

Chapter 1: Our Vision and Guiding Principles

1.1 The role of the Structure Plan is to provide the strategic planning framework to guide decisions on development, transport and environmental matters in Kent and Medway over the next 20 years. It will shape the scale, location and form of private and public investment in Kent over that period. As part of this role the Structure Plan must interpret national and regional policies as they apply to Kent and Medway. Currently these seek to foster sustainable communities, promote an “*urban renaissance*” and the re-vitalisation of rural communities. Kent and Medway contain two of the Government’s four growth areas for the South East (Thames Gateway and Ashford). The need to accommodate major new growth in Kent and Medway of the highest quality and with all the requisite community services for health, education, transport and other functions, whilst protecting Kent’s environment, represents the greatest challenge to public services and government. Not only should the new communities be well balanced in terms of development and services but the investment they bring should help correct deficiencies of the past in existing towns and villages.

1.2 Everyone in Kent should be able to enjoy a healthy and high quality lifestyle. The aim of this Structure Plan is to best serve the economic, social and environmental interests of the Kent and Medway community. This means bringing about healthier, safer, more prosperous communities with access to excellent education, jobs, transport, housing, health, leisure and cultural facilities. It also means ensuring that Kent’s environment is protected and enhanced.

1.3 Kent’s distinctiveness is one of the significant features that this Structure Plan seeks to retain and strengthen. Its distinctiveness is based on its size, peninsular position, heritage, and long history of administration as a single entity, dating back at least to the Saxon Kingdom of Kent. Its long-standing role as a point of entry for those travelling between the UK and the European mainland has helped to shape the county as it is today.

1.4 All places can of course claim to be unique. But in the case of Kent and Medway this uniqueness is based on its place in the national psyche as the Garden of England- a character established through a combination of climate, geology and agricultural expertise. The coastal towns of East Kent, those along the Thames in North Kent, the rural Weald and many historic centres, all share an important sense of ‘Kentishness’. This Plan seeks to retain and strengthen this uniqueness both for its own sake and as a driver for inward investment, tourism and community pride.

Kent and Medway: A distinctive ‘mosaic’

1.5 Kent and Medway face a distinctive set of circumstances. Without a single dominant urban area Kent has a pattern of medium sized towns and smaller centres. There is also a strong interrelationship between rural and urban areas. There are significant differences in the prosperity and quality of the built environment between different communities in Kent and Medway. The future planning strategy for the County needs to respond to these differing needs and circumstances; to conserve the best of what there is and to revitalise those communities and environments in most need.

1.6 70% of Kent’s population live in urban areas. Kent has an outstanding wealth of historic towns but the quality of the built environment is variable. Many towns require

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environmental improvements in inner residential areas and town centres and changes to highway infrastructure to encourage public transport and pedestrian priority. Some towns, especially in north and east Kent, could offer better employment and housing opportunities for the disadvantaged communities within them. There is a need to improve the quality of building design and public space and to make towns more attractive places in which to live.

1.7 Kent's countryside is a key but fragile asset. It helps make Kent special, gives identity to its settlements and reinforces its sense of place. It is under intense pressure from changes in agriculture and from built development. It must be nurtured for the benefit of present and future generations and given strong protection from development. Sensitive farm diversification will, however, be encouraged to ensure that the rural landscape is appropriately managed and that the vitality of the rural economy is improved.

1.8 30% of people live in Kent's smaller market towns rural settlements or the wider countryside. The economic health and vitality of some of these settlements needs to be improved to respond to local needs. Some larger rural settlements provide local retail and community facilities and employment and fulfil the role of rural service centres. They justify greater recognition as focal points for necessary development, including small-scale residential and economic development and community services. Other rural settlements of a similar scale lack many basic services and this needs to be addressed. The emphasis for smaller villages and hamlets will be on maintaining their character and protecting them from inappropriate development.

Pattern of Development in Kent: Map of Towns and villages

1.9 The Kent economy has shown significant improvement over the last decade, unemployment has declined substantially and the economy has diversified. However, there are still significant economic problems and disparities within Kent which need to be tackled and some areas remain reliant on poorly performing economic sectors. In overall economic performance, employment growth and representation of key business sectors, the area does not compare well with the rest of the South East. This gap needs to be narrowed.

Chart of relative economic performance – GDP per capita in the South East counties

1.10 As the principal gateway to the rest of Europe, Kent has significant opportunities for economic development and tourism. This gateway role does however result in a high volume of traffic movement by road and rail to the ports and Channel Tunnel. This impacts on the local environment and on the transport network that also serves local needs. While Kent should play its full part in ensuring economic prosperity for the nation and the South East region, local interests must be also addressed.

1.11 Patterns of development in recent decades have tended to separate different land uses and resulted in relatively low development densities in suburban and commercial areas. This has encouraged longer journeys to work, air pollution and a less 'local' pattern of services. The provision of community facilities and employment growth has also frequently lagged behind the construction of new housing.

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1.12 New development should provide for a better balance of housing, employment and services in places where they can be easily reached. It should support the role of town and district centres as focal points for local communities and make more effective use of urban land. Concentrating development at principal urban areas offers the best prospect for ensuring that homes, jobs and services are well related to each other and have a choice of transport facilities.

1.13 Regional Planning Guidance (2001) confirms the Thames Gateway (which includes most of North Kent) as a nationally and regionally important area for economic regeneration and for the recycling of previously used land. Kent's planning strategy has long identified Ashford as a growth point for both housing and jobs. Its contribution will increase over the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. The commitment to regeneration and economic diversification in the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield is maintained in this Structure Plan. This area is identified as a regionally significant Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER).

1.14 Projected population change, including an increase in smaller households and a mobile labour force, mean that Kent will require significant new development to meet the needs of existing residents and to ensure that economic competitiveness is maintained and improved.

1.15 Kent will be affected by climate change. The impacts will need to be considered in locating development, particularly in river corridors and coastal areas. Kent must also play its part in managing the use of natural resources such as water and in promoting alternative forms of transport and renewable energy.

Community Strategies

1.16 Both Kent and Medway Councils have worked closely with a wide range of partners to produce Community Strategies. These set out shared objectives and priorities for Kent. The Structure Plan is a key delivery vehicle for these community strategies, which have informed the themes and core principles of this Structure Plan:

The Kent Partnership's Vision for Kent – 2002 endorsed a number of objectives for Kent: "A County...

- *of strong cohesive communities, where local people, agencies and groups work together in partnership and individuals from all backgrounds can join in community life*
- *with excellence in learning opportunities and in skills development*
- *which is a centre of excellence for high quality leisure and tourism*
- *where people enjoy healthy lives and have high standards of health and social care*
- *where people are helped to be more independent and become less dependent*
- *which is safe and where people live free from the fear of crime*
- *where business growth builds on existing strengths and grasps the new opportunities stemming from Kent's position as the Gateway to Europe*
- *where the countryside and coast, heritage and environment are safeguarded and enhanced for everyone's enjoyment, now and in the future*
- *where the difficulties of traffic and transport are tackled for the benefit of all*

.The vision for the Medway Community Strategy envisages: "Medway will be a healthy, safe and exciting place with a good environment and major cultural attractions. Medway's communities will be recognised for their care, fairness and vibrancy, where people work together to realise their needs and ambitions"

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Source: More to Medway

Key Themes and Core Principles for the Structure Plan

KEY THEME:

Nurturing Kent and Medway 's Environment and Resources

- Protecting the countryside, minimising greenfield development and making the most of opportunities for the re-use of previously developed land, especially within existing towns and other substantial communities.
- Anticipating and reducing the impact of future climate change including stronger protection and management of areas of potential flood risk, reducing demand for energy and moving towards renewable energy sources.
- Protecting and enhancing the land, air and water environments.
- Ensuring that development does not create unacceptable levels of pollution and that development proposals sensitive to pollution are protected from its effects.
- Protecting high quality agricultural land.
- Conserving and enhancing Kent's natural habitats and biodiversity.
- Promoting sensitive and comprehensive approaches to the assessment and protection of the countryside, that reflect its character and biodiversity as well as its natural beauty.
- Conserving and enhancing Kent's historic environment.
- Prudent use and management of water and other natural resources, including safeguarding of viable mineral reserves from sterilisation.
- Reducing disposable waste to a minimum and disposing of it so as to achieve maximum benefits from recycling and reducing its potential for environmental pollution.
- Using wisely the natural environment to provide leisure, recreational,

KEY THEME

Fostering Prosperity and Well Being

- Increasing economic opportunity and reducing economic disparities within Kent, through commitment to regeneration and improved economic performance in North Kent, the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield.
- Pursuing targeted economic development, including support for high value added activities and skills development, business clusters and knowledge based industries to boost the competitiveness of the Kent economy and existing businesses.
- Pursuing employment led growth and change, especially within the areas in North and East Kent requiring regeneration.
- Supporting indigenous growth of enterprise and employment.
- Providing for sustainable growth in the economically successful parts of Kent, whilst addressing the pockets of deprivation which occur within them.
- Sustaining and improving the economic health and vitality of Kent's rural communities and diversifying the rural economy.
- Capitalising on the role of Thames Gateway as a national and regional priority for economic growth, regeneration and infrastructure investment. This Plan recognises the pivotal role of the main urban areas of north Kent and Medway to this.
- Promoting Ashford as a regional growth point whilst ensuring that wider benefits accrue to the economy of East Kent in particular.
- Promoting sustainable tourism to capitalise on Kent and Medway's assets.

