



# SWALE

## Cycling and walking framework

Consultation document  
2018 – 2022



# Introduction



Cllr. Mike Cosgrove  
Cabinet Member for  
Regeneration



Cllr. James Hunt  
Deputy Cabinet Member  
for Planning

We are holding a consultation this summer to ask you where you would like to see new cycling and walking routes in the borough, and how you think we can improve the current network.

Improvements to the cycling and walking network of Swale have the potential to greatly benefit the residents of our borough. Physical activity can have a proven positive effect on our wellbeing and health. In addition, by encouraging and improving walking and cycling links to the workplace and schools, it can benefit air quality and the local economy by reducing congestion on our roads. Perhaps most importantly, improvements can also make our infrastructure safer for both the daily commute and our leisure time.

Last February, we adopted A Visitor Economy Framework for Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey 2018-2023. We aim to increase the value of tourism to the local economy by 11.5%, and walks and cycle routes play an important role in broadening the appeal of our destinations. For example, new infrastructure can create opportunities for new and existing businesses to create facilities which improve visitor's dwell time such as bike hire schemes or walker's cafés.

After the consultation, the Borough Council will work with Kent County Council to develop a Cycling and Walking Policy Framework for Swale. The new framework will include policies and plans that work together to promote active travel and enable us to provide a basis for influencing the development of new routes. The routes identified will help to inform the planning process where developers provide funding for routes and provide a basis for future bids for government funding.

In this booklet we have included a summary of the current network and a copy of the questionnaire so that you can have your say. I encourage you to complete and return the form to us by the 5 October 2018, so that we can continue to improve the walking and cycling network in Swale.





## Have Your Say

We are asking Swale residents and businesses to provide us with details of where they would like to see improvements to the local walking and cycling network.

We are at an early stage in developing our proposals and your views will help us decide how to progress with them. We look forward to hearing from you.

The consultation will run for eight weeks from 10 August 2018 to 5 October 2018.

## How to give us your views

Complete the questionnaire at the end of this leaflet and hand it in to your closest Swale Borough Council office. These are:

