
Housing Infrastructure Fund – Swale Transport Infrastructure, Swale

Bid Details	Primary Local Authority	Kent County
	Project Type	Forward Funding

Organisation	Kent County
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Scheme Details	Scheme Name	Swale Transport Infrastructure, Swale, Kent
	Scheme Description	The Swale Transport Infrastructure project will directly enable delivery of some 6,341 homes phased for 2022-31 through improvements to the A249 junctions at Grovehurst and Keycol/A2. Should a new route to the M2 east of Sittingbourne be secured, with completion of the Northern Relief Road and a new Southern Relief Road to a new Junction 5a with the M2, this would open up a major opportunity for significant new development. It also supports Kent Science Park, one of the county's leading economic hubs, by providing required access improvements to support expansion. It is the right approach to housing delivery as the Swale Local Plan, adopted in 2017, is only deliverable to 2022 as beyond this there are capacity and air quality issues on the local road network, specifically the A2 and its links with the strategic road network (A249). A Local Plan Review is to be completed by April 2022 to show how the identified housing need can be met post 2022.
	Physical Infrastructure	Road/Highway

Delivery milestones	Planning status	None
	Planning permission target date	01/12/2018
	Statutory planning permission target date	01/12/2018
	Infrastructure – dev partner identified	01/03/2019
	Infrastructure – dev partner appointed	01/06/2019
	Housing – dev partner identified	01/01/2018
	Housing – dev partner appointed	01/02/2018
	Start of infrastructure works	02/01/2020
	Completion of infrastructure works	31/03/2021

Financials	Funding amount	£39,667,917
	2017/2018	£100,000
	2018/2019	£4,000,000
	2019/2020	£9,000,000
	2020/2021	£26,567,917
	Total	£39,667,917
	Previous Funding Application	No
	Indicative public sector	99%
	Aim to recover funding	No
	How intend to recycle	Local infrastructure tariff to be agreed to recycle the fund to facilitate further housing in the area.

Development Profile	Number of sites	22
	Total size of sites	218 ha
	Area on brownfield	52 ha
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	Full / Detailed	0
	Outline	0
	Planning in principle	0
	Allocated	6,341
	Profile up to 2020	278
	Profile 2021 – 2025	3,154
Profile 2026 – 2030	2,909	
Profile 2031 – 2035	0	
Homes delivered if without funding	4,571	
Explanation for numbers delivered	Without HIF funding only the projected Housing Land supply figure to 2022 can be guaranteed. Constraints on the local road network and junctions with the Strategic Road Network cannot be overcome with developer funding alone, due to viability issues. Air quality issues along the A2 also cannot be addressed without a radical approach. Delivery of 4,571 homes are therefore only guaranteed within current network capabilities.	

Options appraisal	Problem being addressed	The current housing numbers required for the Borough cannot be met within the restrictions of the existing road infrastructure beyond 2022, without mitigation. Without a comprehensive solution, these issues simply cannot be adequately resolved. This proposal offers a comprehensive package of works and enabling design to address this and create capacity for substantial future growth. The upgrade of the Grovehurst and Keycol junctions with the A249 and new infrastructure to facilitate an alternative route to the M2 will reduce the need to travel through the centre of Sittingbourne on the A2, and reduce dependence on the A249 and the single motorway junction at M2 J5. These constraints currently combine to act as an absolute impediment to both planned and future growth beyond 2022. This proposal provides certainty for the housing delivery aspirations of the Local Authority.
	Options Considered	The Local Plan provides a development strategy to 2031, but requires transport improvements to deliver beyond 2022. The delivery of improvements to Grovehurst and Keycol junctions on the A249 are required to support the existing network. Doing nothing will result in worsening congestion and air quality with Swale unable to provide for the housing need beyond 2022. Options for a new development strategy will be considered as part of the Local Plan Review. This will define growth beyond 2031 and offer the potential for enhanced delivery in the period 2022-2031. The option for a new settlement and supporting road links to south east Sittingbourne represent a unique and radical option to resolve the constraints. This would facilitate housing growth and support two key economic drivers for Swale namely the Kent Science Park and the Eurolink Industrial Park.
	If funding not secured	The key to delivering allocated sites within the recently adopted local plan and laying down the means by which further significant development opportunities can be exploited could be achieved through a phased approach to infrastructure. Improving the Grovehurst/A249 junction and Keycol junction, alongside seed money to support ongoing development work, would expedite already planned development and promote the potential for the remaining elements of the scheme, thereby opening the door to major new opportunities, in parallel with Local Plan Review.

