4) - make modest 'B' class provision related more to their rural community location, although the latter

seeks to attract a wider offer given its location close to J6 of the M2. One scheme – SE Faversham (scheme 3)- seeks to embed mixed provision within nodes and within residential streets, comprising lighter ‘B’ class uses, including offices, together with retail. The largest scheme – SE Sittingbourne (scheme 1) - indicates strategic scales of employment provision, including flexible office space, incubator uses and high-tech Bio Science/Pharmaceutical Manufacturing space.

#### Physical and social infrastructure

8. All the submitted schemes provide at least the minimum necessary facilities commensurate with the scale of their growth, whilst one is transport infrastructure led. For purposes of the DELTA form, the Council has used the table on page 42 of [Choices for Housing Growth Peter Brett Associates February 2018](#) which set out typical (and scalable) community provision for a 5,000-dwelling community.

#### Total site space and strategic framework plans

9. In the absence of a chosen scheme(s) a ‘zero’ has been entered in the DELTA form. However, the site areas of the four submissions can be seen above.
10. The bid provides the location plans and the strategic framework plan plans as submitted as part of Swale’s New Garden Communities Prospectus.

#### Green space

11. In the absence of a chosen scheme(s) a ‘zero’ has been entered in the DELTA form. However, the four submitted schemes indicate green space of between 33% & 40% of the total site area.

## The online form

### THE FOLLOWING IS A REPRODUCTION OF THE DELTA FORM

Name of local authorities and promoters/developers involved (clearly identifying lead authority)

Swale Borough Council (lead authority), Quinn Estates, Crabtree and Crabtree Developments Ltd, The Duchy of Cornwall, Gladman Developments Ltd.

#### Main Contact

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#### Organisation

Swale Borough Council

#### Headline Information

##### Housing

##### Number of Homes

8,700 delivered by 2038

##### Types of homes and tenures

Market housing (inc. small and medium housebuilders), with up to 40% affordable, specialist housing, Private Rented Sector (PRS) and self-build opportunities. We also wish to support community aspirations for Community Land Trusts, the most advance of which is at Faversham. Housing types and mix will be reinforced by Local Plan policy.

##### Employment

##### Number of jobs created

13,000

##### Approx. area of employment space (ha)

56

##### Key types of jobs created

Use class B1a-c, B2 and B8, together with A and D class uses.

##### Approx. area of retail/commercial space (ha)

Retail unknown – 0 entered.

## Community Infrastructure

### Number of schools

8

### Types and size of schools (if known)

7 Primary (2.3ha) and 1 secondary (10ha), plus expansion of existing

### Number of health and care facilities

3

### Type and size of health and care facilities (if known)

Six GP surgeries X3, 840 sq. m each, plus expansion of existing

### Number of community facilities

4

### Type and size of community facilities

Assume 1,000 sq. m per hall

### Number of district and local centres

Zero district and 8 local centres.

## Site Space

### Area of site space (ha)

0 – As the bid is non scheme specific

### Area of green space (ha)

0 – As the bid is non scheme specific

## 2) If 10,000 or fewer homes are proposed, please provide details of the circumstances you believe make the proposal suitable for consideration

Although for purposes of our bid, only some 8,100 dwellings might only be required within the current Local Plan review period (2038), it is likely that some schemes will extend beyond this with the probability that the number of homes will be in excess of 8,100 in the plan period, with substantially more beyond it. This could either be exceeded in combination with two schemes or, with one scheme in one location.

## 4) Is the proposed garden community a free-standing or transformational garden community?

The four submitted proposals vary in their characteristics:

- 1) Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne is largely free standing, but embraces existing rural communities and at one point adjoins the existing urban area.
- 2) Scheme 2 at Bobbing builds on an existing rural community and other isolated areas of ribbon development, but would be relatively free standing in terms of its relationship with Sittingbourne.
- 3) Scheme 3 at SE Faversham is an urban extension although being planned on garden community lines and will contain many new facilities that will enable it to be self-contained

for day to day activities, whilst being complementary to the higher order facilities of the adjacent urban area. It is envisaged that it will have a similar functional relationship as between Poundbury and Dorchester in Dorset.

- 4) Scheme 4 at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham could be fully described as free-standing, although it is only separated from Faversham (and submission 2) by the motorway and would involve consolidating an existing hamlet.

The geography and planning constraints in Swale limit, to some degree, our scope for totally self-contained/isolated new settlements because some 60% of the open land in the Borough is either within the flood plain (and designated for its biodiversity importance) or within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As a result, all proposals are in some way related to either Sittingbourne or Faversham.

The degree to which the proposals would represent transformational garden communities would be part of our proposed assessment process; however, all four submissions have the potential to be so (see Q5).

5) In the case of proposals for transformational garden communities where substantive growth is proposed to an existing place, please outline the economic social and environmental outcomes you expect the proposal to achieve for the place as a whole?

The economic social and environmental outcomes would vary depending upon the scheme(s) selected. They are still subject to on-going assessment. Examples across the four submissions could however include:

- Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne: An infrastructure led proposal for the provision of a major economic land release with a new privately funded and delivered motorway junction to unlock the potential of the Kent Science Park with 120,000 sq. m of floorspace (with one job per dwelling ratio advocated). A transformational reconfiguration of the road and public transport network at Sittingbourne would also be delivered as a cost to the development, having the potential means to address the A2 and A249 constraints that could otherwise hamper future growth. The scheme also proposes major new FE provision for Sittingbourne, together with significant levels of new green space for communities. The provision of major new social and community facilities will also significantly supplement and benefit existing rural communities. As an infrastructure led proposal, affordable housing provision would be at 10%.

To further amplify the possible transformational elements of this submission in respect of transport, there is the potential to firstly deliver the first privately funded motorway junction, alongside the linked completion of both the Sittingbourne southern and northern relief roads; all of which could change the way Sittingbourne functions as a place. This would then present more scope to relieve congestion and 'unsympathetic' uses in or close to the town centre to provide for regeneration – including brownfield land – to gain pace and traction as the whole town begins to function more effectively rather than being a prisoner to its currently limited transport access options.

By supporting town centre regeneration and growth with well connected (by public transport and non-motorised modes especially) access, as well as the high GVA jobs aspired to at Kent Science Park, there could be uplifts in creating a diverse range of employment in Sittingbourne itself, helping to diversify the jobs market to reflect the greater diversity being brought to the housing supply.

However, of all the schemes before the Council, it is these prospective transformational benefits that need particular assessment and elements of the Council's bid are intended to assess this with the aim of maximising its transformational possibilities.

- Scheme 2 at Bobbing: New rural employment opportunities, together with new community facilities for new and existing settlement, including improving existing transport conditions around the existing school. Major new open space facilities for existing and new communities and 40% affordable housing provision.
- Scheme 3 at SE Faversham: Exemplar community engagement processes will embed social, environmental and economic outcomes into the initial planning of the community. It will deliver a genuinely mixed uses and 40% affordable housing. Potential wider benefits to Faversham include increasing its attractiveness as a visitor location and through potential calming of the A2 through innovative design approaches. The overall approach here is founded on 'New Urbanism', with social, economic and environmental outcomes based on those secured at Poundbury, Dorset, where a wide range of housing and mixed uses within 'walkable' communities encourage residents to stay within the area during the day and evening.
- Submission 4 at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham: New rural employment opportunities that could also serve wider employment needs, together with 40% affordable housing provision and new community and retail facilities to serve the new community and the surrounding rural area. Potential for re-alignment of A251 to improve existing transport conditions in North Street and the improvements to J6 of the M2. Potential for major country park to improve landscape quality both adjacent to and inside the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

### The support letters

It is envisaged that four letters from the scheme promoters would be provided, alongside those from the South East Local Economic Partnership, Kent County Council and the Kent Thames Gateway Partnership.