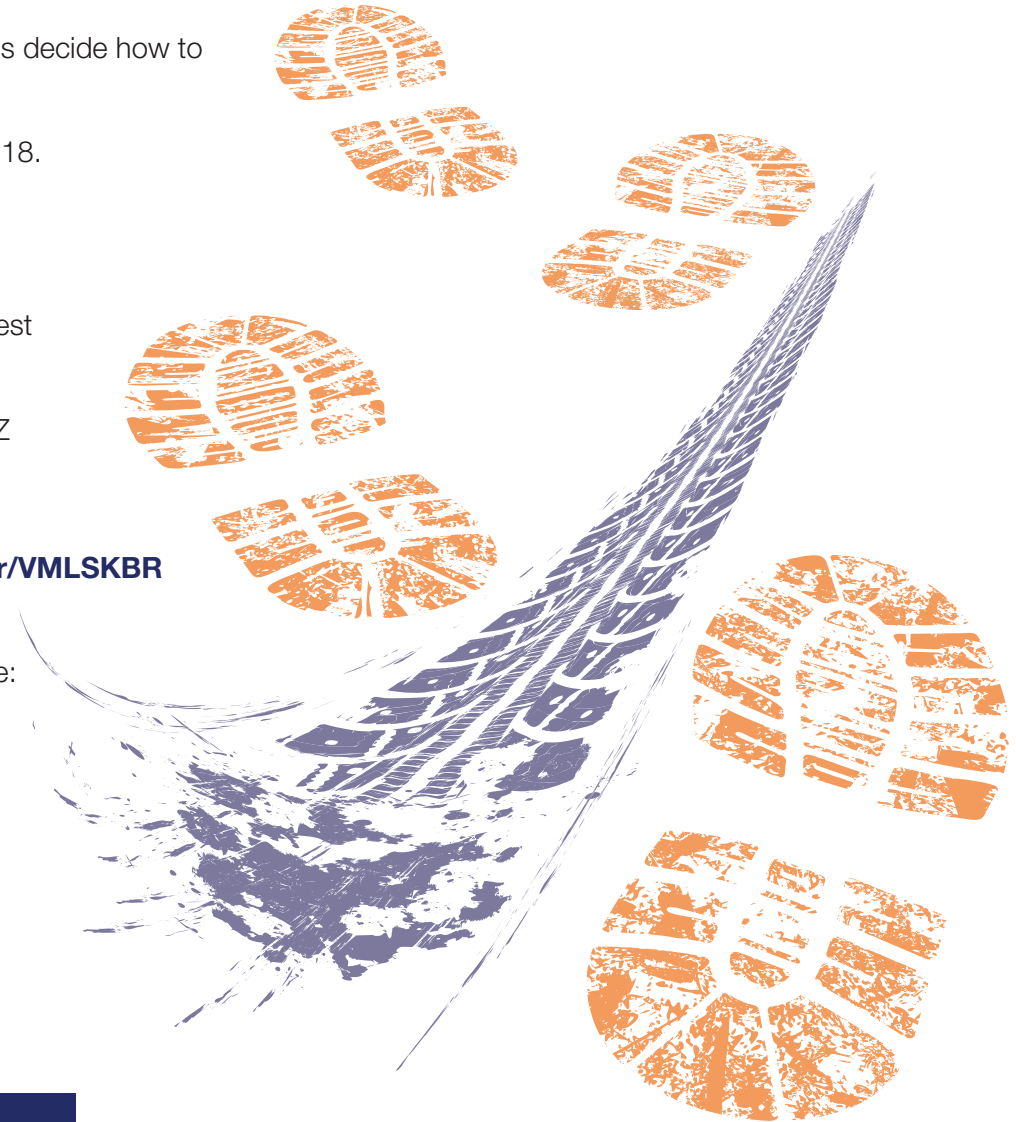
- The Alexander Centre, 15-17 Preston St, Faversham, Kent ME13 8NZ
- Sheppey Gateway, 38-42 High Street, Kent, Sheerness ME12 1NL
- Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 3HT

Visit the Swale Borough Council website or visit [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VMLSKBR](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/VMLSKBR) and complete the questionnaire online.

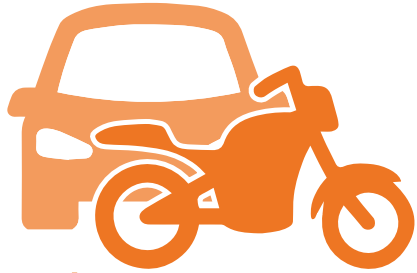
If you have any queries or would like this information in a different format please:

Email: [cyclingandwalking@swale.gov.uk](mailto:cyclingandwalking@swale.gov.uk)

Call: **01795 417850**



# Overview



**70%** of those travelling to work in Swale either drive a car, van, motorcycle, scooter or moped to their workplace.

*2011 Census*



**2%** of those travelling to work in Swale and Kent use a bicycle.

*2011 Census*



**12%** of those travelling to work in Swale walk to work.

*2011 Census*



**70%** of adults in Swale report that they walk at least once a week.

*Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2015-16*



**16%** of adults in Swale report that they cycle at least once a month.

*Walking and Cycling Statistics, England: 2015-16*



The Cycle to Work Scheme generates at least £72 million in economic benefits for the UK economy in terms of health each year.