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KEY THEME

Securing Quality, Investment and Infrastructure for Regeneration and Development

- Forging the regeneration and renaissance of Kent's principal urban areas, including neighbourhood renewal, redevelopment and improvement in key inner urban locations.
- Securing balanced and timely provision of housing, jobs, infrastructure and community services. Supporting existing and enhanced services and infrastructure through development.
- Promoting and investing in efficient transport that provides for future needs, addresses congestion, avoids unacceptable environmental damage and makes best use of existing road and rail infrastructure.
- Adopting high quality design to use land, water, energy and other resources more efficiently and to provide for changing lifestyles and preferences.
- Encouraging a sense of place, local distinctiveness and the provision of safe, secure convenient and attractive communities and working environments.
- Maintaining the character and separation of settlements through maintenance of the Green Belt and strategic gaps.

KEY THEME

Enhancing choice, opportunity and accessibility.

- Ensuring that planning policies and practice in Kent and Medway promote social independence and take into account the needs of all sections of the community.
- Providing sufficient housing of a suitable range, quality and diversity for people in Kent and Medway.
- Concentrating development at the principal urban areas that are the major focal points for employment, public services and transport facilities.
- Promoting more mixed use developments to a pattern and density that makes efficient use of land, increases accessibility, reduces travel needs and is planned to meet social, cultural and economic needs.
- Ensuring that decisions on development and transport achieve good accessibility to services and jobs and a choice of means of transport for people and goods.
- Ensuring that physical access to transport and community services and buildings whether public or private, new or existing, is improved for the benefit of all whilst recognising the value of heritage buildings.

Achieving Sustainable Development

1.16 The prime contribution of the Structure Plan to improving economic, social and environmental well being will be through promoting a more integrated, better-designed and more sustainable pattern and form of development. Strategic Policy SP1 gives effect to this by defining the key elements that the local authorities, other public and private sector agencies, the development industry and others will need to address.

Policy SP1: Meeting Development Needs in a Sustainable Manner

The primary purpose of Kent's development and environmental strategy will be to achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. This will be done principally by:

- **Protecting the Kent countryside and reduce reliance on greenfield sites to meet all forms of built development;**
- **Using and re-using land for development more efficiently;**
- **Protecting and enhancing features of importance in the natural and built environment;**
- **Reducing the need to travel, encouraging the availability of a choice of transport, reducing growth in dependence on the road network and fostering good accessibility to jobs and services for all sections of the community;**
- **Encouraging high quality development and design that reflects Kent's identity and local distinctiveness and promotes healthy, safe and secure living and working environments;**
- **Fostering balanced and timely provision for housing, employment, infrastructure and community services to maintain and develop well functioning settlements;**
- **Responding to the implications of long term climate change by:**
 - **Advancing the conservation and prudent use of energy, water and other natural resources;**
 - **Minimising the impact of pollution and assisting the control of greenhouse gas emissions;**
 - **Safeguarding areas of potential flood risk from development**

Chapter 2: A Spatial Strategy for Kent and Medway

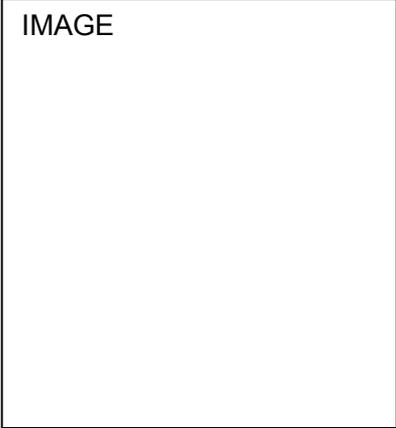
Introduction

2.1 Kent is characterised by its pattern of large and medium sized towns and cities together with a 'peopled countryside' of historic market towns, villages and hamlets. These settlements are set against a backcloth of a rich and diverse natural environment. The role of the Structure Plan is to preserve this distinctiveness while responding to the specific needs of different parts of the County and re-balancing investment and development pressures across it.

Key Spatial Issues

- Imbalance of development pressures and wealth and investment across Kent
- Need to respond to decline of town centres
- Impact of London on housing markets
- Accommodating growth pressures in a sustainable way
- Decline in rural services
- Resisting development pressures on the countryside

IMAGE



Spatial Strategy

- Focusing development and investment in North Kent and East Kent including Ashford and Shepway
- Concentrating development at the principal urban areas, particularly the major urban areas of Kent Thameside, Medway, Thanet, Ashford and Maidstone/Medway Gap.
- Concentrating necessary rural development at rural service centres.
- Adopting a sequential approach to the location of development by first using previously used land and buildings
- Maintaining the Green Belt.
- Defining Strategic Gaps to maintain the separation of major settlements.

Kent and Medway: External Relationships

2.2 The future of Kent and Medway will be significantly influenced by their relationship with surrounding areas notably: London, neighbouring counties and the European mainland.

London

2.3 The future prosperity of Kent and Medway is intrinsically linked with that of London. A significant proportion of London's working population commutes from Kent into central and outer London, as many as 37% of the workforce in Sevenoaks commute to London with 19,000 commuting daily from Medway.

2.4 To preserve local economic and social vitality, levels of out-commuting from Kent should not become too dominant. Increased levels of commuting would place further pressure on transport infrastructure, particularly rail, which is already strained. West Kent districts experience particular pressures especially in terms of demand on housing. There are difficulties in providing an adequate range of housing, particularly affordable housing and provision for key public and private sector workers. A sufficient range of job opportunities provided locally as an alternative to commuting can help to counter any trend towards dormitory settlements. Balanced provision for employment and housing in London are essential in managing pressures in Kent.

2.5 Kent has reasonable but slow access to London by rail. Road links are poor and congested. Access from the west of London to its central areas is comparatively very much better at present than from the east and this disadvantage needs to be tackled. London can have the effect of 'blocking' Kent from the rest of the country, particularly the Midlands, North and East of England, thus heightening the effect of the County's peninsula location. It is important to improve transport links with the rest of the UK, in order to access wider markets.

2.6 Kent derives both direct and indirect economic benefits from its proximity to London. Some businesses relocate or expand from London to Kent and continue to require access to the capital. Services are provided in Kent for residents of London (e.g. retailing at Bluewater and other centres). Visitors and tourists travelling through Kent to the Capital offer an important prospective market for the area's amenities and attractions.

2.7 The relationship with London is important in delivering key national and regional policies, such as the Thames Gateway initiative. Environmental issues such as air pollution, estuary management, habitat and open space networks necessitate an integrated approach between strategic authorities including the Greater London Authority. In the past Kent has accepted a proportion of London's domestic waste for disposal to landfill but with a move towards greater self-sufficiency in waste management it will be important that both areas manage and dispose of the majority of their waste locally.

Neighbouring Areas

2.8 Kent's relationship with neighbouring counties is less intense than with London, although cross boundary traffic movement and commuting have increased in recent years. With the exception of Tunbridge Wells/ East Sussex and Dartford/South Essex cross-border job markets are weak. Retailing within Kent does exert wider influence, particularly Bluewater (in Dartford) and to a lesser extent Tunbridge Wells.

2.9 Kent does share common issues with neighbouring authorities e.g. housing demands and pressure on transport infrastructure as a result of commuting to London. There are also common transport issues such as management of orbital transport

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movement around London including prospective further crossings of the Thames east of London and traffic movement along the South Coast.

Europe

2.10 Kent is at the heart of the most economically successful and densely populated part of Europe. This affords locational advantages including ready access to markets. The European Union has encouraged the sharing of issues of common concern across Kent and Nord Pas de Calais through successive rounds of the Interreg programme. However, scope remains to increase the degree of co-operation between Kent and the rest of Europe.

2.11 Kent is the main UK gateway to Europe. Since the opening of the Channel Tunnel in the 1990s, the volume of international freight transport passing through the county has risen greatly and further growth is expected. By far the greater proportion of this freight travels on Kent and Medway's two east – west motorways resulting in significant environmental pollution including noise and poor air quality as well as considerable congestion. On the positive side there are significant benefits to be gained for tourism and commerce. The promotion of alternative routes outside of the county, together with environmentally less damaging methods of transport within Kent (e.g. rail) would help to relieve the pressure on the county's trunk road network and communities.

Concentration of development at the urban areas

2.12 70% of Kent's population live in urban areas. Four urban areas are relatively large - Medway, Dartford and Gravesend/Northfleet (Kent Thameside), Maidstone, (together with the Medway Gap) and Thanet. In addition Ashford is identified in Regional Planning Guidance as a focus for accelerated growth. These urban areas offer the best prospects for successful public transport and greater self-sufficiency for employment and services, reducing the need for longer distance journeys. They will provide the greater proportion of development opportunities in Kent and Medway within the 20-year time horizon of this Plan.

2.13 Twelve other principal urban areas have similar but less pronounced advantages. In order to take advantage of the facilities in these towns and to reduce pressure for development in the countryside, new development should also be focussed on these urban areas, but generally on a smaller scale. There are numerous small to medium sized towns in Kent. They provide services for the rural community as well as for their own residents but many are too small to support a full range of specialised services.

2.14 There are exceptional opportunities in Thames Gateway, Thanet and other East Kent coastal towns to address deprivation and improve economic, social and environmental well-being. Fundamental to this is the need to ensure that major developments benefit existing as well as new communities.

2.15 The strategy seeks to concentrate development in the nineteen major or principal urban areas listed in Table SS1 and identified on the Key Diagram. There will be a strong focus on the reuse of previously developed land, particularly within the central parts of our towns and through many of the strategic locations for development identified by this Plan. Developments should aim to encourage mixed uses with new housing provided at a higher density than has been the case in recent years supported by public transport facilities.