### Strategic Approach

6) Provide a statement on how the proposed garden community fits with local or area housing and economic plans and strategies; how it will meet anticipated population growth both within the relevant Local Plan period and beyond; and how it will address local housing affordability issues.

a) How it fits with local housing and economic plans and strategies

The Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission's report (June 2018) suggested that the wider Thames Estuary region was capable of accommodating 1.3 million new jobs and 1 million new homes by 2050. The Commission recognises North Kent's potential to contribute towards ambitious housing and economic growth as part of the wider Thames Estuary area. This takes further the agenda for growth and regeneration in Thames Gateway Kent. Swale has a key role to play and providing for new garden communities could be one option which can contribute to delivery of these ambitions.

New communities would also significantly support the *SE Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan (2014)* and its objectives for Sittingbourne and Sheppey:

- Housing growth.

- Private sector employment.
- Increased economic value.

For Swale and the Thames Gateway, the strategy notes that the area contains significant additional land for residential and commercial development. It identifies the following key investments to unlock growth, all of which would be supported by one or more new communities:

- Improvements to Junction 5 at Sittingbourne and Junction 7 of the M2 at Faversham.
- The development of a new Junction 5a and a link road to Kent Science Park from the M2. This would facilitate the Science Park's expansion as a major centre for life sciences and environmental technologies.
- Improved access to residential and commercial developments in northeast Sittingbourne. This includes completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to provide direct access from the A249 to the A2 and improvements.
- FE facilities at Sittingbourne, the largest town in Kent without further education provision.

The 2014 Strategic Economic Plan is imminently to be replaced by a new Strategic Economic Statement, which will itself be the framework for developing Local Industrial Strategy/ies in the SELEP area. It is understood that the above priorities will continue to be followed through, e.g. LGF funded projects and inputs to shape Highways England's RIS, etc. It is also likely that the new Statement will continue to resonate in its support for garden community ambitions. This is reflected in SELEPs support for this bid.

New communities have the potential to support the Council's own *2018 Economic Regeneration Framework* in terms of:

- Supporting improvements to the strategic road network – junctions on the M2 and A249
- Completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road and a new A2-M2 link to help address issues on the A2 and create the capacity for future growth.
- Supporting a pipeline of available commercial sites and premises across Swale to serve expansion as well as new investment.
- Improving the supply of workshops, studios and office space for micro and start-up businesses.
- Supporting the delivery of new FE provision.

#### **b) How it will meet anticipated population growth**

See also context statement. Subject to testing, the Council will seek to accommodate its anticipated population growth in full as defined by the Government's standardised methodology. Alongside the delivery of existing adopted Local Plan allocations, new communities may be the only option to ensure that these future population needs can be met as the existing Borough social and physical infrastructure comes under increasing strain. New communities could therefore deliver the lion's share of the growth needing to be planned for. Depending upon the scheme(s) selected, there is also scope for new communities to meet Swale's population growth needs across several plan cycles.

There will also be scope to more closely align housing type and mix with actual housing need in Swale as the scale of the schemes will have more inbuilt flexibility so that they are better able to reflect demographic needs than conventional smaller urban extensions.

#### c) How will it address local housing affordability issues?

We recognise that affordability here has worsened to the detriment of existing and future residents. Latest data shows that our house prices are on average over 9-times local workplace earnings.

We fully recognise that we need to deliver more new homes but also a wider choice to increase local access to housing. Simply delivering more mass-market housing (volume housebuilding) will not be sufficient to achieve this. Recognising that we needed to widen access to market housing, our New Garden Communities Prospectus made it clear that any new community proposal it took forward needed to make significant provision for new tenures of market housing. We are also seeking a significant commitment to self-build as these could offer residents a new route to affordable home ownership.

Aside from market housing, the delivery of affordable homes in Swale has been well below need. Due to viability constraints, current 'policy' levels require new development to make provision of between 10% (Sittingbourne) and 40% (Rural Areas). Schemes on the Isle of Sheppey have a zero percentage; viability issues making the deliverability of new communities there especially difficult. Three of the four submissions have committed to 40% provision which would be a significant uplift in performance. One scheme (scheme 1 SE Sittingbourne) is currently committed to 10%, reflecting the infrastructure led nature of the submission. Whilst clearly on a total provision of some 11,500 homes, this would still be a relatively significant number of affordable homes overall, the Council would wish to test the promoter's assumptions and could, if successful in its bid, be looking for assistance from Homes England to enable some improvement in affordable housing provision in this scheme. It would also want to explore whether other funding might be available to take some of the financial load for infrastructure provision from the master developer in order that it might improve garden community credentials and, in particular, an improved affordable housing offer.

#### d) How it will provide and embed opportunities to expand further in the future if required

All four schemes have the potential for further expansion beyond their submitted 'red line' plans (subject to appropriate Local Plan review mechanisms) and the promoters have confirmed this to be the case. In particular, the Council will ensure that infrastructure provision is able to accommodate future needs arising over and above that currently required under the proposals submitted.

Scheme 1, at SE Sittingbourne, has land promoted by the same master developer outside of their submissions (and outside of this bid). This is intended to secure delivery of additional and related road infrastructure. The Council considers it desirable that such land is included within the new community submission, but this has been declined due to the agreement between the master developer and the other landowners. We will ensure that this additional land is embedded within the new community process should it be allocated and to support this, we would wish to access advice as to how best to achieve this end.

A number of the submissions raise 'red-line' issues in terms of whether they represent the most appropriate boundaries within which to consider the new community. In particular, schemes close to existing urban areas raise questions as to their relationship with land adjacent the urban edge not part of the submission. We are considering how to address these areas and could and would

envisage any master plan area as additionally embracing these areas. If needed, the Council will consider CPO in these areas to achieve a sustainable relationship between existing and proposed communities. If this action were pursued, it would bring the Council into a more active role in the development of the site by becoming a landowner in its own right and this, in turn could change the nature of the proposed local delivery vehicle.

## Local Leadership

7 a) Set out the extent of community engagement undertaken to date in respect of the garden community. This should include any engagement with key local stakeholders, for example, Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships, LEPs, energy district network operators, etc.

Early work for the Council shows us that Swale is potentially in a 'chicken and egg' situation. Our previous development strategy, favouring small and medium sized urban extensions to its main towns, has affected developer and infrastructure partners' ways of thinking. Large scale new community proposals have not previously been assembled or promoted to Swale because they stood little chance of being successful. Further, the possible benefits a new community model of development could bring were not widely understood. We have undertaken much activity in an attempt to overcome these barriers, involving extensive engagement with Council Members, the development industry and delivery partners. This most obviously resulted in our Prospectus – launched as a public document in April 2018 and supported by a number of stakeholder workshops and one to one engagement. We used this approach to provide developers the confidence to propose new communities to Swale and also to start communities and infrastructure providers thinking about how they could be delivered.

Dialogue both with the South East LEP and the County Council has been undertaken for purposes of progressing this bid and letters of support have been included.

b) How do you intend to engage with local residents and stakeholders about the garden community proposal in the future?

Community engagement on the submitted schemes themselves has been variable because of the stage reached in the Local Plan review process. To have undertaken such consultation prematurely could have allowed communities to have believed that the schemes were being progressed without regard to the emerging local planning framework and without regard to their ability to be involved in its preparation.

We have however undertaken community engagement as part of our scoping work for the Local Plan review. In our document [Looking Ahead](#), published in April 2018, we canvassed views around the role of new communities and how they could be delivered in Swale.

In terms of the submitted proposals themselves, all schemes have engaged to one extent or another with utility and infrastructure providers and we are in dialogue with them as a means to further confirm their stated positions. We will shortly wish to begin dialogue with scheme promoters over delivery vehicle mechanisms – an area where a successful bid may provide valuable support.

One scheme at SE Faversham (scheme 3) has undertaken, with the agreement of the Borough and Town Councils and other key parties, an extensive Enquiry by Design process with the local community, led by the Princes' Trust, to inform the submission of their proposals to the Council's Prospectus. The promoters of schemes at Bobbing (scheme 2) and North Street (scheme 4),

Faversham are now also beginning early community engagement. Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne has yet to engage and the Council will be encouraging them to do so as soon as possible.