*Institute for Employment Studies 2016*



## Funding

The policy framework will provide a basis for making bids for improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in Swale through the Local Enterprise Partnership (Local Growth Fund) and other transport funding awarded to Kent County Council (KCC) by the Department for Transport. It is anticipated that it would both inform and be informed by the Swale Local Plan and Local Transport Strategy Reviews, which in turn can provide the basis for funding bids. Additionally, the policies and plans contained in the framework could help to secure support for walking and cycling from other possible funding streams such as developer funding via s106 obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

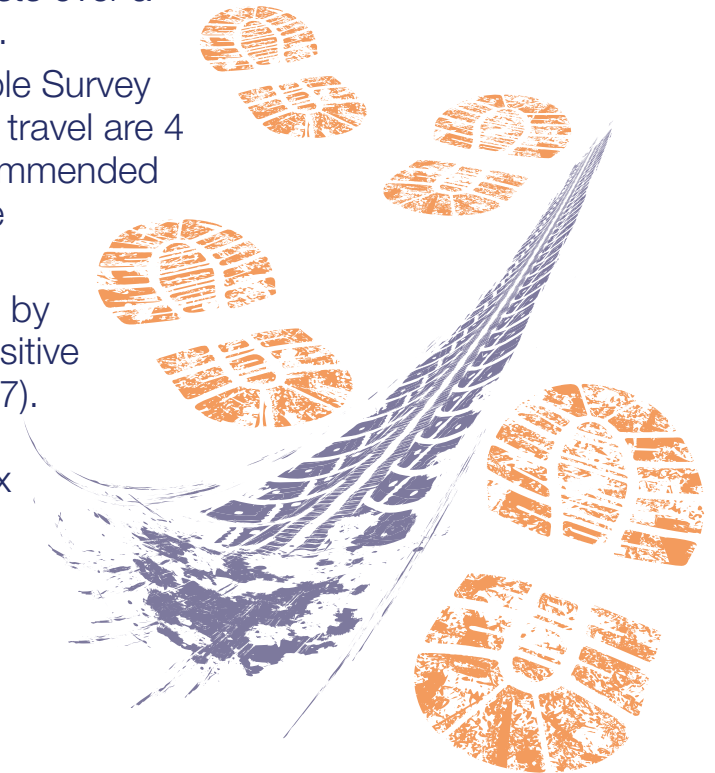
In the past, funding has been used to make small interventions which help to improve the network such as cycle parking and new routes to schools and workplaces.

## Health benefits

Cycling and walking have proven benefits for the health and wellbeing of those who travel in these ways. Research suggests that:

- Increasing evidence has been found for a link between adult obesity levels and the amount of physical activity undertaken when travelling. For instance, western countries with the highest levels of active travel generally also have the lowest obesity rates (Bassett et al 2008).
- Switching to active travel for short motor vehicle trips could save £17bn in NHS costs over a 20 year period (Jarrett et al, 2012).
- Sport England's 2015 Active People Survey showed that people who cycle for travel are 4 times more likely to meet the recommended level of physical activity than those who do not.
- 30 minutes or more of commuting by foot or bicycle has a significant positive effect on mental health (Ohta, 2007).

Source: Sustrans' Active Travel Toolbox



## Cycling Routes

Swale currently has three official cycle routes

- the National Cycling Route 1 passes through Faversham and Sittingbourne, partly following the route of the A2. The overall route connects Dover and the Shetland Islands;
- National Route 174 or 'The Sheerness Way' is a looped route which includes Barton's Point Coastal Park, the Queenborough Lines, and Sheerness Sea Front; and
- the Isle of Harty Trail is a flat, circular route which is mainly traffic-free. The route takes in local attractions such as Leysdown Beach and the RSPB Raptor View Point.

Cyclists can also make use of public bridleways but by law, those on two wheels must give way to other users. Walkers and cyclists can also use a number of shared-use paths in Swale which are free of motor traffic.

Cyclists can also use cycle lanes which are painted on the carriageway with a red surface and in some places green. The edge of the lane can have a solid white line which instructs drivers that they are not allowed to use it during its times of operation, or a dotted white line which instructs drivers that it will not be an offence if they enter the lane.

The new Swale Cycling and Walking Policy Framework will build on the research and feasibility completed for the routes included in the previous draft Swale Cycling Strategy 2014-2018. Maps of these potential routes can be viewed in the strategy which is available online.