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New releases of greenfield land will be kept to a minimum and be at a reduced level in comparison with previous experience. The strategy will serve to both resist pressure on the urban fringe and avoid suburbanisation of the countryside.

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Table SS1: Major and Principal Urban Areas in Kent

SUB AREA	MAJOR URBAN AREAS
North Kent	Kent Thameside <i>[Dartford/Stone/Greenhithe/Swanscombe]</i> <i>[Gravesend /Northfleet]</i> Medway Towns
East Kent Triangle	Thanet Towns
Channel Corridor/West Kent	Ashford Maidstone/Medway Gap*
	OTHER PRINCIPAL URBAN AREAS
North Kent	Sittingbourne Sheerness/Queenborough/Minster Faversham
East Kent Triangle	Canterbury Herne Bay and Whitstable Dover Deal
Channel Corridor	Folkestone/Hythe
West Kent	Sevenoaks Swanley Tonbridge Tunbridge Wells

* including Aylesford, Ditton, Larkfield, New Hythe, Snodland, Leybourne, and Kings Hill

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2.16 Other than at the principal urban areas and the strategic development locations identified by this Plan (Chapter 3), any significant development will be concentrated at the rural service centres, identified on the Key Diagram and in Table SS2. Proposals to support the local rural economy or address local housing needs at other, smaller rural settlements, capable of supporting a sustainable pattern of development, will be identified through Local Development Documents.

Table SS.2: Rural Service Centres

Borough Green	Sandwich
Cranbrook	Staplehurst
Edenbridge	Tenterden
Headcorn	Westerham
Lydd	West Malling
New Romney	
Paddock Wood	

Policy SS1: Spatial Priorities for Development and Investment in Kent

Strategic policy in Kent will be focused upon the promotion of development and investment in North Kent, Ashford and East Kent (including Shepway) and on a general re-balancing of housing pressure from the west towards these areas.

Policy SS2: Role of Major Urban Areas, Other Principal Urban Areas and Rural Service Centres.

Further to Policy SS1 development in Kent will be concentrated at major urban areas, as shown on the Key Diagram:

- **in North Kent at Kent Thameside (within Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs) and the Medway Towns;**
- **in the East Kent Triangle at the Thanet Towns;**
- **at Ashford as a regional growth point.**
- **at Maidstone and the urban area of the Medway Gap**

The primary emphasis will be upon the redevelopment of previously developed land including large-scale opportunities within the Thames Gateway and the Medway Gap.

Elsewhere provision for development will be concentrated at the principal urban areas, as shown on the Key Diagram.

Any significant development at rural settlements should be concentrated at the rural service centres identified on the Key Diagram or other settlements, identified in Local Development Documents, where development would be sustainable.

The strategic development requirements of this Plan should be met in a manner that provides for balanced and timely residential, employment, leisure and community development and infrastructure provision.

A Sequential Approach and prioritising use of previously developed land

2.17 This Plan endorses the use of previously developed land and buildings, prior to developing green field sites as a key ingredient in bringing new life to urban areas, particularly their central and inner parts. Regional planning guidance seeks to achieve at least 60% of all new development outside London on previously developed land or through the conversion and reuse of existing buildings. The scale and character of Kent's urban areas and the prospects for the use of previously developed or damaged land have been an important consideration in arriving at the strategic distribution of development requirements within Kent. Policy targets are included elsewhere (Policy HP3) for the use of previously developed land for housing. New greenfield land release will be kept to a minimum and will be phased, so that it does not undermine the successful development of previously developed land in the locality.

Policy SS3: Priority for previously developed land and a sequential approach to the location of development.

Development requirements, not met by sites with existing planning permission, should be provided through the sequential consideration of (i) previously developed land or buildings and (ii) greenfield land.

In each case assessment of development locations should reflect the sequential consideration of the county's major/principal urban areas, rural service centres and smaller rural settlements that can provide a sustainable form of development.

Town Centres and Inner Urban Areas

2.18 Town centres should be lively and economically prosperous. The environment of the central parts of our urban areas needs upgrading. Town centres and inner urban areas, where there is a choice of transport and good access to services and jobs, are ideal locations for mixed-use development at relatively high densities.

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2.19 Within these areas competition for available sites may arise between housing, retail and leisure uses. The priority in the core of town centres, which should be defined in Local Development Documents should be for retail and leisure developments. They require access from a wide area, benefit from proximity to one another and add to the attractiveness of centres.

2.20 Local Development Documents should also establish a pattern of mixed use which protects and improves residential amenity and public safety. Existing non-conforming industrial or service uses can inhibit the effective use of land or the provision of mixed use development in inner urban areas particularly if they give rise to potential conflicts with residential development. Provision should be made for their relocation to alternative sites.

Policy SS4: Mixed use in town centres and inner urban areas

Development which assists Kent's town centres to be prosperous, safe, vibrant and with high standards of design and maintenance will be supported.

Within the core of town centres first priority should attach to retail, service and leisure uses. Office, community, cultural and residential uses should be also provided, where practicable as part of mixed use developments.

Elsewhere within town centres and edge of town centre locations a diversity of land uses will be encouraged including residential development providing for a mix of dwelling type and size.

Alternative locations should be identified for the relocation of non-conforming uses which cause serious environmental disruption for residential use.

Rural Communities

2.21 Rural communities need concerted action to bring about their revitalisation. Planning policies can help to create more balanced and self-contained rural communities and reduce the need for travel but they need to reflect the diversity within Kent's rural areas. Accessibility to the jobs and services in the county's network of urban areas are important influences. Within rural communities themselves access to housing, retail and community services and public transport are key issues.

"Kent Countryside 2000" found that:

- Jobs in traditional rural industries continue to decline and rural services have to compete often unsuccessfully with larger towns
- Residents of rural areas travel to urban areas and London employment.
- House prices have risen beyond the means of many local people and there is very limited social housing
- Some sections of the rural community suffer deprivation and problems of isolation. This is exacerbated by poor public transport.

IMAGE

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2.22 Rural service centres have an important role to play because they provide these community facilities as well as employment and hence reduce the need to travel to urban areas. They are, or have the potential to be, a focus for public transport. Twelve significant rural service centres have been identified (see Table SS2 and Key Diagram). Other settlements may also be capable of fulfilling this role especially where they have good public transport connections. These should be identified in partnership with District Councils through preparation of Local Development Documents. Through application of the sequential approach provided for under Policies SS3 and HP4 small scale, housing, retail, employment and community facilities development may be appropriate in these settlements where this can provide greater local choice and can support and enhance local services.

2.23 Other larger rural settlements have grown as commuter or industrial areas but without strong local services. The priority in these settlements should be to improve local services to support a more sustainable pattern of living. Specific requirements should be established through an assessment against rural service needs and be identified in Local Development Documents.

2.24 At a small number of rural settlements, a greater scale of housing and employment may exceptionally be justified to improve local services and infrastructure, to bring about improvements to the environment or to help revitalise communities that have lost their original economic role. These include Aylesham, Iwade and Hawkinge, all identified as Strategic Development Locations in this Plan.

Policy SS5: Development at rural service centres and other rural settlements

Other than at Strategic Development Locations identified by this Plan development at, but beyond the built confines of rural settlements should be small scale and identified in a Local Development Document or be supported by a special local justification. This may include the provision of affordable housing, community facilities or the expansion of an established business.

- a) **Rural Service Centres, as identified on the Key Diagram, will be the focus for community services, improved public transport and small scale housing and employment serving their areas;**
- b) **Smaller rural settlements capable of functioning as rural service centres may be identified in Local Development Documents as suitable for small scale development if they meet the following criteria :**
 - **good road and public transport access and connectivity; and**
 - **an existing core of employment and community services**
- c) **for large rural settlements which lack local services a rural services standards assessment should be undertaken. The need for and provision for service improvements should be identified in community strategies and Local Development Documents.**

2.25 Beyond the rural service centres many smaller rural settlements offer a limited range of facilities and services. The emphasis here will continue to be on restraint beyond the limits of

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existing built development. Small scale development may be exceptionally justified if it contributes to the provision of affordable housing directed at identified needs within individual communities and/or improved community infrastructure, diversification of farm businesses and appropriate expansion of established rural enterprises (see Chapters on Fostering prosperity and Housing Provision).

Policy SS6: Development in the countryside

Housing development in the countryside will be subject to Policy HP6.

Non residential development in rural Kent other than at rural settlements should:

- (i) be demonstrated to be necessary to agriculture, forestry, the winning of minerals or other land uses for which a rural location is essential; or**
- (ii) be the re-use, adaptation or redevelopment of an existing rural building or institution, where the change is acceptable on environmental, traffic and other planning grounds; or**
- (iii) provide a public facility for which a rural location is justified; or**
- (iv) allow for the business diversification of an existing farm in accordance with Policy FP7.**

RESTRAINING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Metropolitan Green Belt

2.26 The Metropolitan Green Belt in Kent has a major role to play in:

- Preserving open country between the edge of Greater London and the urban areas of Medway, the Medway Gap and Tunbridge Wells;
- Near London, to curb the growth of , and preserve the separate identities of Dartford and Swanley and the settlements in the Darent Valley;
- Further out,
 - to maintain the separation between Gravesend and the Medway Towns ;
 - to restrict the expansion of settlements south of the A2 to prevent further suburbanisation and preserve their identity;
 - to restrain expansion between and around Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Tonbridge;
 - to contain the western edge of the Medway Gap urban area and limit development in the transport corridor towards London ; and
 - to prevent the outward expansion of Sevenoaks and settlements in the Weald

2.27 No significant changes to the Green Belt are proposed in this Plan. The extent of the approved Green Belt is some 12 – 15 miles from the built up edge of Greater London, as shown on the Key Diagram and defined in Policy SS7. Detailed boundaries are defined in local plans / local development documents. The Dartford Borough Local Plan Review incorporates changes to the boundary of the Green Belt to exclude Eastern Quarry pursuant to Policy MGB2 of the 1996 Kent Structure Plan.