Moving forward, we propose that there would be three strands of engagement:

1. Through the various stages provided by the Local Plan review process. In particular, at issues and options and preferred option stages, the Council would envisage directing considerable efforts toward innovative community engagement techniques and is looking for this within its bid proposals.
2. As the Council indicates its likely preferred option(s), it will advocate a process by which the scheme promoters undertake Enquiry by Design (or equivalent) processes involving stakeholders to create both masterplans in support of the local plan process and, secondly, through detailed design codes to support the development management process. Extensive engagement would also be required as part of any pre-application process.
3. The Council would establish community representation with the proposed delivery structure for the chosen settlement(s), through its master planning, delivery and post development phases.

8. Where a proposed garden community is cross-boundary or located close to the boundaries of neighbouring authorities, describe the type and level of local authority co-operation and joint working taking place.

Although the schemes are not cross-boundary or located close to the boundaries of neighbouring authorities, there are joint co-operation issues that would need to be addressed. These are likely to be primarily related to questions of transport and travel patterns.

In the case of transport, all the four submissions, to one degree or another, are reliant on actions that need to be undertaken by Highways England, notably at junctions 5 and 7 of the M2. Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne would also require Highways England to effectively 'sign off' a privately funded and delivered new motorway junction (M2 5a) - a first for strategic transport infrastructure provision. Although liaison with Highways England is in place, the Council may benefit from the potential leverage available through the Garden Communities programme to ensure that if chosen, key decisions across Government can be made to support the timely delivery of the new community in question. Such co-ordination and leverage may also be relevant to other Council's, such as Medway, Maidstone, Canterbury, Thanet and Dover, whose own growth proposals may be dependent on improvements at key motorway junctions in Swale.

All of the schemes potentially raise issues of changes in travel patterns and labour markets between Council areas:

1. Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne: Advocates growth at levels and of a type that is advocated as offering the potential to change commuting patterns between Swale and other locations. This is because workers in many of the 'higher order' job sectors currently out-commute and provision at the Kent Science Park would have an unspecified potential to change this. Locally, the likely travel pattern changes could be between Swale, Maidstone and the Medway Towns, but the site's location with easy access to Ebbsfleet and Lower Thames Crossing could also have implications for travel.
2. Scheme 2 at Bobbing: Has the potential to impact on travel movements to and from Maidstone and Medway Towns due to transport links.

3. Schemes 3 & 4 at SE Faversham and North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham: Have the potential to impact on travel movements to and from Faversham to Ashford and Canterbury, but also further afield given the location close to the M2 and A2(T).

These will be matters both for further testing, informed by assessment work forming part of this bid, and for subsequent discussion with our partners. However, given that we are at an early stage in this process, direct engagement with adjacent Councils has been limited to information giving about the process that it has initiated. However, as appropriate, this co-operation will be increased.

At this stage, we do not envisage that housing provision made by any of the proposed new community would be available to meet the land supply of other districts, although in the longer term this could be reviewed.

### Garden Community Vision

9 a) Set out the vision and key development objectives for the proposed garden community. Highlight how the garden community will address the qualities set out in the Prospectus, and any other principles considered important.

Our own New Garden Communities Prospectus set out the Council's own vision for the process:

- A new opportunity for growth and a step change in quality.
- Investing in success.
- Investing in growth.
- Creating superb new places.
- A new beginning...a radical shift?

We also provided a series of development objectives that should be addressed by promoters:

- Be located in an appropriate, sustainable location and deliver 2,500 to 10,000 dwellings for the long-term.
- Provide major mixed-use sustainable development to meet the needs of a self-supporting community, which can grow into valued places.
- Catering for a diversity of commercial and housing provision, including a diverse mix of types and tenures, self-build and affordable at 40%.
- Meet high standards of design including Building for Life 12, BREEAM, the BRE's Home Quality Mark, the Government's optional technical standards for housing (on water, accessibility and wheelchair housing and internal space) and Building with Nature certified core standards.
- Be delivered through a partnership approach and managed through a long-term community.
- Controlled stewardship structure to provide a self-sustaining lasting legacy.
- Proactively engage the existing and new community, in positively planning for the future.
- Ensure that any land value capture is sufficient to provide significant benefits for existing and future residents over and above what is required, and fund its full and extensive infrastructure requirements.
- Be master planned, designed and 'plan led' to the highest standards creating an outstanding community, which positively reflects and enhances the local context and character.

- Deliver a safe, secure, vibrant, inclusive, healthy and locally distinctive self-contained community, based on bringing the unique Swale countryside into its ‘heart’.
- Respond to heritage and environmental assets, achieving net gains in biodiversity and incorporating the very best landscape and urban design.
- Make a positive contribution to the existing transport situation, and provide a sustainable, integrated and robust active transport network incorporating the necessary infrastructure improvements and latest technology.
- Deliver and maintain extensive landscaping and multifunctional green infrastructure over a significant percentage of the land area through a comprehensive network of open spaces, habitats and green corridors. Providing walking/cycling provision so as to achieve excellent connectivity and access to the full range of facilities.
- Provide a sustainable place which integrates imaginative energy and waste solutions, recognises the need to maximise efficiency, embraces technological solutions, minimises pollution and delivers zero carbon development.
- Start delivering new homes as soon as possible, ideally by 2026, and reach an annual rate of at least 150-250 dwellings per year, per community, using innovative approaches to increase delivery throughout the rest of the new plan period and beyond.

Although the submitted schemes are being assessed for their ability to address both the Prospectus vision and objectives, at this stage, we believe there are good prospects for one or more new communities to meet these objectives, either on the basis of the submissions made, or with the support of a successful bid, are able to improve their overall performance. Likewise, schemes have been asked to demonstrate their compliance with TCPA principles and again, whilst there is scope for schemes to strongly support these principles, there is also the opportunity, via the bid, to seek further enhancements.

Table 1 below considers each of the Government’s Garden community ‘qualities’ and provides commentary on the likely direction of travel of the submissions before the Council.

Table 1 Meeting Garden Community Qualities

Garden Community Quality	Direction of travel of Council submissions
<p><b>a. Clear identity – a distinctive local identity as a new garden community, including at its heart an attractive and functioning centre and public realm.</b></p>	<p>All schemes are committed to creating local identity through the design process, including use of master planning and design codes which would be used by the master developer to ‘sign off’ all phases of development. This will be particularly important for schemes of significant scale where the intention may be to involve a large number of developers who will have their own design templates.</p> <p>All schemes include at least one functioning centre and all present major opportunities for the public realm.</p>
<p><b>b. Sustainable scale – built at a scale which supports the necessary infrastructure to allow the community to function self-sufficiently on a</b></p>	<p>All the submitted schemes are of sufficient scale to support the entire infrastructure necessary to meet needs on a day to day basis and in one case (scheme</p>

<b>Garden Community Quality</b>	<b>Direction of travel of Council submissions</b>
<p><b>day to day basis, with the capacity for future growth to meet the evolving housing and economic needs of the local area.</b></p>	<p>1) would provide housing and transport infrastructure of wider than local benefit as a means to unlock provision of a new motorway junction. All will be nevertheless reliant on strategic improvements to the national road network.</p> <p>Their self-sufficiency will depend upon their relationship with adjacent towns and villages. All will meet normal day to day needs and would all improve the facilities available to existing communities. However, the location of the urban areas of Sittingbourne and Faversham will mean that it will be important for those settlements to continue to provide the higher order facilities in order to ensure their continued vitality.</p> <p>All scheme promoters confirm that there is capacity for future growth and infrastructure provision will be planned on that basis.</p>
<p><b>c. Well-designed places – with vibrant mixed-use communities that support a range of local employment types and premises, retail opportunities, recreational and community facilities.</b></p>	<p>We support the Thames Gateway Kent Partnership ambition to raise quality in new development across North Kent, as expressed in its Growth Plan 2014-20.</p> <p>All the proposals advocate mixed use provision, but vary in their approach, ranging from discrete ‘zoned’ areas for employment, recreational and community to facilities to those where provision is more closely embedded and fine grained within residential areas.</p>
<p><b>d. Great homes – offer a wide range of high quality, distinctive homes. This includes affordable housing and a mix of tenures for all stages of life.</b></p>	<p>All proposals fully support this objective and include proposals to encourage SME builders, self/custom build and Community Land Trusts. These will be supported by planning policy, but the bid may offer the potential to further improve this offer.</p> <p>Three schemes support 40% affordable housing and there may be scope, via a successful bid, to improve the performance of scheme 1.</p>
<p><b>e. Strong local vision and engagement – designed and executed with the engagement and involvement of the existing local community, and future residents and businesses. This should include consideration of how the natural and historic environment of the local area is reflected and respected.</b></p>	<p>All scheme promoters are fully committed to this process and have set out their approaches to future engagement. Scheme 3 has already actively prepared its submissions using an Enquiry by Design process.</p> <p>All schemes to one degree or another have implications for the natural and historic environments. All have already, or intend to shortly, further consider how they intend to reflect, respect and enhance these assets.</p>
<p><b>f. Transport –integrated, forward looking and</b></p>	<p>Indicative master plans all appear to show good</p>