## Walking Routes

It is beyond the scope of this booklet to record all of the public rights of way which are open to walkers. Kent County Council have listed these routes on the Explore Kent Map on the Kent County Council website, and residents can also request a definitive legal map from the authority.

The promoted walks in Swale are:

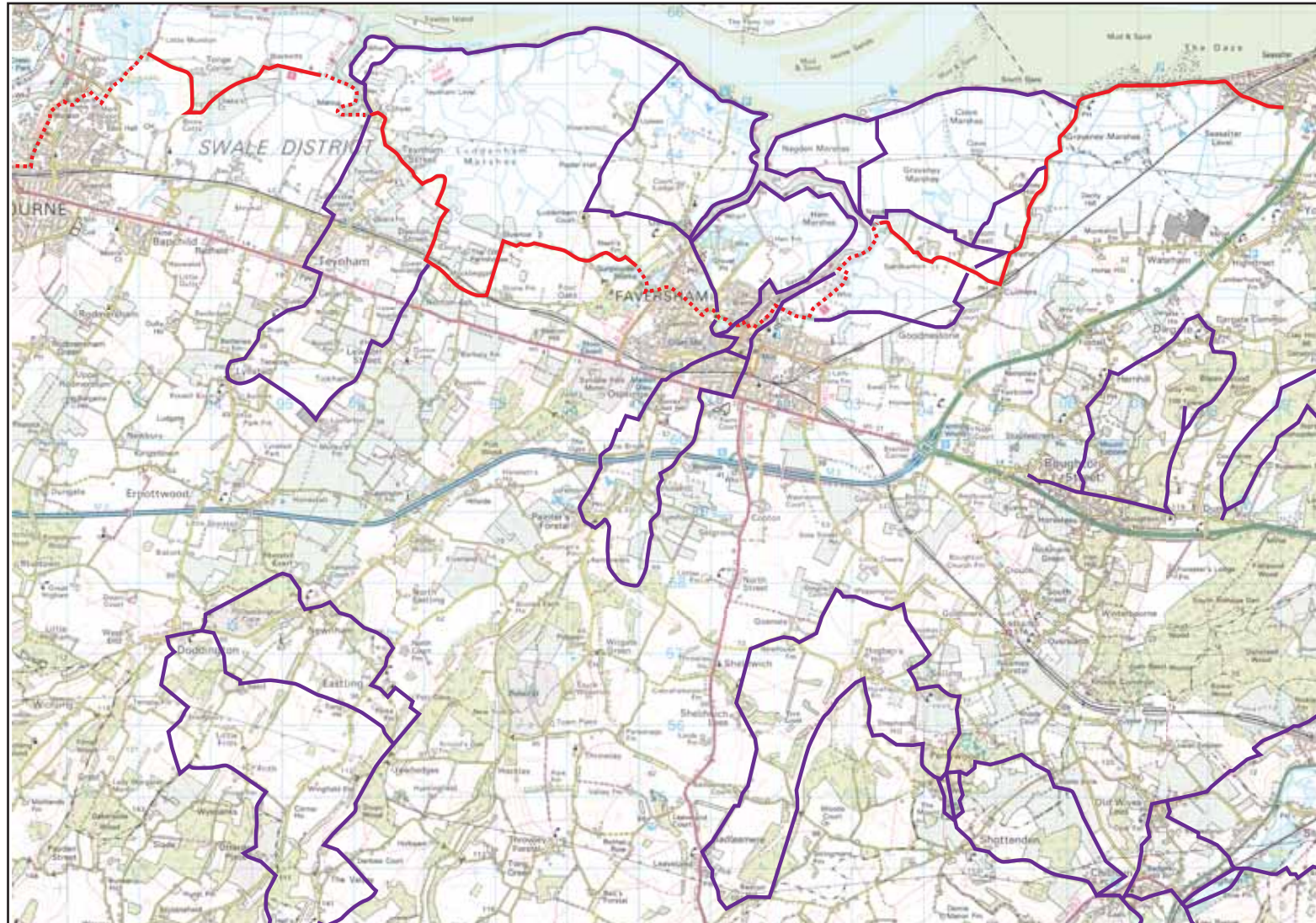
- The Saxon Shore Way is a long distance footpath which passes through Swale along the North Kent coast and marshes. The route runs for 160 miles from Gravesend to Hastings.
- There are also a number of locally promoted trails such as those covered by the Food Trails project in Faversham, Newnham, Sheldwich, Boughton, Oare and Teynham. There are also routes in Perry Wood, Elmley National Nature Reserve and Barton's Point Coastal Park. Some of the town centres have also created specific routes to encourage visitors such as the Sittingbourne Cats Trail and guided walks in Faversham.
- Natural England is also progressing plans to improve access to the coast in Swale, including around the Isle of Sheppey. Consultees can find out more and the latest updates online at the Natural England website.