Strategic approach

Demonstrate strong local leadership

The scheme directly tackles the issues identified by the inspector in the adopted Local Plan, by removing the road network obstacle to delivery in the District. It directly provides a solution to the congestion and air quality issues which led to the requirement for an immediate review of the Local Plan. It is a bold and comprehensive solution, which in its pursuit requires strong local leadership to deliver. The Local Authority has demonstrated this strong leadership in initiating this proposal to complete a package of infrastructure works and represents the only way to provide a true alternative to the congestion and air quality issues caused by the current road network. It evidences a robust approach to planning within the District, to provide a strong and deliverable Local Plan and removes the inevitable question marks over every single application to come forward within the Plan period. It also ensures that the housing numbers set out can be achieved and the local plan can be implemented with confidence. It also facilitates the potential for a significant area of additional land to come forward for development at the appropriate time by allowing circa 1,000 acres of previously inaccessible land to be brought forward for housing, in a single cohesive manner. By concentrating development in this area, it is possible to apply the principles of "garden village" design, to ensure a vibrant and sustainable community is delivered, by virtue of the scale of proposal being sufficient to support the various community, educational, medical and other facilities required to ensure a sense of "place making". There has already been joint working between Kent County Council, Swale Borough Council and also Highways England. This joint working is already being put into practice through the joint instruction of a Swale wide traffic model, to ensure a joined-up basis for the base modelling of the road network and its implications.

Demonstrate unlocking new & better homes

The current road transport arrangements in Sittingbourne represent the single largest barrier to the delivery of required housing within the Swale District due to its inadequacy and the resulting congestion and air quality problems associated with it. Swale has an adopted Local Plan but this can only be implemented over the next 5 years if these issues are not addressed and as such it is subject to an immediate review. This proposal will release the currently allocated sites to come forward by offering a solution to the road network which no single site, or combination of sites is able to deliver at the current time. The proposal once implemented in full, not only supports the current delivery envisaged within the Local Plan beyond 2022, but it also offers an opportunity to bring forward a comprehensive offer of additional housing in a well-planned manner, to increase choice and sustain delivery.

Demonstrate diversifying housebuilding market

The scheme allows the allocated sites within the Local Plan to come forward for delivery without being constrained by the road network. By providing a comprehensive infrastructure solution for the allocated sites we will be able to move forward without having to tackle this issue. The range of sites currently allocated, and the approach to the potential larger scheme will encourage small and medium size builders to bring forward proposals without contributions to infrastructure that impact upon the viability of proposals and prevent them being progressed. This viability impact will also in turn have a significant impact on other provisions within these developments, including the ability to enforce housing targets. A proportion of the sites could also be allocated for self and custom build, offering people the opportunity to build their own home, and providing for the significant demand for these opportunities in the locality.

All supporting Local Authorities

Yes
Swale Borough Council 26 July Meeting Minutes with Council Resolution (file:Council Meeting 26 July 2017.pdf)

Plan Status	Plan adopted or submitted	No
	Date adopted or submitted	26/07/2017
	Web addresses to relevant documents	http://www.swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale

Approach to delivery	Plans to deliver infrastructure	In delivering this infrastructure we intend to take a phased approach. Phase 1 would see the delivery of the upgrade to the Grovehurst and Keycol junctions with the A249 to alleviate immediate pressures and to tie in with Highways England proposed works to M2 Junction 5. Alongside this we would also be able to progress the detailed design in relation to the new M2 Junction 5a and Southern Relief Road (SRR), and also explore the potential link between the new SRR to the existing Northern Relief Road (NRR). The funding requested provides certainty in terms of delivery by ensuring that the infrastructure works can be completed to support the Local Plan (Phase 1: Grovehurst and Keycol junctions on the A249) and funding is available to develop the remaining infrastructure requirements of the NRR extension, SRR and Junction 5a. Our ambition is to have these schemes fully designed and “shovel ready” for implementation post 2022.
	Link between infrastructure and homes	The provision of the Phase 1 infrastructure (Grovehurst and Keycol junctions) will accelerate and secure the delivery of the adopted Local Plan allocations post 2022. There are no other realistic solutions, given the geography and configuration of transport links. In Phase 2, provision of the additional new road infrastructure, north and south of the A2, creates new links and assists delivery of new development but also opens new possibilities in tandem with the Local Plan Review. It also supports potential growth at both Kent Science Park and Eurolink providing economic and employment benefits for the area. Without this, there is insufficient capacity on the road network to be able to access these new areas and in-fill or piecemeal development will only slowly exacerbate existing transport and air quality issues as opposed to providing a comprehensive solution.
	Delivery partners working together	The adopted (July 2017) Swale Local Plan demonstrates deliverable development for the first five years of the plan period. However, new projections of worsening congestion on the A2 and its junctions with the strategic road network which emerged during the course of the Local Plan Examination resulting in the need for an early review of the Plan. Kent County Council is working closely and collaboratively with Swale Borough Council and Highways England to develop and deliver a strategic solution for this area.