Garden Community Quality	Direction of travel of Council submissions
<p><b>accessible transport options that support economic prosperity and wellbeing for residents. This should include promotion of public transport, walking, and cycling so that settlements are easy to navigate, and facilitate simple and sustainable access to jobs, education, and services.</b></p>	<p>progress in this area with layouts showing all key requirements linked by networks intended to facilitate sustainable travel. Scheme 3, in particular, displays positive indications of achieving walkable communities.</p> <p>Scheme 1 introduces road infrastructure that will be of wider than local economic and transport benefit, which in turn offers the prospects of a new public transport network for Sittingbourne and the potential ability to drive model shift.</p> <p>A potential challenge for all schemes will be their ability to encourage significant model shift to public transport which may in turn require other additional investment (See Q10a).</p> <p>All schemes however are subject to transport modelling.</p>
<p><b>g. Healthy places – designed to provide the choices and chances for all to live a healthy life, through taking a whole systems approach to key local health &amp; wellbeing priorities and strategies.</b></p>	<p>Indicative master plans all appear to show strong promise in their commitments to access to greenspace and healthy activates. Some schemes may need to undertake further work to demonstrate a whole systems approach and a successful bid may offer scope to support this.</p>
<p><b>h. Green space – generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure that promotes health, wellbeing, and quality of life, and considers opportunities to deliver environmental gains such as biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital.</b></p>	<p>All schemes demonstrate strong commitments to good quality green space ranging from some 33% – 40 % of the total site areas. Given the nature of current land uses on the sites proposed (intensive agricultural land), the prospects for biodiversity net gain and enhancements to natural capital appear good and present the opportunity to provide an exemplar.</p> <p>Scheme 1 includes a number of local wildlife designations and ancient woodland which will require careful mitigation and positive proposals to address. The promoter recognises these issues.</p>
<p><b>i. Legacy and stewardship arrangements – should be in place for the care of community assets, infrastructure and public realm, for the benefit of the whole community.</b></p>	<p>All schemes advocate a master developer approach and are clear in their belief that there needs to be strong legacy and stewardship arrangements in place at an early stage. We are clear that a holistic approach is required to ensure that all assets are considered for the benefit of the whole community.</p> <p>The Council has been clear in its Prospectus that these are issues to resolve at an earliest stage and the way forward will also be reinforced by planning policy.</p>

Garden Community Quality	Direction of travel of Council submissions
<p><b>j. Future proofed – designed to be resilient places that allow for changing demographics, future growth, and the impacts of climate change including flood risk and water availability, with durable landscape and building design planned for generations to come. This should include anticipation of the opportunities presented by technological change such as driverless cars and renewable energy measures.</b></p>	<p>The larger schemes before the Council are better placed to flex over time due to their longer build out. However, all schemes show strong potential to address these issues, particularly in the areas of landscape, flooding and water, building design and renewable energy. The use of green space and SuDs are likely to make these climate resilient communities.</p> <p>All the schemes would appear to have strong scope to respond to other technological changes such as driverless cars, but a successful bid process would give us scope to draw upon wider expertise in these areas to influence master planning work.</p>

b) Provide details of review mechanisms and tools that will be put in place to secure delivery of the quality aspects of the garden community. E.g. a design review panel.

At this stage, all the scheme promoters are advocating use of the master developer approach by which the landowner or developer retains control of the design process, in partnership with the Council via its informal local delivery vehicle (see Q10). In one case, scheme 3, the landowner has taken this a stage further, explicitly highlighting that they will retain the freehold until such times as each house is ‘signed off’ as meeting the design code/passport. As part of the master planning and detailed development of the proposals, we already have in place a Design Review Panel that we would use, but if successful in this bid, we wish to supplement this with our own in-house urban/landscape design skills.

## Deliverability

### Milestones

10 a) Identify the key risks to delivery of the milestones between now and start on site shown in the timeline submitted with this bid and set out the measures you will take to mitigate these risks.

Table 2 below identifies both our risks and intended mitigation measures.

Table 2 Identifying potential risks and mitigation measures

Potential Risks	Mitigation Measures
<p><b>a. Reliance on Highways England transport improvements delays delivery.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early dialogue already commenced.</li> <li>• Swale inclusion in the Garden Communities programme will support Highways England investment priorities.</li> <li>• Highways England to form a partner on strategic delivery team of chosen settlement(s).</li> </ul>
<p><b>b. A failure in modal shift toward public transport leaves new community’s car dominated.</b></p>	<p>So often new housing development can be poorly served by amenities, local employment and public transport, all contributing to increased car</p>

Potential Risks	Mitigation Measures
	<p>dependency. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure masterplan makes comprehensive provision for non-car modes.</li> <li>• The Council and County Councils will prepare a detailed Local Transport Strategy to support the Local Plan. This will set priorities and steer future investment. This will be especially critical, if transformational public transport use at Sittingbourne is to be achieved.</li> <li>• Include existing Bus Partnership within strategic delivery team of chosen settlement(s).</li> <li>• Ensure ‘walkable’ communities.</li> <li>• Ensure sustainable location of employment and amenities, alongside enhanced PT provision and linked incentives (e.g. smart ticketing, congestion charging/parking policies). This will help reduce the need for people to use cars and have alternatives when they do need to make journeys.</li> <li>• Given the scope to support broader modal shift both within new communities and across other new and existing developments, we will, with the support of a successful bid, commission further economic analysis on existing travel to work and labour supply patterns and how new provision could disrupt behaviours in a positive way so as to help to break the mould of car dependency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>c. Infrastructure led proposals challenge ability to comprehensively meet Garden Community principles, notably affordable housing provision.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigorous testing of viability assumptions.</li> <li>• Exploring ability of Homes England to further support schemes to improve performance.</li> <li>• Explore other funding streams for infrastructure to reduce master developer burden.</li> <li>• Explore scope for SELEP support/assistance, either technical or through future Shared Prosperity Funding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>d. Market saturation/developer capacity leads to slow delivery and failure of Council’s Five-Year Supply.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All scheme promoters recognise that they need to ensure that large developers are not solely responsible for delivery of their schemes and that opportunities are present across a range of markets, such as small to medium size developers, specialist housing providers and self and custom builders. We will also wish to encourage Community Land Trust Involvement and will pursue this via policy in respect of</li> </ul>

