

Date: 4th December 2024

CPRE Kent - The Countryside Charity
CPRE Kent, Queen's Head House,
Ashford Road, Charing,
Kent
TN27 0AD

To all Swale Council Members

By email only.

Dear Councillor,

Re: Full Council Meeting 4th December – Revised Local Plan Timetable.

We are writing with respect to Agenda Item 16 (Local Development Scheme autumn 2024) that is to be discussed at tonight's meeting of the Council.

CPRE Kent are extremely concerned with the suggestion that the Local Plan-Making process could be delayed to first allow for determination of the Highsted applications by the Secretary of State (as set out within the update paper provided at Appendix II of the report).

Simply put, delaying the Local Plan will clearly send the wrong signal to both the planning inspectorate and the Secretary of State. An emerging plan that does not include Highsted Park, even at the earliest stages, would need to be given planning weight by the decision-makers regardless of the politics involved.

This is in addition to the clear and obvious risks of delaying as set out within the update report.

It should also be noted that CPRE Kent have recent experience of a called-in Secretary of State decision taking over 4 years to be determined (Called-in decision: land adjacent to Turnden, Hartley Road, Cranbrook (ref: 3273015 - 22 November 2024)).

There is therefore no guarantee a delayed Local Plan timetable would achieve anything other than extending the length of time the District is subject to yet further speculative development and planning by appeal.

We therefore urge members to resist any calls for the Local Plan process to be delayed any further.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Griffiths

Director

CPRE Kent

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