Policy SS7: Extent of the Green Belt

The Metropolitan Green Belt will extend about 15 miles from the edge of the built up area of Greater London, i.e. to the east of Gravesend, to the west of Rochester and West Malling, and to the east of Watlington and Nettlestead. It will also extend to the west of Paddock Wood and east of Tunbridge Wells. The detailed boundaries are established through local plans / development documents.

The boundary of the Green Belt at Dartford on the north side of the A2 is amended to exclude Eastern Quarry from the Green Belt. New boundaries will be defined through the Dartford Local Plan.

2.28 The uses which are appropriate within the Green Belt are well established through Policy Guidance and case law. There is a positive role for Green Belt to play in providing for increased access to the countryside and for outdoor leisure and recreation. Uses should also help to protect landscape and wildlife interest, to keep land in agricultural and forestry use, and to improve derelict or damaged land near towns.

Policy SS8: Uses Appropriate within the Green Belt

Within the Metropolitan Green Belt there is a general presumption against inappropriate development. The construction of new buildings is inappropriate unless for:

- **Agriculture or forestry;**
- **Essential facilities for sport and recreation outdoors, cemeteries, and other uses of land which preserve its openness and do not conflict with its established purposes;**
- **The limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings;**
- **Limited infilling (including affordable housing for local community needs) within existing villages;**
- **Limited infilling or redevelopment of major existing developed sites identified in Local Plans/Local Development Documents as suitable for such development.**
- **Small scale composting facilities meeting a local need where these can be accommodated without severe impact on the purposes of the Green Belt**

The reuse of buildings is only appropriate where the openness of the Green Belt is maintained and other planning considerations are not prejudiced.

Proposals for mineral extraction must incorporate high quality environmental standards including restoration.

Strategic Gaps

2.29 It is important to maintain the separation between the urban areas of Maidstone, the Medway Gap and the Medway Towns through the designation of a 'strategic gap'. The specific purposes of the gap are to separate:

- a) the Medway Towns urban area from north Maidstone;
- b) the Medway Gap urban area from the Medway Towns;
- c) the Medway Gap urban area (at Aylesford and Ditton) from the north western edge of Maidstone;

Further to these functions its role is to:

- to prevent the coalescence of existing settlements. On the West Bank of the Medway this function will include separation of Snodland from Larkfield and New Hythe to the south and Halling to the north;
- to prevent the merging of areas of new development and existing settlements and to ensure that development on the East Bank of the Medway is confined to areas already allocated in local plans.

2.30 This Plan also designates a strategic gap to maintain separation between the urban areas of the Medway Towns and Sittingbourne north of the M2. Its role will be:

- to restrict outward expansion to the east of Gillingham and Rainham;
- to restrict the westward expansion of the Sittingbourne urban area;
- to curtail development in the A2 transport corridor between Sittingbourne and Rainham;
- to maintain separation between Sittingbourne and settlements in the A249 transport corridor. This will include separation of Iwade from the Sittingbourne urban area and Ridham/Kemsley. The detailed boundaries of this strategic gap will be defined through the Local Development Documents for Medway and Swale.

Policy SS9: Strategic Gaps

Strategic gaps are designated to maintain the separation of:

- **the Maidstone and Medway Gap urban areas from the Medway Towns and from each other;**
- **settlements on the east and west sides of the River Medway;**
- **the Medway Towns and Sittingbourne urban areas.**

Within these gaps any development proposals which would significantly extend the footprint of existing settlements, or the areas identified for development in this Plan or current local plan allocations, will not be permitted. Detailed boundaries of the strategic gaps will be identified or revised through Local Development Documents.

Chapter 3: Policies for Sub Divisions of Kent and Medway

3.1 The improvement of living standards and enhancement of the environment in Kent requires that the key elements of the planning and transport strategy are delivered for the whole county. These include carefully considered investment in roads including those that run across Kent, major uplift of Kent's coastal rail network, provision of CTRL domestic train services and tackling the issues of housing and employment initially on a county wide basis. However some issues vary in their nature and intensity across the county and for this reason variations in policy are provided for 4 sub areas:

- North Kent
- East Kent Triangle
- Channel Corridor
- West Kent

North Kent

3.2 North Kent comprises Dartford, Gravesham and Swale Boroughs and Medway Unitary Authority. Its mix of town and countryside presents many opportunities for improving the local environment and economy. This part of Kent and Medway contains some areas of deprivation and poor quality urban environment. Yet there are also many attractive residential areas, historic city and town centres, picturesque rural settlements, large tracts of attractive countryside and extensive areas of marshland of international ecological importance along the Swale, Medway and Thames estuaries.

3.3 In the 1980s and 1990s there were fundamental changes in the local economy such as the closure of Chatham Dockyard and the decline of much manufacturing and port industry. However in the last decade there has been an increasing shift to the education, pharmaceutical, high tech, financial and service sectors.

3.4 The Thames Gateway initiative, begun by Kent CC, the North Kent Districts and East London Boroughs in the 1980s, has seen the area become a focus of national and regional regeneration policy. Major development is well underway, with recent prestige projects including the Darent Valley Hospital, Bluewater and Ingress Park in Dartford and Chatham Maritime in Medway. Although the development of some settlements, such as Iwade and Sittingbourne, has involved expansion based on greenfield land, the majority of development has taken place on previously used land.

3.5 Substantial improvements in infrastructure have included the M2 widening and A249 improvements. More is to come, including a second Swale crossing, completion of the CTRL and Ebbsfleet station, an enhanced public transport network ('Fastrack') and widening of the A2. These in particular will provide a major boost to the pace of development, but it is also important for Kent and Medway that the fullest possible access for domestic usage of the CTRL is gained. In general transport will continue to pose major challenges, including the dependence on the motorway system. Better use of the rivers is possible but can conflict with urban regeneration initiatives.

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

3.6 Concern has been expressed that the necessary investment in community or social infrastructure has lagged behind development. Some communities in North Kent remain excluded from the benefits that investment has brought. A key challenge will be to ensure that all sections of the community benefit from economic development and social change but major funding will be needed for some facilities and services including adequate attention to affordable and key worker housing provision to support local economic growth and respond to a strong housing market with good and improving access to London.

3.7 The scale of development proposed in North Kent offers unparalleled opportunities to promote high quality, innovative and sustainable forms of development strongly concentrated on previously used land. Economic, social and environmental benefits can be integrated and self-reinforcing. These include projects that provide a landmark for design quality, large scale community facilities (e.g. a regional park), the integrated delivery of public services/facilities and mixed use developments based around new transport interchanges and major leisure, sporting and tourist attractions. There is also much scope to capitalise on innovative forms of development including industrial scale composting, renewable energy plants and combined heat and power.

Dartford and Gravesham

3.8 Situated within Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs, Kent Thameside is one of the two principal hubs for development identified in RPG9a for the whole Thames Gateway. It will be focused upon major areas of previously used or damaged land. Achieving development of the right form and quality here will be one of the keys to wider regeneration success across the Thames Gateway. The scale and close proximity of these locations provide a singular opportunity to bring forward a pattern of development including aspirations for higher density, which improves the environment and makes good use of public transport. Achievement of the full development capacity of these opportunities needs to be supported by an enhanced public transport network ('Fastrack') and a major upgrade of community facilities and services.

3.9 Strategic policy seeks to ensure that existing communities, particularly marginalised ones, derive benefits from regeneration through employment opportunities and investment in community infrastructure. This will require backing from Government and its agencies, and a comprehensive investment programme encompassing both public and private sectors. South of the A2 the intention is to preserve the open countryside and the Metropolitan Green Belt.

Policy NK1: Dartford and Gravesham

At, and between, the principal urban areas of Dartford and Gravesend/Northfleet major mixed use developments based on previously developed or other damaged land will be comprehensively planned, including appropriate measures to integrate new development with existing communities, and phased in conjunction with the provision of new highway and public transport infrastructure and community services and facilities.

Provision will be made for a bus based public transport network (Fastrack) linking Dartford and Gravesend town centres, Bluewater and the main Strategic Developments identified by this Plan.

Opportunities for enhancing the economic, leisure, amenity and transport potential of the River Thames will be identified, including safeguarding of deep water facilities and associated land at Northfleet Riverside

A network of open land and green spaces ('Green Grid') will be identified and provided to link major areas of open space with the Thames and with existing and new communities.

Proposals for the main Strategic Developments should contribute to enhancing the quality of the built and open environment, including provision of elements of the Green Grid, and support a pattern, form and density of development that reflects accessibility to existing and planned public transport provision.