Potential Risks	Mitigation Measures
	specific allocations.
<p><b>e. Community concerns lead either to delay in planning processes and thereby delay in delivery.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough assessment and evidence base by the Council provides a robust case for the soundness of schemes that may be taken forward.</li> <li>• Early and genuine community engagement, including community representation in key structures.</li> <li>• Strong political commitment for the chosen scheme(s).</li> </ul>
<p><b>f. Planning constraints cannot be overcome within the detailed master planning and pre-application processes.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At an early stage, we will assess the significance of the potential impacts on these constraints and the degree to which these can be minimised and mitigated in compliance with national planning policy. If schemes are progressed, further detailed assessment of mitigation and compensatory measures will be undertaken.</li> </ul>
<p><b>g. Securing the appropriate ‘red line’ boundary for the site leads to a less than optimum land area and/or leads to undesirable development pressures on adjacent land.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with promoters and those with interests in appropriate adjoining sites to bring sites into the ‘red line’ with appropriate end uses that reflect overall objectives.</li> <li>• If necessary, we will use CPO powers and access skills via the New Garden Communities programme in support.</li> <li>• We will use our membership of the New Garden Communities programme to give us greater confidence in resisting unsuitable proposals on sites adjacent to new community locations.</li> </ul>
<p><b>h. Landowners or developers fail to wait for the local plan preparation process and prepare pre-emptive planning applications.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the necessary resources in place to ensure that there are no avoidable delays to the programme of Local Plan review.</li> <li>• Be flexible as to the timing of progressing master planning and pre-application work so that appropriate activity can shadow the Local Plan process and enable early development management decision once signalled by a Local Plan Inspector.</li> <li>• Providing clear messages where necessary that the Council will not support attempts to pre-empt the local planning process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>i. Infrastructure and design quality commitments made at Prospectus stage are not followed through.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will wish to explore with Homes England the most appropriate delivery vehicles, however, at this stage it is assumed that the Council would</li> </ul>

Potential Risks	Mitigation Measures
	<p>establish an informal local delivery vehicle (LDV), based on master developer model taking the lead on implementation. We will seek to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the master developer. This 'informal' LDV would act as a steering group, but would not, itself, act as the master-developer. All legal agreements to progress the project would be between the local authority and the landowner or promoter with a controlling interest in the land.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The job of the master developer will be to manage the overall development process: ensuring that the necessary finance is available for the entire advance infrastructure; ensuring that the necessary planning consents are available in a timely manner; procurement; and disposing of individual sites for development.</li> <li>• Where mainstream housebuilders may be reluctant to fulfil design or other objectives, or where there may be more difficult plots, we will ensure that the master-developer is prepared to undertake delivery to maintain quality and value as a lead to others to follow.</li> <li>• We will ensure that there are clear lines of accountability to give the local authority confidence about proper and timely delivery, including infrastructure, design quality and the full range of housing types.</li> <li>• The Council will ensure that its own internal processes are transparent; ensuring also that its promotional and statutory plan and decision making elements are separated.</li> <li>• LDV partners, notably the Council, will ensure dedicated Council officers – planners/urban designers - are in place to support the master developer as appropriate.</li> </ul>

b) Provide a high-level commentary on the assumptions that have been made with respect to the housing trajectory for the garden community.

It is too early to speculate on the role of new communities within the local plan review or to reasonably and reliably attribute housing and employment numbers. However, to form its assumptions, we have drawn upon known or emerging quantities and the four schemes submitted under the Council's New Garden Communities Prospectus.

To determine the delivery timescales, we have formed a 'bid development scenario' based around two hypothetical unnamed new community locations, with delivery illustrated to 2038, but also indicated as extending beyond:

- a. A scheme involving a relatively straightforward site to open up and likely to involve two to three developers, capable of delivering up to 200 dpa, aided through planning policies requiring land made available for small scale housebuilders, custom build and private rented sector housing. This could perhaps begin to deliver housing by 2023/24; and
- b. A more significant scale of scheme, involving the provision of significant upfront infrastructure and likely to involve up to six developers, together with a range of other outlets including assisted living, custom build etc. (aided through planning policies), capable of delivering up to circa 600 dpa. This too could perhaps begin to deliver housing by 2023/24, extending across several cycles of plan making.

Despite their hypothetical nature, it is of course possible to draw parallels with actual schemes submitted to the Council's Prospectus process, however, it should be stressed that these 'bid development scenarios' do not imply support by the Council for any scheme currently before it and are used only to illustrate the overall delivery potential.

It should also be noted that there may also be the potential for the Local Plan review to signal further locations beyond this scenario as a means to secure development needs over the major long term.

c) Set out any opportunities that there are to accelerate this housing trajectory including any interventions that would be needed to support acceleration.

In broad terms, it should be emphasised that potentially without a new approach in Swale, a 'business as usual' is not likely to be able to deliver accelerated housing provision, because of highways and air quality issues; hence we have to find an approach that breaks that Gordian knot. The new garden communities approach has that potential to do this as a strategic alternative in its own right.

Given the reliance of schemes on the actions of Highways England, inclusion in the Garden Communities programme will help support Highways England investment priorities in a fashion that facilitates timely delivery.

We would wish to explore with Homes England whether there were other means to speed up delivery, such as increasing affordable housing provision both in quantity and in terms of phasing, or other measures available to Homes England and the Council via its accelerated construction programme. We would also wish to explore the means by which developers could be supported in using modular off-site construction as a means to increase delivery.

All submissions are currently indicating a wide choice of housing outlets, including small to medium house builders, custom and self-build provision and Community Land Trusts and there may be scope via a successful bid to further enhance this offer.

The Council will work planning policy principles firmly into the overall housing mix in order to ensure that SMEs are not squeezed out. Our Local Plan review will also put in place policy requirements, e.g. a certain percentage of development plots being no greater than x hectares.

## Infrastructure

11 a) Provide a list of the key items of infrastructure that will be required to support delivery of the garden community. Transport-related; education, health, country parks, etc.

The Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework (Kent County Council 2018) highlights that Swale now has the third largest district population in Kent and built development has similarly physically grown. Over the last 20 years, most of the villages and towns in Swale have experienced growth, with growth in the towns the most rapid. In the last 10 years, more employment floor space has been built than anywhere else in the County.

Across North Kent, the existing total infrastructure requirement (excluding growth arising from the next round of local plan preparation) was estimated at some £2.5 billion with a funding gap of some £666 million. The biggest requirements are from health and social care and transport, with transport having the biggest funding gap. The County Council has emphasised this point in its support for our bid.

The following improvements are likely to be necessary to facilitate delivery of any new community in Swale:

- Junctions 5 and 7 of the M2.
- Junction 5a of the M2 (subject to testing).
- Improvements to junctions on the A249 west of Sittingbourne.

Within the wider context, delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing will also be important, but is likely to lead to demands for improvements to the M2 itself, e.g. widening, conversion to Smart Motorway.

Other improvements will be dependent upon the scheme(s) chosen, but could include:

- Improvements to Junction 6 of the M2 and A251.
- Sittingbourne southern and northern relief roads.
- FE provision at Sittingbourne.
- 7 Primary and 1 secondary school, plus expansion of existing.
- 3 6 GP surgeries, plus expansion of existing.
- At least 4 community halls.
- At least 2 country parks.
- At least 2 District Heating schemes.

b) Outline any significant new or upgraded utility provision that will be required to support delivery of the garden community.

Improvements will be dependent upon the scheme(s) chosen, but could include:

- An off-site reinforcement main to bring water supplies to SE Sittingbourne.
- Planned reinforcement and capacity upgrades to waste water treatment, together with possible upgrades to Faversham Waste Water Treatment Works and programme of onsite and offsite works.
- New electric supplies connection from existing 33kV tower line between Canterbury and Sittingbourne, together with 4.0 km of underground cables to SE Sittingbourne.
- Localised upgrades/reinforcements to existing networks.

As the utility companies are not used to dealing with strategic planning for substantial regeneration and growth proposals, and there is no requirement for them to engage with this process in the

statutory frameworks that govern them, it is important that time and effort is applied to liaison with them.

Our bid therefore seeks support to set up the right information flows and personal networks which will create momentum. We therefore propose to engage with the incumbent utility providers and where necessary arrange meetings to explore how this scale of development might be best served, and how efficiencies in provision (through, say, infrastructure corridors, shared ducting, and joint working) might be best delivered.