# Maps of Promoted Cycling and Walking Routes

These maps show cycle routes in red and locally promoted walks in purple.

## Faversham



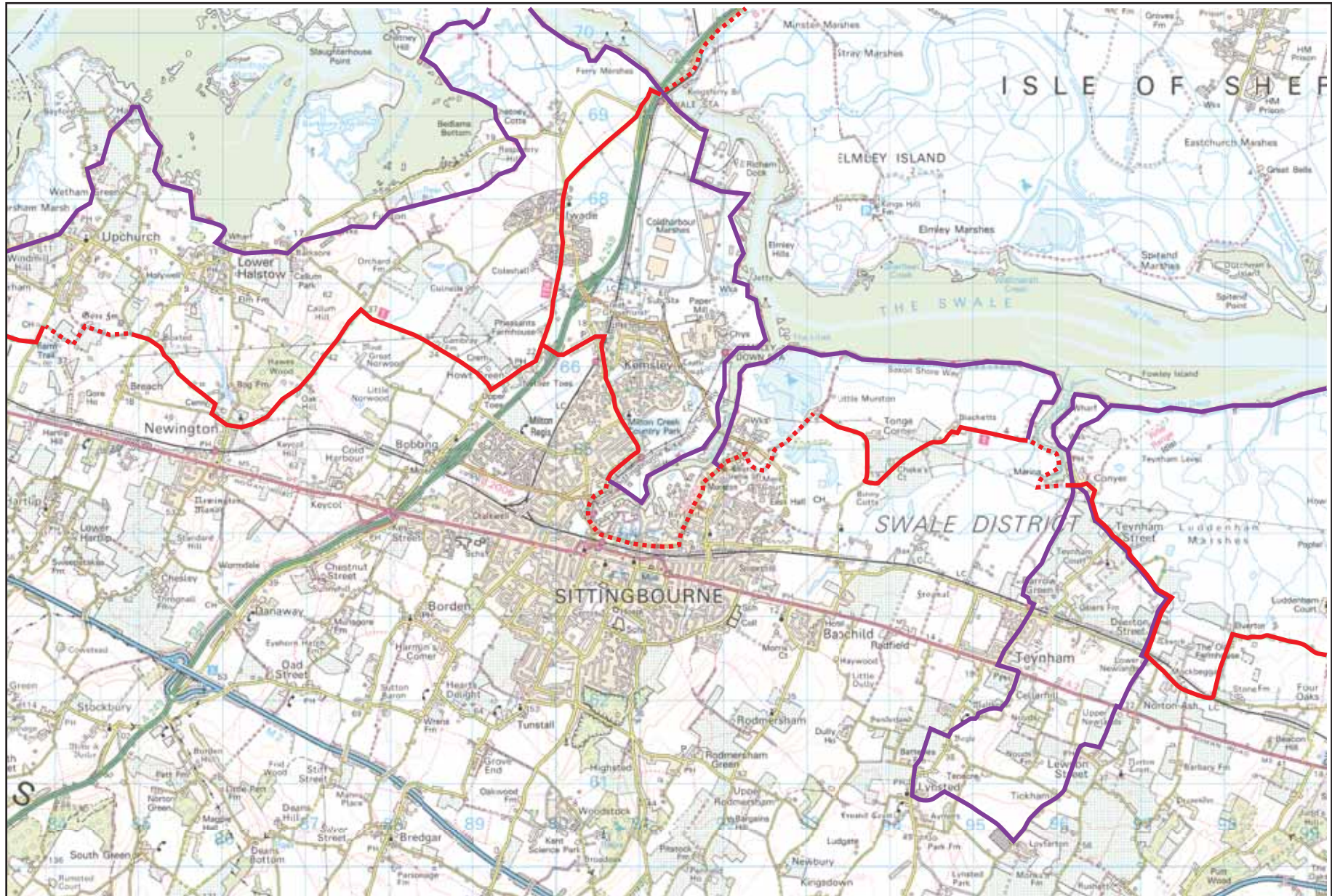


# Isle of Sheppey





# Sittingbourne





## National and Local Policy Overview

The **Department for Transport's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy** (2017) is the main national strategic driver for the policy framework. The main ambition of the strategy is 'to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey.' The strategy emphasises a partnership approach to delivery and makes a commitment to supporting walking and cycling infrastructure improvements.

On a county level, a number of Kent County Council policies will provide guidance including:

- The **Active Travel Strategy** which will run until 2021. The overarching ambition of the strategy is to 'make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent'. To achieve this, the strategy aims to enable the delivery of three outcomes: improved health through an increase in physical activity; reduced congestion on the highway network by providing better travel choices and encouraging safer active travel.
- The **Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031** which outlines the transport improvements proposed for Swale.
- The **Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan** which aims to increase the use and enjoyment of Kent's public rights of way and open green space.



The cycling and walking network of neighbouring boroughs will also be taken into account so that, where feasible, new proposals connect or complement existing routes.'

On a borough level, the Swale Borough Council policies include:

- The **Visitor Economy Framework for Sittingbourne, Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey 2018-2023** which includes the priority to deliver public realm improvements which will lead to improved infrastructure and connectivity. Under this priority, there is also the action to increase destination infrastructure for shared use routes.