Strategic Developments will include those at:

(a) Ebbsfleet Valley as the location for development of a combined domestic and international passenger station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, a new business centre, major residential development and community facilities. Development should reflect a high standard of civic design and landscaping and be integrated with new and improved transport networks including Fastrack and an extension to Crossrail;

(b) Eastern Quarry for a series of linked and integrated communities with an emphasis on housing provision, along with social and community facilities and business development to be developed in accordance with a Master Plan and serviced by a new public transport network (Fastrack);

(c) North Dartford, to the west of the A282 for business, housing, leisure and recreation uses;

(d) Crossways Business Park, to the east of the A282, for continued mixed commercial development involving office, industrial and distribution uses;

(e) Swanscombe Peninsula (East and West) for a new mixed use community, predominantly for housing, taking full account of the area's relationship with the River Thames, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, other physical constraints to

development including ground conditions and flood risk and integrated with an enhanced public transport network;

(f) Gravesend/Northfleet Riverside and North East Gravesend involving the reuse of redundant previously used land and premises.

Medway

3.10 Urban renaissance will be accelerated in particular through the regeneration of the Medway Waterfront and renewal of poor quality housing. Medway Waterfront is a series of large-scale inter-linked brownfield development sites along the River Medway, including Chatham Centre and Waterfront and adjacent Rochester Riverside and Chatham Maritime. Chatham with its outstanding river frontage and historic location should become Medway's new city centre and cultural heart. This should include support for major new public transport capacity, employment provision and cultural, tourism and service uses. The aim is to turn Chatham Centre and Waterfront into a thriving city centre for living, working, learning, shopping, leisure and culture.

3.11 Attention will be centred on the urban area for the majority of Medway's development needs. There should be no outward expansion that conflicts with strategic restraint policies. The role of substantial areas of potentially surplus defence land at Chattenden/Lodge Hill has been identified in regional planning guidance and this Plan provides for a new, village scale mixed use community here in the period to 2016 and beyond.

3.12 Completion of improvements to the A228 coupled with rail access to the regionally significant port of Thamesport are priorities. Such improvements are important to progress strategic scale industrial and commercial land allocations involving previously developed land at Grain and Kingsnorth and their linkage with the Medway urban area and Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

3.13 Medway has the largest labour force in Kent but there is substantial dependence on commuting to London. There is a continuing need to support local economic development and the growth of higher value added economic activity. The development of the technology and knowledge sectors will be encouraged at Rochester Airfield and Chatham Maritime.

3.14 Growth of the Higher and Further Education sectors will be promoted, including a full-scale university campus. The establishment of the Universities at Medway partnership will bring 5000 additional higher education places to Medway thereby broadening the range of opportunities available for local people and associated benefits to the Medway economy.

Policy NK2: Medway

Proposals to regenerate Medway should focus upon the Medway Waterfront including central Chatham, Rochester Riverside and at Strood.

Expansion beyond the Medway urban area to meet development requirements should be concentrated at a new, mixed-use community at Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

Development for the Higher and Further Education sectors including a full-scale university campus, will be supported. Provision will be made for the technology and knowledge sectors at Rochester Airport and Chatham Maritime.

Completion of improvements to the A228 together with rail access improvements to support growth of Thamesport and industrial and commercial development at Grain and Kingsnorth will be promoted.

Major new town centre investment at Chatham on a scale appropriate to one of the region's principal urban centres will be supported, particularly in relation to new public transport capacity, employment provision and cultural, tourism and leisure facilities.

Swale

3.15 The Swale area will continue to play a significant role in the Thames Gateway but there will be a stronger focus of development and improvements in Sittingbourne and Sheerness. Most new housing in Swale should be met in the Sittingbourne /Sheerness corridor. Provision of the Second Swale Crossing is critical to unlocking the regeneration of Sheppey. Policy for Faversham, at the transition between the eastern end of the Thames Gateway and the coastal towns of the East Kent Triangle, seeks to conserve its historic environment and contain further peripheral growth beyond that already planned. Improving local employment opportunities, promoting a more self-sufficient role for the town and meeting the housing needs of the area commensurate with the urban housing capacity of the area are prime considerations.

Policy NK3: Swale

Within the Thames Gateway part of Swale measures to support economic regeneration and diversification at Sittingbourne and Sheerness / Queenborough will be pursued. Provision of the A249 Second Swale Crossing and the Sittingbourne Northern Distributor Road (linking the A249 with the A2 to the east) are prime requirements for this. Other strategic provisions include:

(a) opportunities for mixed business, industrial and distribution and residential development already identified at Ridham/Kemsley;

(b) expansion of the port of Sheerness in accordance with Policy TP22,

(c) completion of the strategic expansion of Iwade for c. 1200 dwellings (including the initial phase allocated through the Swale Local Plan). Provision for development should ensure no infringement upon areas of wildlife importance or on high quality agricultural land and maintain separation between Iwade and Sittingbourne.

(d) mixed-use urban expansion at North East Sittingbourne (including land currently allocated through the Swale Borough Local Plan) in conjunction with the definition and phased provision of the Sittingbourne Northern Distributor Road from its link with the A249. Provision for development should avoid infringement upon areas of wildlife importance and minimise the call upon high quality agricultural land.

(e) expansion of the Sittingbourne Research Centre as an innovation hub.

At Faversham conservation of the historic environment of the town remains the key consideration. Improvement of local employment opportunities will be pursued primarily involving opportunities already committed through the Swale Borough Local Plan. Further outward expansion of Faversham for residential or employment purposes is not envisaged.

East Kent Triangle

3.16 East Kent includes the area now known as the East Kent Triangle (comprising the Districts of Canterbury, Dover and Thanet). This is an area of generally very high quality landscape and includes the historic city of Canterbury, the historic town of Sandwich and the principal urban areas of the Thanet towns, Dover, Deal and Herne Bay/Whitstable.

3.17 Parts of the area have persistent high levels of unemployment which reflects structural changes to the economy arising from past job losses in the ports and former coalfield and the decline of traditional seaside tourism. In some coastal towns a combination of low property values, seasonal and/or low skill employment and the availability of suitable (but often poor quality) accommodation have resulted in a high proportion of vulnerable people, dependent on benefit, in the resident community and a spiral of deprivation.

3.18 A number of recent changes are helping to improve the area's overall image and accessibility. Investment in East Kent has come in many forms, including: the expansion of the pharmaceutical industry in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough; the Higher/Further Education sectors in Canterbury and Thanet, major improvements to road access including the £100m scheme for the Thanet Way; major retail projects in Canterbury and at Westwood in Thanet, and seafront regeneration schemes.

3.19 Alongside this investment the County Council's Public Service Agreement with the Government focuses on reducing welfare dependency and bringing about social regeneration in East Kent. Together with the investment in physical infrastructure this will help to turn around public perceptions of East Kent and allow it to capitalise on its opportunities and build on its strengths. Whilst much has been done to address road access to, and within, this area but there are outstanding requirements to upgrade water supply, waste water treatment and power supply.

3.20 To improve the East Kent economy requires continuing effort to improve skills, encourage the pharmaceutical industry to further invest and to capitalise on a reinvigorated tourism sector. The prospective expansion of Manston Airport provides further investment potential. East Kent's location providing convenient access to continental markets is a further asset.

3.21 Upgrading environmental quality is important in parts of East Kent, to assist these economic drivers. Prospective environmental enhancements include a new Regional Conservation Park located around the Stour Valley and Wantsum Channel, a network of green and open spaces, and the enhancement of degraded landscapes on the urban fringe of towns such as Whitstable and Herne Bay.

Canterbury

3.22 The city of Canterbury is the predominant retail, cultural and educational centre within East Kent .Its education and cultural sectors represent a catalyst for growth The further and higher education sectors in the City should be fostered by expansion of its universities and colleges including provision for the accommodation needs of an expanded student population. More widely growth in the local economy for business and research activity that has links with the higher education institutions in the city also merits support. To this end a further release of land at Canterbury to support knowledge and technology uses linked to the education sector should be provided. Further investment is required in the cultural sector and new hotels.

3.23 Currently the city depends on a large net inflow of commuters to support the level of jobs in the area. Addressing urban capacity issues within the city should help to reduce the dependence upon car based commuting to work. A range of sustainable transport initiatives should counter road traffic pressures associated in large part with the number of commuters and tourists who visit the City together with its role as an important sub-regional retail centre. Herne Bay and Whitstable have experienced significant outward housing expansion in recent years but the emphasis at the coastal towns should now be on realisation of urban housing capacity and securing a better balance between housing, population and the local economy. With continuing priority attached to regeneration at the coastal towns there is a need to ensure a ready supply and choice of land for local firms and inward investment.

Policy EK1: Canterbury

At Canterbury the location of new development will be governed by the need to conserve the built environment and setting of the historic city.

Expansion of the Further and Higher Education sectors in Canterbury will be supported. Knowledge and technology uses linked to this sector will be encouraged, initially through the identification of a site not exceeding 10 hectares.

Proposals for major cultural facilities and high quality tourism accommodation in, or with good access to, the city centre will be encouraged and supported.

The transport strategy for the city of Canterbury will be reviewed to bring forward further initiatives to provide for enhanced public transport and facilities for cycling and walking as alternatives to the use of the car.

At Herne Bay/Whitstable it is strategic policy to enhance and diversify the local economy. A site of up to 10 hectares at Herne Bay/Whitstable for the relocation and expansion of local firms, and inward investment, should be identified.

Dover

3.24 Strategic policy for Dover centres upon economic growth and the regeneration of the town and the former coalfield areas. The innovation hub based on pharmaceuticals research and development in the Sandwich Corridor will play an important role along with implementation of strategic land for employment at Dover. Development proposals should be brought forward to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the European gateway

role, including those at the port of Dover. The regeneration of the former coalfield area remains a strategic priority but the isolated nature of the sites makes large-scale intensive development inappropriate. Some provision should be made for release of land for housing post 2006 in areas accessible to the Sandwich Corridor. To support these aims for the District, a range of transport improvements is required.