Utilities delivery needs to be understood against three key criteria:

- The need for off-site strategic network reinforcement and upgrades – which could be needed a significant distance upstream of the site.
- The need for substantial reinforcement and delivery corridors across the site, which, for efficiencies sake, may need to be delivered on a “land ownership blind” basis.
- The need for existing plant and equipment to be diverted re-located or protected to release the available areas for development.

## Land

12. Provide a brief commentary on the land ownership and development promotion arrangements within the proposed garden community site. This should include:

a) Details of land owners, promoters and developers;

- 1) Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne: Promoter and master developer is Quinn Estates who indicate that 6 housebuilders to date are committed. The master developer has full control over the land in question from the following landowners: [Names redacted for GDPR](#)
- 2) Scheme 2 at Bobbing: Promoter, master developer and landowner is Crabtree and Crabtree Developments Ltd. There is one developer to date.
- 3) Scheme 3 at SE Faversham: Promoter, master developer and landowner is The Duchy of Cornwall, although there is a potential option to include land owned by Swale Borough Council. There are no developers signed up to date.
- 4) Scheme 4 at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham: Promoter and master developer is Gladman Developments. Landowners are: [Names redacted for GDPR](#)

*NB: If these details are to be within the public domain, the names of private individuals should be redacted for GDPR purposes.*

b) Extent to which land is under option and any agreements in place;

See above. It is understood that all arrangements include equalisation strategies.

c) Details of any discussions about delivery mechanisms and models which have taken place;

Providing an outline of the delivery mechanisms and models was a key part of the Council's Prospectus requirements. All four schemes have opted for the master developer model, which although there may be some variances, broadly encompasses the following principles:

- The Master Developer secures the allocation (and/or outline PP) for whole site.

- Grants housebuilders ‘licences’ to develop land parcels, but also leads by example.
- Master Developer, in partnership with the Council, controls the quality of housebuilders output, including design standards via master plans and design codes. It is in the Master Developers interest to maintain housebuilders quality because they have more parcels to licence. Master developers in some instances may maintain freehold until houses are signed off as being in compliance with the adopted design code. This is proposed within one scheme.
- Oversees the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
- The Council maintains control via the development plan policy, supplemented by other planning agreements, design guides and MoUs.

To oversee this process, the Council intends to establish an informal local delivery vehicle (LDV) and will enter into a memorandum of understanding with the master developer. See also Q10a).

We intend to begin discussions with the scheme promoters shortly. However, if successful, we would also wish to explore whether other models may potentially be available.

d) Envisaged site assembly period including whether land can be drawn down in phases;

Given that all four master developers have complete control over the land, there are not envisaged to be any site assembly issues - all have the potential to enable land to be drawn down in phases.

There are two other possible issues affecting the site assembly period:

1. Whether the Council considers the ‘red lines’ submitted by the scheme promoters to be reasonable and whether other land would need to be assembled and equalisation strategies re-negotiated. We are considering how to address these areas, but this in turn could bring the Council into a more active role in the development of the site, e.g. by becoming a landowner in its own right; and
2. In the case of scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne, opening up of the site is wholly reliant upon Highways England consenting access from the M2 to allow private works to create a new Junction 5a.

e) Details of any part of the site that is public sector land.

Within scheme 3 at SE Faversham, there is a potential option to include land owned by Swale Borough Council for the redevelopment or relocation of a football club. See also 12d).

## Planning

13 a) Indicate the planning status of the site(s) for the garden community.

Submissions to the local plan review process, with two schemes considering pre-application discussions.

b) Describe the status of the current Local Plan and if relevant provide a timescale and key milestones for its adoption.

The Local Plan began a process of review in 2017. Key milestones are:

- Scoping Issues Public Engagement - 27 April – 8 June 2018.
- Member decision on scope of reasonable alternative development strategy for Issues & Options and Preferred Option - June 2019.

- Issues and Options & Draft Preferred Option Public Consultation Oct - Dec 2019.
- Publication of Preferred Local Plan for public Consultation - Nov - Dec 2020.
- Submission of Plan for Examination - April 2021.
- Examination in Public of the Local Plan (stage 1) - Nov 2021.
- Examination in Public (stage 2) (for Main Modifications) - autumn 2022.
- Adoption of the Local Plan Review by Swale Borough Council - spring 2023.

Although cognisant of the need to ensure that these remain development plan-led proposals, the Council is likely, subject to confirmation in December 2020, to move forward into the next phase of developing its chosen approach in order to ensure delivery of new housing as close to 2022/23 as possible.

c) Highlight any significant planning constraints that may affect allocation and development of the site. E.g. green belt status, flooding risk, designated heritage assets, etc.

Constraints vary between sites, but the following (limited to NPPF FN6 policies) is a summary for each submission:

- 1) Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne: Designated heritage assets, scattered ancient woodland/local nature reserve, land take from AONB for motorway junction and AONB setting northward.
- 2) Scheme 2 at Bobbing: Some woodland, adjacent designated heritage assets.
- 3) Scheme 3 at SE Faversham: Isolated designated heritage assets.
- 4) Scheme 4 at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham: AONB setting generally, , isolated designated heritage assets.

*NB: All schemes are affected by a review of local landscape designations which will make its recommendations before the end of 2018. Schemes 1 and 4 are currently affected by existing adopted local landscape designations.*

d) If any of the site is classified as brownfield, please highlight the proportion and nature of the brownfield element.

Very minor brownfield elements.

e) Briefly describe the high-level planning strategy proposed to facilitate delivery of the garden community. This should include both plan-making and development management routes.

Plan making

Schemes are currently being assessed via our Prospectus process described in the context paper. Subject to this assessment and the Council resolving that new communities should be one of the strategic spatial options (June 2019), the new communities will enter the plan-making process, either in their entirety for consultation purposes, or the removal of certain schemes as determined by the assessment process.

The process would then be as per Q13b, with the planning strategy of the plan intended to support the overall approach, with allocation and detailed planning policy. It would be the intention to have master planning and pre-application work at a very advanced stage by the time the Local Plan is submitted for Examination (April 2021).

The Council has one officer (supported by consultants) in place to directly support the new communities process and intends, particularly if supported by this bid, to expand its team with further expertise from 2019 onwards (see Q15).

### Development Management

We envisage that there would be some overlap between the plan making and development management process, whilst ensuring that ultimately it will be the plan making process that will confirm the soundness of the overall approach before any planning applications are determined favourably.

With the establishment of political steers in place, the Council would enter into formal draft partnership arrangements (informal LDV) with the relevant master developer(s) to move forward both on preparation of an overall masterplan, followed by design codes, together with the necessary pre-application arrangements. This would be with a view to having outline applications submitted to the Council by the time that the Local Plan Examination takes place (Nov 2021). This would be to reinforce evidence that projects were likely to be deliverable for local plan purposes and that planning decisions could be promptly made upon adoption of the Local Plan (early 2023).

We would hope to be able to put in place, via this bid, additional dedicated urban/landscape design, development management and administrative support for this process.

### Other

The Council will be seeking to set up informal local delivery vehicles with the scheme promoters which will play a strong part, alongside the master developer role, in ensuring quality from start to finish and beyond.

### Viability

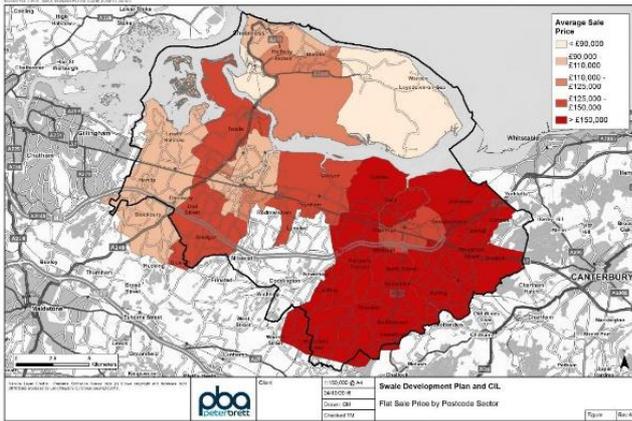
14 a) Provide a brief market commentary on existing land values, levels of local housing demand and need, local housing affordability, and types of homes needed locally to meet need.