- The **Swale Active Lives Framework 2017-2022** where walking and cycling can contribute to the overall vision that, 'the residents of Swale are encouraged, motivated, informed and have the opportunity to be more active and healthier. Enabling them to live life to the full, be happy and well, reaching their full potential'.



- The **Swale Transportation Strategy 2014-2031** (draft) which aims to ‘encourage the use of sustainable means of travel as an alternative to the private car’.
- The **Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031)** is the most significant Swale Borough Council policy which considers cycling and walking routes. The key policies are:
  - **Policy Core Planning 2** outlines that planning applications must provide ‘integrated walking and cycling routes to link existing and new communities with local services and facilities, public transport and the Green Grid network’.
  - At the design level, **Policy Development Management 6** explains that location, design and layout for development proposals will demonstrate that, ‘priority is given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, including the disabled, through the provision of safe routes which minimise cyclist/pedestrian and traffic conflict within the site and which connect to local services and facilities’.



A number of allocations in the Local Plan also include consideration for cycling and walking provision, including:

- **Faversham:** the Oare Gravel Workings, Oare Road; land at Western Link, Faversham; land north of Graveney Road; land at Preston Fields and Perry Court Farm.
- **Isle of Sheppey:** land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster.
- **Sittingbourne:** A249/Grovehurst Junction improvements; Iwade expansion; land at south-west Sittingbourne; land at Frognal Lane, Teynham; land at Frognal Lane, Teynham; Stones Farm, Canterbury Road; land at Crown Quay Lane and Milton Pipes, Mill Way.



## Contacting Swale Borough Council

To request hard copies of any of the consultation documents or for any alternative formats, please email [cyclingandwalking@swale.gov.uk](mailto:cyclingandwalking@swale.gov.uk) or call 01795 417165.