3.25 Aylesham is an established location for strategic expansion involving up to 1000 dwellings together with some new employment provision and community services and infrastructure. Its development will contribute to wider housing provision for East Kent. Aylesham is within reasonable proximity of Canterbury and has a rail connection to it. This provision is intended, in part, to offset some of the restraint applied to the neighbouring District. Development will help provide a more sustainable basis for the existing substantial community.

Policy EK2: Dover

Development in Dover should strengthen and diversify its economy and promote environmental enhancement. This will include support for the innovation hub based on pharmaceuticals research and development in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough, implementation of strategic employment land at Dover (White Cliffs Business Park) and appropriate expansion and diversification of the port of Dover.

Proposals supporting the regeneration of the former East Kent Coalfield sites primarily involving the provision of new employment and recreational uses should be continued.

The mixed-use expansion of Aylesham, incorporating provision for up to 1000 dwellings, is supported.

The housing provision for Dover District (Policy HP1) includes 300 dwellings for the post 2006 period to be accommodated at a location, or locations, within, or offering good accessibility to, the Sandwich Corridor.

Improvements to transport infrastructure and accessibility should include early implementation of the East Kent Access proposals in the A256 corridor, A2 improvements between Lydden and Dover, rail access to the port of Dover, and rail infrastructure and service improvements between Dover and Canterbury, Thanet, and Ashford.

Thanet

3.26 Strategic policy continues to seek employment-led regeneration for Thanet. A better balance between housing and employment is required to reduce out-commuting and address the needs of deprived communities. The provision made for significant residential growth should be phased and dependent upon demonstrable progress with the performance of the local economy and employment growth. In response to established strategic policies there is a generous supply of employment land already committed. Transport improvements, notably dualling of the Thanet Way linking to the M2/A2 and provision of the Ramsgate Harbour Access Road, have improved the accessibility of the

area. Complementary measures to improve rail infrastructure and services are required including the provision of high speed domestic trains on the CTRL from/to Ramsgate via Ashford.

3.27 Tourism and culture can play an important role in regenerating the existing towns of Ramsgate and Margate in particular. There is potential for Manston Airport to attract significant inward investment through major expansion for both freight and passenger services. A new mixed-use town centre for Thanet at Westwood will be provided. Westwood already functions as a major destination for retailing. A new Strategic Development Location for housing in the post 2006 period is also proposed for the Westwood area in close proximity to the new town centre, as well as committed land for business development and the principal transport corridor in Thanet linking Margate and Ramsgate. Actual phasing will be dependent on the outcome of detailed local assessments of urban housing capacity elsewhere in the Thanet towns. Examination of Westwood should also consider the housing provisions required beyond 2016.

Policy EK3: Thanet

Proposals for growth in Thanet should provide a better balance between housing and employment by enhancing the rate of inward investment in the economy. As a key catalyst for economic growth the expansion of Manston Airport for passengers and freight will be supported including the development of new terminal and freight handling facilities.

Developments which will contribute to the regeneration of the central and seafront areas of Ramsgate and Margate, including cultural and tourism-related proposals, will be supported. This includes initiatives for Ramsgate Waterfront and Margate Old Town.

A new town centre for Thanet at Westwood will involve mixed use retail, service and leisure uses and a new public transport interchange, and be developed predominantly on previously used land.

A Strategic Development Location of up to 1000 dwellings for the post 2006 period, adjoining the urban area at Westwood, should be defined and phased through the Local Plan/Local Development Document.

Improvements to infrastructure will be required to support economic growth and improve accessibility, including East Kent Access (within the A256 and A253 corridors), rail infrastructure and service improvements between Thanet and Canterbury, Dover, Ashford and London and an eventual direct rail link to Manston Airport.

Channel Corridor

3.28 The Channel Corridor comprises the three central districts of Ashford, Maidstone and Shepway. It is an area of varied economic and environmental characteristics but united by the communications corridor of the M20 and the existing international passenger and freight railway line between London and the Channel Tunnel. The area extends from the Metropolitan Green Belt through to the coast.

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

3.29 Although not widespread, deprivation is an issue across the area. In general Shepway suffers the highest levels, particularly in the northern and central wards of Folkestone, where indicators of social exclusion include poor quality private rented housing stock. There are also deprived communities on the outskirts of Ashford and in South Maidstone. Some rural wards suffer higher than average levels of deprivation, exacerbated by remoteness in the case of Romney Marsh.

3.30 The relationship between the principal urban areas of Ashford and Maidstone and the rest of the sub-area will assume increasing importance. Ashford has long been identified for significant growth, through successive Kent Structure Plans, and is now one of the regional growth areas identified by Government and RPG9. The implementation of the *Ashford's Future* study recommendations will have significant sub-regional implications and the strategy must not prejudice growth and regeneration in the neighbouring districts including those of the East Kent Triangle.

3.31 Maidstone (along with the Medway Gap area in West Kent) occupies a central location within Kent. Housing, labour markets and patterns of movement transcend administrative boundaries in this area. Maidstone is the County Town of Kent, a sub-regional shopping, employment and service centre.

3.32 There is a continuing need to capitalise on the economic opportunities afforded by the gateway role of the area (M20 and CTRL international and domestic services) and growth at Ashford. Benefits should flow to all parts of the community including those currently suffering deprivation. To fulfil its national role as a gateway whilst enabling essential community development and economic change, there will be a need to: increase capacity of the M20 west of Maidstone; improve access to the motorway, including a series of junction improvements and the remove constraints such as those caused by Operation Stack in the Ashford area. Sustainable transport links will need to accompany these improvements especially in conjunction with the level of growth envisaged for Ashford.

Ashford

3.33 Ashford is recognised as a regional focus for growth both to help stimulate inward investment to east Kent and also to assist in addressing the region's wider employment and housing needs. Despite a generous supply of employment land the rate of recent housing development has outstripped local economic performance. In coming years there will be additional labour market pressures associated with improved accessibility and rail commuting capacity accompanying completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in 2007. The objectives for employment growth under *'Ashford's Future'* are ambitious and if housing and employment are to be more balanced it will require a step change in recent investment trends supported by a boost in vocational skills provided through the Further Education sector in the town.

3.34 For growth on the scale envisaged by the *'Ashford's Future'* Study to be achieved, a number of constraining factors need to be addressed and essential improvements secured ahead of housing or other growth. The local authorities need to be enabled by central Government to finance the community infrastructure implied by accelerated growth. This also includes major renewal and upgrading of the town centre and its environs, improvements to transport infrastructure and community facilities in the town. Areas of social disadvantage must share in economic and community improvements.

Policy CC1: Ashford

Ashford is identified as a regional centre for growth. The location and phasing of development will be comprehensively planned. Expansion will be focused on high quality and sustainable developments in and around central Ashford and, where further greenfield development is required, in an arc to the south of the town.

Early measures to improve the public realm and quality of life in Ashford should include major investment in cultural, retail, leisure, convention and community facilities.

Provision will be made for up to 40ha of additional land for business development to meet requirements for the medium and longer terms.

Major investment in physical infrastructure, social and community facilities, public transport enhancement, other sustainable transport initiatives, and environmental management will be required to support the growth in residential and business development proposed and the existing community. This will include:

- **Enhanced junction capacity on the M20 at or near Junction 10 (and, in the longer term, at Junction 9);**
- **Measures to manage flood risk in the Stour Valley;**
- **Provision for sustainable management of water resources, including facilities for increasing water supply and the treatment of wastewater in conjunction with the maintenance of water quality standards.**

An assessment will be undertaken to examine the potential role of new transport links between the A2070 and the A28 to the south west of the town.

Maidstone

3.35 The role of Maidstone as the County Town will be underpinned through major new retail, cultural and community uses. The range and quality of retailing in the town centre will be enhanced through the Fremlin Walk development and it remains the centre of county administrative, judicial, and financial services. Central Maidstone has an important role in supporting diversification of the local economy and enhancing the quality of the area as an employment centre. Continuing restraint to preclude net additional release of greenfield land for economic development in the Maidstone area remains appropriate in view of a tightening labour market and the greater restraint now applied to housing provision. However some substitution between existing and new allocations would be appropriate, in line with Policy FP1 (e) to secure a supply of attractive land for economic development that has both good accessibility to the labour market of Maidstone and the national and strategic road network.

3.36 Retention of the Strategic Gap, originally designated in the 1996 Structure Plan, between Maidstone, the Medway Gap and Medway will maintain the separation of these urban areas. Areas of landscape importance limit the growth of Maidstone to the north and north west, particularly to the north of the M20, whilst extensive areas of high quality agricultural land lie to the east and south of the Maidstone urban area. The priority will be to make best use of urban capacity and opportunities for regeneration within central Maidstone for redevelopment, re-use and intensification of land in close proximity to town centre services and public transport. Transport improvements will support these priorities

and enable better traffic management, provide opportunity for environmental enhancement and increase accessibility for communities to the south of Maidstone.

Policy CC2: Maidstone

Proposals for new office and residential uses should focus on the centre of Maidstone to provide close integration between employment, housing and public transport facilities. Proposals to enhance and broaden the town centre's retail, leisure, tourism and cultural draw will be supported. Transport improvements to support these initiatives will include the A229 Upper Stone Street contraflow and All Saints Link.

No large-scale release of greenfield land for housing will be provided beyond land already allocated for built development in the Maidstone Local Plan.