#### Existing land values

Over the past 30 years most new development has been located in lower value areas north of Sittingbourne and on the Isle of Sheppey, partly because this has echoed brownfield land and regeneration opportunities. This posed and continues to pose, viability challenges.

As a proxy for land valued, Figs 2 and 3 below show sales values for various types of homes across Swale. Higher value areas are shown in darker reds.

### Flats – average sale price gradient



### Semi-detached houses – average sale price gradient

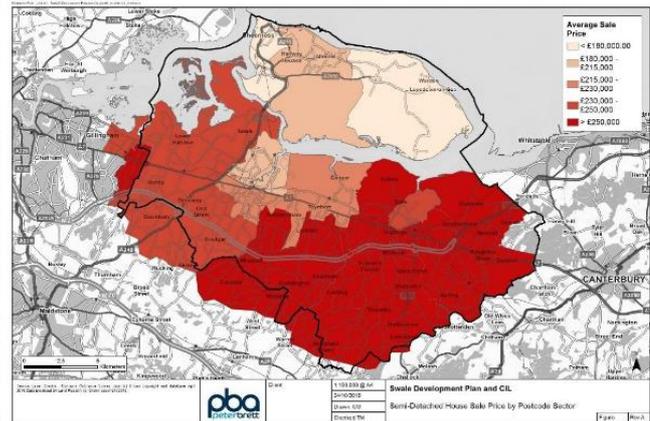
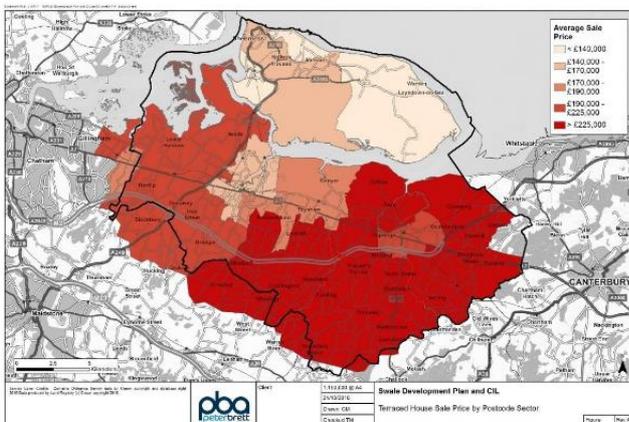


Figure 2 Swale average sale prices (PBA)

### Terraced houses – average sale price gradient



### Detached houses – average sale price gradient

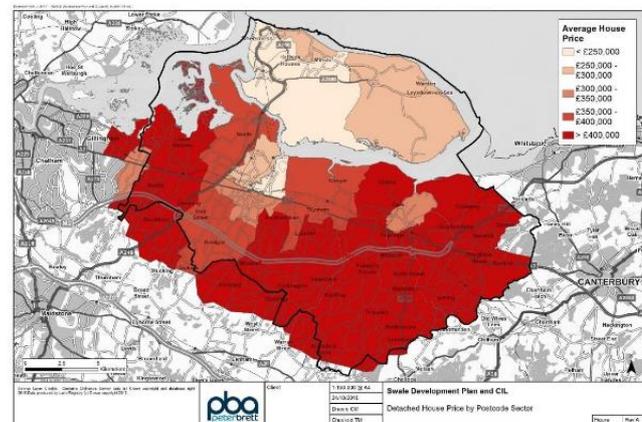


Figure 3 Swale average sale prices (PBA)

All of the new community submissions are within the top two highest value land bands and therefore offer significantly stronger viability prospects to secure the full range of infrastructure, affordable housing and design standards that should come with new garden communities.

### Local housing demand

Levels of local housing demand for Swale are likely to be most closely reflected within the Government’s standard methodology for housing need. This currently indicates a need of circa 1,050 dpa, subject to review.

### Affordable housing

There are strong structural demographic drivers within the local housing market, caused by employment growth and in-migration. These have led to a growing population and relatively poor levels of affordability in the private housing market. Evidence indicates a level of need of 190 dwellings per annum; however housebuilding, including affordable housing is affected by the viability picture in the Borough.

### Types of housing

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 (SHMA) indicated that the largest growth will come from single person and lone parent households. In terms of the accommodation required to provide a balanced housing market, the SHMA suggested that the makeup of the new housing required should be:

- 25% affordable
- 7% private rented
- 68% owner occupied

The SHMA also indicated that new owner-occupied accommodation should principally be two and three-bedroom homes and new private rented housing should ideally be three and four bedroom homes. Figure 4 shows the size and tenure of new homes required, both for affordable and market housing, within the level of objectively assessed need.

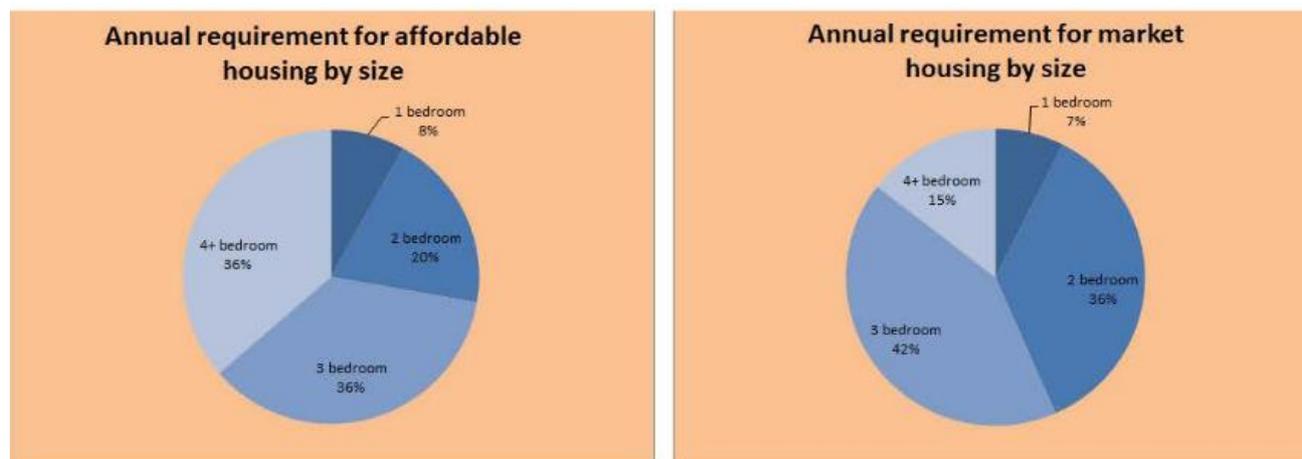


Figure 4 Size and tenure of new homes required within the level of objectively assessed need (PBA 2015)

The population profile of the Borough has aged slightly but broadly follows national trends, with levels of in-migration and natural change sufficient for Swale to retain its age profile over the past 10 or so years. The Council's SHMA 2015 projected the possible change in household types that could occur up to 2031. This is shown in Fig 5 which shows that the number of one person and lone parent households is expected to show the highest increases.

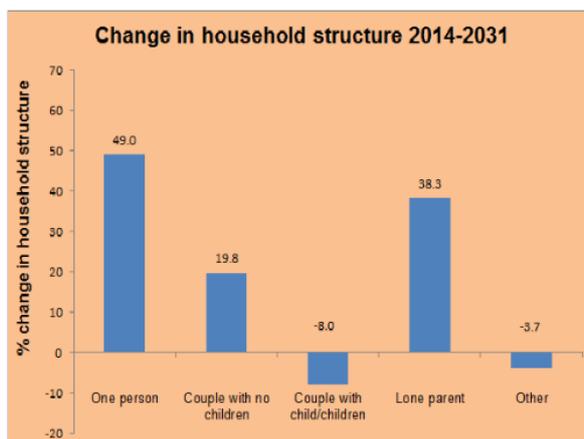


Figure 5 Change in household structure 2014-31 (PBA 2015)

The 2011 Census suggests that the Black, Asian, Minority Ethnicities (BAME) population has increased to 3.4% of the total population in Swale; this is still notably smaller than the regional and national figures. Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups represent the largest BAME group, comprising 1.2% of the Borough's population with White Irish (0.6%), White Gypsy or Irish Traveller (0.5%) and White Other (2.6%). The majority of the population (92.9%) are White British.

