

Local Plan Panel Meeting		Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	20 September 2018	
Report Title	Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning	
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins	
Head of Service	James Freeman	
Lead Officer	Gill Harris	
Key Decision	No	
Classification	Open	
Recommendations	1. Recommend to Cabinet that they agree the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix I to this item) as the scope and SA framework for the Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging Swale Borough Local Plan.	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report updates the Panel on work connected with the preparation of the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal (SA).
- 1.2 Attached to this report at Appendix I is the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan SA, July 2018. The Scoping Report presents the suggested scope for the SA – a framework of sustainability issues and objectives which will form the focus of the appraisal of the emerging local plan and its reasonable alternatives.
- 1.3 The Scoping Report has been subject to consultation with the nationally designated authorities, adjoining councils, internal departments, other relevant bodies, Cabinet Members and Deputies and Local Plan Panel Members.
- 1.4 The Panel is asked to agree to the publication of the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan SA, subject to any further changes it might agree.

2 Background

- 2.1 Sustainability Appraisal (SA) is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, in terms of sustainability issues, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising the

- positives. The SA must be undertaken in accordance with specific procedural requirements, as established by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes ('SEA') Regulations 2004. A sustainability appraisal of the proposals in all Local Plans is required by section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2.2 In January 2018 AECOM Ltd were appointed to undertake SA work for the Issues and Options and Preferred Option stages of the Swale Borough Local Plan.
- 2.3 Scoping is the first stage in a five-stage SA process, as follows:
1. Scoping presents a scope or 'framework' of sustainability issues and objectives that should be a focus of, and provide a methodological framework for, the appraisal of the emerging plan and reasonable alternatives.
 2. Appraisal of reasonable spatial alternatives with a view to informing the preparation of the draft plan and subsequent assessment of the draft plan
 3. Preparation of the SA Report with a view to informing consultation
 4. Consultation of the SA Report
 5. Publication of a statement at the time of the plan's adoption which 'tells the story' of plan making and the SA.
- 2.4 Scoping itself involves the following steps:
- Context review – a review of existing policy and issues/objectives established by Government, the Council and other key organisations;
 - Baseline review – a review of the current situation locally and a consideration of how this might evolve in the absence of the plan;
 - Key Issues summary – a summary of the key problems and opportunities identified in the context and baseline review;
 - SA Framework – a refinement of the key issues to be carried forward into the next stages of the SA work.
- 2.5 The anticipated broad scope of the sustainability issues and objectives likely to be of greatest relevance to the emerging Swale Local Plan Review were presented under 12 themes or topics: air quality; biodiversity; climate change mitigation; communities; economy and employment; flood risk; heritage; housing; land; landscape; transport; water. Each chapter of the Scoping Report examines these themes in turn, looking at context, baseline and key issues and objectives.
- 2.6 At the end of each chapter the objectives for each topic are proposed. These objectives are also presented in Appendix A of the Scoping Report as the SA Framework itself (page 56 of Appendix I). These objectives are carried forward into the next stages of the SA. As an example, the SA objectives for Biodiversity are as follows:

- *Minimise, and avoid where possible, impacts to biodiversity, both within and beyond designated and non-designated sites of international, national or local significance.*
- *Achieve biodiversity net gain including through the long term enhancement and creation of well-connected, functional habitats.*

2.7 Now that the scoping stage has been undertaken, together with information gathered through the Looking Ahead Consultation and emerging evidence, Planning Policy Officers, with the assistance of AECOM, are in a position to begin the second stage of the SA as set out in 2.3 above. In due course, this is likely to involve Members agreeing to the reasonable spatial alternatives to be appraised.

3 Proposals

3.1 Appendix I is the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, July 2018. The Panel is asked to recommend to Cabinet that they agree the Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal as the scope and SA framework for the Sustainability Appraisal for the emerging Swale Borough Local Plan. Please note that the document may be subject to some minor updates following this report to Local Plan Panel.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 Panel Members may wish to comment further on this document. Comments will need to be presented back to AECOM for their response. If proposed changes are substantial this could delay progress with the Local Plan. As stated above, SA is a statutory requirement for all Local Plans so not agreeing to an SA Scoping Report is not a viable option.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 One key procedural requirement of the SEA Regulation is that there is consultation on ‘the scope and level of detail of the information’ to be included within the key output report with nationally designated authorities ie the Environment Agency (EA), Historic England (HE) and Natural England (NE). However, it was considered appropriate to consult more widely. The table below lists all the bodies consulted. Comments received were processed by AECOM and, where relevant, were incorporated in to the SA Scoping Report, July 2018 (Appendix I of this item).

Environment Agency	Comments received
Historic England	Comments received
Natural England	Comments received
Highways England	No comments received
RSPB	Comments received

Kent Wildlife Trust	No comments received
CPRE	No comments received
Swale Borough Council Economy and Communities	Comments received
Swale Borough Council Environmental Health	Comments received
Swale Borough Council Housing	Comments received
Swale Borough Council Climate Change	Comments received
Home Builders Federation	No comments received
Kent Developers Group	No comments received
Medway Council	Comments received
Ashford Borough Council	No comments received
Canterbury City Council	Comments received
Maidstone Borough Council	Comments received
SELEP	No comments received
KCC Environment	Comments received
KCC Flood Risk	Comments received
Southern Water	No comments received
South East Water	No comments received
Swale Borough Council Cabinet Members and Deputies	Comments received from Cllrs Lewin and Horton
Swale Borough Council Local Plan Panel Members	Comments received from Cllrs Lewin and Hunt

- 5.2 Copies of the consultation comments received can be found in the members' room.
- 5.3 It is not a requirement that the SA Scoping Report be formally published for public consultation, however, the document was published on the Swale Borough Council Emerging Local Plan website inviting anyone interested to comment on the draft document. No comments were received.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports the Council's corporate priorities for a borough and a community to be proud of.
Financial, Resource and Property	Within Local Plan budget.
Legal and Statutory	None anticipated at this time.

Crime and Disorder	None anticipated at this time.
Sustainability	The Local Plan process will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal.
Health and Wellbeing	None at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None at this time.
Equality and Diversity	The Local Plan process will be subject to a Community Impact Assessments at appropriate points.

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix I - Scoping Report for the Swale Borough Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, July 2018 (SA)

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 None