Any re-appraisal of land provision for economic development at Maidstone should not:

- (i) involve net additional release of greenfield land above land allocated or permitted for such purposes at 2001;**
- (ii) undermine the principal role of the Strategic Gap in separating north Maidstone, as defined by the M20, from the Medway Towns urban area and the north western edge of Maidstone from Aylesford/Ditton**
- (iii) prejudice the role of the North Downs Special Landscape Area in protecting the foreground of the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**

Shepway

3.37 Policy for Shepway seeks the regeneration of Folkestone to improve its shopping, service and residential functions, underpin its role as a tourist resort, attract further investment into the town and address the needs of socially disadvantaged communities. Redevelopment of the harbour and seafront for a mix of uses, but incorporating a major residential element, will make a substantial contribution. Alternative uses for the port area should be considered. Some further provision of employment land to maintain a choice of sites for inward investment and new enterprise is proposed where well related to the Folkestone /Hythe urban area or New Romney as the key rural service centre for the Romney Marsh area.

3.38 Outward expansion of the Folkestone/Hythe urban area is constrained by the proximity of the North Downs AONB. A precautionary approach to long term flooding risk should preclude significant additional residential development on Romney Marsh. The strategic expansion of Hawkinge for residential and employment use, will be completed within the settlement boundary previously defined through the Shepway Local Plan and subject to completion of the A260 Hawkinge Bypass. Measures to stimulate the rural economy and strengthen the role of the service centres at New Romney and Lydd should be pursued. The potential to maintain and strengthen facilities at Lydd Airport and Folkestone Racecourse should be investigated.

Policy CC3: Shepway

Proposals which assist in regenerating Folkestone, including improvement of its shopping, service and tourism functions will be supported. Provision for mixed-use regeneration of the harbour and seafront should incorporate a major residential element and consider opportunities for alternative uses of the Port.

The strategic expansion of Hawkinge should be completed on the basis identified in the Shepway Local Plan with no further major development on the Downs.

Provision for up to 20 hectares of additional land for business should be identified and be well related to the Folkestone/Hythe urban area or New Romney.

Proposals to strengthen the rural economy of Romney Marsh should be concentrated at New Romney and/or Lydd. Elsewhere protection of the environment and countryside will be foremost. Proposals to retain and strengthen the current uses at Lydd Airport and Folkestone Racecourse should be pursued.

West Kent

3.39 Of the four sub-areas, West Kent (the Districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells) is the most prosperous. It is an important economic driver for the County as whole but also subject to long-standing restraint through the Metropolitan Green Belt and important landscape designations. The area is characterised by attractive countryside, good quality housing, low unemployment, labour shortages and a strong dependence on commuting to work outside Kent, particularly to central London. Employment growth over the last decade has been relatively strong despite the lack of major new sites for business development which are largely confined to the Tonbridge and Malling area (notably Kings Hill). Nonetheless there are pockets of social disadvantage across the area in settlements such as East Malling, Snodland, Edenbridge and Swanley.

3.40 Constraints on greenfield development coupled with strong housing markets and land values have produced substantial reinvestment in the fabric of the principal urban areas for housing. In some instances this has involved the loss of existing employment land. High housing costs have also led to difficulties for key workers in accessing the market. In many instances the pattern of housing and job markets are not synonymous with local administrative boundaries. Some rural communities are remote and lack services or facilities and excessive levels of commuting can be damaging to community life in general. The legacy of the cement industry and redundant institutional land in the eastern part of the area gives rise to significant opportunities for regeneration and recycling of previously used land.

3.41 Strategic policy for West Kent seeks to optimise economic performance in a sustainable manner with no strategic release of green belt land. There will be a strong reliance on making the best use of land for housing in the principal towns and rural service centres, but existing employment land will be protected, particularly where it is in central, accessible locations within those settlements.

3.42 Growth will focus upon a few key strategic sites. These include several innovation hubs where links between research and business are promoted. They provide opportunity

for Kent to increase its share of regional economic inward investment. Some existing developed sites within the Green Belt, such as company HQs, may offer redevelopment or other opportunities for optimisation of use. In such cases the existing developed footprint will be important in establishing the future scale of development.

Policy WK1: West Kent

In the West Kent Districts of Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and Malling:

(a) there will be no release of land from the Metropolitan Green Belt and no major release of additional greenfield land for residential or business development;

(b) in seeking to make the best use of land within the principal urban areas for housing the local planning authorities should make provision to safeguard existing and/or new employment land for more intensive (office) employment uses at locations in, or close to, the town centres of the principal urban areas.

Sevenoaks

3.43 Diversification of the Sevenoaks economy through tourism and leisure together with development in the knowledge and technology sectors associated with defence research will be pursued. The emphasis will be to maintain and secure a sustainable balance of employment and housing opportunities in order to reduce the need to travel / commute and in a manner compatible with the District's position lying wholly within the Green Belt. A particular focus will be given to providing key worker housing to meet the needs of the local economy. The viability of Sevenoaks and Swanley centres should be secured through enhancement of the quality of their retail and other consumer services.

Policy WK2: Sevenoaks

Within Sevenoaks District the scale of new housing development reflects its location wholly within the inner Metropolitan Green Belt, the relatively small scale of the principal urban areas of Sevenoaks and Swanley and the character of their built environments.

Fort Halstead is identified as a prospective business cluster associated with its established role in defence related research. Proposals to expand technology and knowledge activities will be supported subject to the provisions of policy FP4.

Tonbridge and Malling

3.44 The Strategic Development Locations designated under earlier Structure Plans have been reviewed and changes include:

- The existing commitment for a mixed use new community at Kings Hill is taken forward but its land use mix should be reviewed to provide for a greater residential element (some 750 additional homes and business floorspace reduced to 186,000 sq. metres. This will ease labour market pressures, serve to reduce demands elsewhere for

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additional housing land and further improve the balance within the development between residential and business use.

- Development provisions on the East Bank of the Medway during the currency of this Plan are limited to a new community provided on previously developed land at Peters Pit with undeveloped land beyond this to be included in the Strategic Gap between the Medway Gap urban area and Maidstone which is retained to prevent coalescence of these urban areas.

3.45 This Plan also identifies innovation hubs at Kings Hill and HRI East Malling. In the latter case proposals relating to the land based industrial sector will need to pay due regard to prevailing policies of restraint.

Policy WK3: Tonbridge and Malling

Within Tonbridge & Malling Borough housing and employment growth will be concentrated at the following strategic development locations:

- **Kings Hill for continued development of a new mixed-use urban community involving phased development of a campus style business park, major residential development and associated social and community facilities. A revised mix of land use to reduce B1 employment provision and increase the housing element will be pursued;**
- **Holborough Quarry, to the north of Snodland and west of the A228, principally for housing and associated social and community facilities;**
- **Leybourne Grange, to the south of the M20 and west of the A228, for housing development and associated social and community facilities;**
- **Peters Pit, on the East Bank of the Medway, principally for housing and associated social and community facilities and subject to the provision of transport infrastructure including a new crossing of the Medway**

Kings Hill and HRI East Malling are identified as innovation hubs where links between research and business development will be encouraged. HRI East Malling has a specific role for the land based industries.

The designated Strategic Gap between the Medway Gap urban area and the Maidstone and Medway Towns urban areas respectively will be retained and extended to include undeveloped land not currently allocated for development on the East Bank of the Medway.

Tunbridge Wells

3.46 The prime consideration for Tunbridge Wells is the need to ensure conservation of the high quality built environment and setting of the town and to respect its location within the Metropolitan Green Belt and High Weald AONB. The emphasis will be on maintaining business growth and prosperity and addressing local housing needs within these limits. A strategic requirement for a new general hospital at Tunbridge Wells serving a wide area of West Kent has been identified (Policy QL12). There will be a particular focus on the commercial and employment role of the town centre and careful management of the supply of land opportunities for business and industrial development.

Policy WK4: Tunbridge Wells

The prime consideration at the urban area of Tunbridge Wells in the quantity and location of development will be the conservation of the built and natural environment, the setting of the town and its location within the Green Belt.

Within this framework full and effective use of development capacity within the principal urban area of Tunbridge Wells/Southborough will be pursued. This should provide for a balance of business, commercial and residential development with particular attention paid to meeting locally based needs for housing.

Chapter 4: Fostering Prosperity

Context

4.1 Securing sufficient well-rewarded employment for Kent's residents is fundamental to people's quality of life and to well being in the County. But Kent is a less prosperous County than many of its neighbours in the South East.

Key Prosperity Issues for Kent:

- *Improving Kent's economy relative to the South East*
- *Reducing disparities across Kent*
- *Getting higher quality better paid jobs into Kent*
- *Encouraging knowledge and technology sectors of the economy*
- *Improving the local balance of jobs and housing to reduce commuting*
- *Capitalising upon tourism and gateway potential*
- *Ensuring a balanced and prosperous retail sector, focused upon town centres*

Insert chart of economic output per head Kent / SE / UK

Structural weaknesses in the Kent economy:

Although unemployment is below 3% (at 2003) a number of weaknesses remain in the Kent economy:

- there are about 80,000 more employed people than there are jobs in the County. Commuting to London and neighbouring counties is therefore a necessity for many people, especially in North and West Kent.
- many jobs are in industries with lower earnings than the new businesses that are concentrated in London and in the western part of the region. Only four Kent Districts are among the top 25% in the UK for earnings, despite Kent's location in a high-cost region.
- there are still many people who are disadvantaged by ill health and low skills,
- certain areas such as Thanet have suffered from under investment in the economy in the past.

4.2 The people of Kent will not enjoy greater prosperity unless strenuous efforts continue to be made to renew its economy and to value its economic assets, including leading businesses. However economic growth must be planned in such a way that the

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environment of the County is protected and all areas share in improved employment opportunities.