The Census showed that just 0.7% of the population in 2011 had been resident in the UK for less than 2 years. Overwhelmingly the majority of the population have resided in the UK for over 5 years (including those born in the UK).

The Census indicates that 21.1% of households in Swale were older person only households (households where all members are 65 or over), compared to 21.7% regionally and 20.5% nationally. Of these older persons only households in Swale in 2011, 57.8% contained only one person, a similar percentage to that recorded in the South East (58.5%) and England (60.0%).

The SHMA (2015) showed that whilst single older person households in Swale were more likely than average to reside in social rented accommodation; both of the older person groups show a high level of owner-occupation. Older person households were also more likely than average to have multiple spare bedrooms in their home.

The population aged 65 or over is likely to increase dramatically over the plan period to 38,132 in 2031, a rise of 46.2%. The SHMA highlights the greatest future demand is for two/three bedroom owner-occupied dwellings and one/two bedroom private rent and affordable dwellings.

Some 18.6% of the resident population in Swale have a long-term health problem or disability, with 46.5% of all those aged 65 or over and 84.5% of those aged 85 or over.

There are also around 1,199 spaces in nursing and residential care homes in Swale and presuming the current occupancy rate continues there is a need for an additional 481 spaces by 2031.

**b) Provide a high-level viability appraisal (budget statement and linked cash flow statement) for the garden community project, highlighting key infrastructure requirements, any funding gaps and how they might be filled. This should include an explanation of the assumptions that have been made.**

All scheme promoters have been asked to provide viability assessments. To date two have been provided (schemes 2 and 4) and these are submitted as part of this bid as the means to demonstrate conditions for sites at both Sittingbourne and Faversham.

No funding gaps are identified for infrastructure within the schemes themselves, although a number may be dependent upon infrastructure yet to form part of programmes e.g. HE, water and utilities.

**c) Set out the key dependencies and phasing implications between housing and infrastructure delivery.**

These vary between the submissions as follows:

- 1) Scheme 1 at SE Sittingbourne: Will require delivery of M2 Junction 5 improvements by Highways England and consent to and delivery of new Junction 5a before any development takes place. Although significant levels of development could probably take place from this new junction, at a point yet to be determined, development would become dependent upon completion of both the Sittingbourne Southern and Northern Relief Roads (although the scheme promoter envisages their early delivery). It would also appear that new electricity supplies would need to be in place early in the development phase.
- 2) Scheme 2 at Bobbing: Will require delivery of M2 Junction 5 improvements by Highways England, however, the degree of spare capacity arising from this is currently unclear. Capacity at A249 junctions would need to be improved at an agreed stage, but the degree to which existing conditions can be improved have yet to be demonstrated.
- 3) Scheme 3 at SE Faversham: Will require identification of M2 Junction 7 improvements by Highways England within RIS and its delivery to enable full build out. A contribution toward

interim improvements is highly likely, but the scope and timing for these have yet to be determined.

- 4) Scheme 4 at North Street, Sheldwich, Faversham: Will require identification of M2 Junction 7 improvements by Highways England within RIS and its delivery to enable full delivery. A contribution toward interim improvements is highly likely, but scope and timing yet to be determined. Improvements to the M2 J6/A251 and the A2/A251 junction will be required at a point to be determined.

d) Describe any plans to access finance, including private sector investment.

There are no current plans by the Council to access finance; however, the master developers will all need to access private sector investment to forward fund infrastructure.

### Government Support

15. Please outline what aspects of the government support package set out in the prospectus you would like to draw on to support delivery of the new garden community. Please be as specific as possible and highlight how the support requested would help deliver additional or accelerated housing delivery.

As explained by our context paper, this bid is intended to support provision of new communities by a relatively small local authority with limited experience and expertise in the delivery of major projects of this likely scale and complexity.

As indicated by the context paper, the bid reflects a two-stage (in part overlapping) process:

1. Bringing the Council to the point where it has chosen new communities as a key component in its local plan review strategy; and if a scheme(s) is to be progressed
2. To then further develop the chosen scheme(s) through to their implementation.

Stage 1: Bringing the Council to the point where it has chosen new communities as a key component in its local plan review strategy (up to selection of preferred option – November 2018 to December 2020)

Potential technical Inputs include:

1. Resources to enable full assessment of 'garden community' credentials:
  - a. Overall project management and planning policy advice.
  - b. Consultancy support in social, economic (inc. viability) and environmental assessment of risks and opportunities and compliance with garden community principles.
  - c. Support for initial assessment of cumulative impacts on utilities.
  - d. Urban/landscape design to support assessment and early master-planning.
  - e. Community engagement expertise and support.
2. Support for transport planning including:
  - a. Strategic transport modelling and preliminary design for highway options.
  - b. Research to support plausible and transformative public transport interventions suited to Swale's context.
  - c. Research to test the transformational job numbers and the labour market implications arising from proposals.

Stage 2: To then further develop the chosen scheme(s) through to their implementation (June 2019 up to adoption of local plan, outline planning permission and beyond)

1. Resources including:
  - a. On-going support of those resources from Stage 1, but to additionally include:
    - i. Detailed planning policy formulation.
    - ii. On-going master planning and design coding.
    - iii. Pre-app discussions and required specialist inputs.
    - iv. Technical assessment work, including study work/assessment to consider cumulative effects of schemes on such matters as infrastructure and utilities.
    - v. Legal Inputs to S106/infrastructure delivery.
    - vi. Appointment and on-going costs of two senior planning officers (Development Management) dedicated to the efficient processing of new community pre-application and planning applications.
2. Access to expertise, including:
  - a. Advice from Homes England in respect of:
    - i. Appropriateness of master developer delivery mechanisms for emerging schemes and possible other delivery vehicles that could help drive and accelerate delivery options;
    - ii. Advice on improving 'performance' of schemes against garden community principles, e.g. affordable housing provision;
    - iii. Consideration of options for accelerated delivery with Homes England, particularly around planning expertise and new land buying powers, as well as supporting smaller and more innovative house builders into the market.
  - b. To potentially offer potential brokerage between the Council, master developer and other landowners to resolve 'red-line' issues, with, if necessary, access to CPO expertise.
  - c. Possible access to other infrastructure funding streams, e.g. HIF, to support improved performance against garden community principles.
  - d. Potential pilot project via Natural England in respect of exempla for net biodiversity gain and maximising natural capital.
  - e. Further study to foster a whole systems approach to key local health & wellbeing priorities and strategies within planning policy, master planning and planning applications.
  - f. Continued study work/assessment to consider cumulative effects of schemes on such matters as infrastructure and utilities.
3. Support for transport planning including:
  - a. Co-ordination of Highways England to ensure priority and provision of strategic transport infrastructure to support early delivery of new homes.

- b. Detailed transport modelling and design, including the role of new technologies, such as driverless vehicles.
  - c. Development and implementation of Swale Transport Strategy to support modal shift.
  - d. Co-ordination between local authorities over the delivery of strategic infrastructure of wider benefit.
4. Establishment of exemplar community engagement techniques, including:
- a. Place making workshops, possibly using Design South East or other to support master planning moving through to design coding.
  - b. Support for additional and bespoke Local Plan review engagement processes aimed at proposed new communities.
5. Delivery mechanisms, including:
- a. Advice and costs associated with 'steering group' involving the Council and developer, KCC, Government agencies, community representatives etc.
  - b. Identifying enhanced delivery options by promoting significant opportunities for housing development beyond the main volume housebuilders including private rented sector development, small housebuilder opportunities and custom build.
  - c. Enhanced affordable housing opportunities through identifying further public sector investment.