The Impact of Previous Plans

4.3 The 1996 Structure Plan gave special attention to the regeneration of major sites in the industrial towns of in North Kent, and to diversification of the East Kent economy in response to colliery closures, a decline in port employment and weak tourism. As a result, the Plan gave Kent the lead in the South East for sites new business. Throughout the County a total of 3.33 million sq. m of business floorspace were to be provided from 1991 to 2001 and a further 2.3m to 2011. There are now over thirty sites for business investment in Kent in excess of 10 hectares, which together could provide 3.6m sq. m of employment space. Access improvements and incentives to encourage inward investment have supported the generous land provision at these sites.

4.4 Although ample land has been provided the development that has taken place has fallen short of the 1996 Structure Plan guidelines. This has been exacerbated by the loss of industrial and business space to other uses (some 1.5 million sq. m between 1991 and 2002). The 1996 Structure Plan guidelines are based on net additions to new business space from 1991. The chart and Table FP1 show that in net terms only 31% of the Structure Plan guideline has been met across Kent.

Strategies for Economic Development

The priorities of key economic development strategies are well established in the Structure Plan and local plans.

Kent Prospects is the economic development strategy for the KCC area. It seeks to sustain the most successful parts of Kent and to close the gap between them and less successful areas. It does not seek to maximise economic growth but to respect the quality of life in Kent and to achieve this through a diverse “*mosaic*” economy:

- *building on the existing key economic activities in Kent:*

tourism

land-based and food processing

distribution and logistics including ports

health care

printing and packaging

- *and encouraging growth sectors in the “knowledge economy” :*

pharmaceuticals and chemicals

media and communications

financial and business services

higher education and research and development

environmental industries

The *Medway Economic Development Strategy* parallels this approach by giving particular emphasis to financial and business services and tourism, and to high technology manufacturing in which Medway has important employers providing the basis for a local cluster. The education and retail sectors are to be encouraged, and concentrated in Chatham.

The economic development partnership for the County, the *Kent and Medway Economic Board*, has distilled its priorities for development as follows:

- commence development at Ebbsfleet, with the International Passenger Station as the catalyst.
- maximise the development of Manston Airport.
- Ashford’s International Passenger Station as a catalyst for town centre development and regeneration of the wider area.
- continue development at the Port of Dover.
- develop the Medway Waterfront.
- develop employment land at Grain and defence land at Chattenden
- develop Folkestone harbour, the seafront and Old Town.
- complete the *Thanet Central Island* and *Sandwich Corridor Spatial Development Project*.

The *Regional Economic Strategy for the South East*¹ endorses the sectors identified in the above strategies as business concentrations and networks in Kent, together with advanced manufacturing within the engineering sector. Its Draft Action Plan acknowledges these development projects as priorities for Kent. Each of those priorities is well established in the Kent Structure Plan and local plans.

Insert chart of percentage guideline quantity developed across Kent

Table FP1: Planned Business Floorspace* 1991 –2011

1996 Structure Plan Guidelines 1991 – 2001	3.33 million sq. m
2001 – 2011	2.22 million sq. m
1991 - 2011	5.55 million sq. m
Gross take up of industrial and business floorspace 1991-2001	
Net take up of industrial and business floorspace 1991 –2001	
Net take up of industrial and business floorspace as a proportion of the Structure Plan guideline 1991-2001	31%
Employment space committed (gross) at 2001	6.37 million sq. m

* Based on Use Classes A2/B1/B2 and B8

4.5 If past experience is maintained, market demand will not match the supply of land in the County's growth areas, and jobs from new development will be offset by the loss of existing employment. Only the larger development sites are likely to noticeably improve local employment prospects. Taken together, the major sites in Kent offer the potential to transform the economy of the County, but the precise impact is difficult to judge.

Table FP2: Planned Business Floorspace 2001: (million square metres*)

	Available by 2011	Available 2011-2021
All sites	4.75	
<i>Of which Major sites</i>	<i>(2.61)</i>	<i>1.14</i>
Sites not formal commitments		0.48
Total		6.37

* Based on gross commitment i.e. excludes any future losses to alternative uses

Source: KCC Employment Land Survey 2001

4.6 Sites in Kent in excess of 10 ha. have a combined capacity for 101,000 jobs assuming full take up. In practice there will always be some empty space, and some new buildings will be occupied by firms relocating from elsewhere in Kent. Other sites, lost from employment use will offset the impact of new development. So the number of net additional jobs might be between 40% and 60% of the site capacity, rising to perhaps 60-80% for very large developments such as Ebbsfleet. In addition proposals such as the expansion of Manston Airport will boost employment.

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4.7 The additional employment from major developments in Kent, if successful, might be between 50,000 and 80,000 jobs. Consultants' forecasts of the growth of jobs in Kent are modest - if there were no contribution from major new sites; perhaps only an additional 16,000 jobs over 20 years.

4.8 The scale and distribution of dwellings proposed in Policy HP1 of this Plan have regard to the balance between jobs and workforce that will arise in the future. There will be slower growth in the population of working age, and with 116,100 additional dwellings by 2021 the workforce will increase by about 36,000. The CTRL will make commuting more attractive from many parts of Kent, if the network of domestic services favoured by the local authorities is introduced. However most of the passengers will be diverted from existing rail services.

4.9 The growth of employment from land already provided could therefore exceed the increase in workforce from the new housing now proposed. This gives scope to reduce commuting and persistent unemployment. A 25% reduction in commuting and improved access to jobs as a result of this Plan's policies could release a reserve of labour in Kent of up to 55,000 people. If so the growth in jobs and the workforce is forecast to be broadly in balance in Kent as a whole – (a) and (b) in table FP3.

Table FP3: Job creation and workforce forecasts

Combined capacity of sites > 10 Ha	101, 000 jobs
Assumed rate of jobs created which are additional to Kent	40 – 60%
...and at very large developments (e.g. Ebbsfleet)	60 – 80%
Total potential additional employment from major developments	50,000 – 80,000 jobs
Consultants' forecast of growth in jobs not including the effect of major sites (trend increase)	16,000 jobs
Total potential number of jobs created (a)	66,000 – 96,000 jobs
Increase in resident workforce	+36,000
Reduction due to CTRL (increased commuting)	- 5,000
Reserve of labour (25% reduction in commuting and improved access to jobs)	+55,000
Total workforce (b)	+86,000

4.10 However, the growth in jobs and the workforce varies considerably throughout Kent and could become out of balance in the following areas:

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Thameside, given high sustained long term employment growth will rely, in part, on inward commuting; • Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Canterbury will require either a further reduction in out commuting or an increase in the workforce to match the growth in jobs; • Ashford and Tonbridge and Malling and possibly Swale and Medway would need additional employment provision if they are to reduce out commuting; |
|--|

- If there were high employment growth in the Manston-Richborough area, further housing provision could be needed in Dover/Thanet in the longer term.

The balance of housing and employment land

4.11 Over a twenty year period the balance between workforce and jobs will be maintained by adjustments in the labour market and economy of the County. It is a central part of the Plan's strategy that this process should lead to greater employment choice, higher earnings and less long distance travel to work.

- Higher value employment uses will prompt increased investment and higher productivity
- Average working hours may increase as part time working is replaced by more full time working
- The proportion of migrants into Kent of working age may increase
- The road and rail network will allow short reverse commuting from outside Kent to Kent Thameside and West Kent

4.12 This Plan supports the introduction of domestic rail services on the CTRL. They will reduce journey times to London from East Kent and give access to a better choice of employment for the more disadvantaged and more distant urban areas. However it is unlikely that there will be a great increase in London commuting from those areas, given the number of rail services to be provided and the cost of travel.

4.13 The approach to commuting in this Plan is therefore:

- to encourage improved rail services by CTRL and other routes which will improve the choice of workplace and quality of travel;
- by the same means to encourage a switch from car to rail travel;
- to reduce the volume of long distance travel from Kent by increasing the number, range and quality of local jobs.

The Plan's Approach to Business Development

Strategic Principles

The Structure Plan seeks a balance between housing and employment and pursues the following objectives:

The scale and character of economic growth should:

- improve the economic performance of Kent relative to the South East region;
- reduce dependence on working outside Kent;
- promote more varied and high quality employment in Kent;
- harness new technologies to underpin opportunities in the knowledge driven 'Information Economy';
- harness economic strength to improve the quality of life and environment;
- make best use of the existing supply of employment land;

Kent's varied economy will be encouraged as a whole:

- all economic activities should contribute to a higher value economy;
- the Plan provides land for business uses and has positive policies for retail and leisure, ports and airports, community services, minerals and waste management;
- Kent will take advantage of its strengths (such as pharmaceuticals and defence) and regenerate vulnerable sectors (agriculture and tourism);
- new industries will be encouraged (including business services and technology);
- linkages with higher education and research will be developed;
- improvements in the 'digital economy' will be supported to sustain growth in all sectors;

The concentration of economic development:

- priority will be given to improvements in east and north Kent to reduce the wide differences in prosperity within the County;
- major economic development will be concentrated at 5 strategic locations: Kent Thameside, Medway, Ashford, Thanet/Richborough and Maidstone/Medway Gap.

Local balance

- sufficient development is provided in all urban areas to sustain full employment and reduce the need for travel ;
- employment should be suited to the skills of the workforce, which will be improved to give access to new opportunities;
- where there are local concentrations of deprivation planning policy will be supported by fiscal and other measures to reduce poverty;
- the rural economy will be diversified in a manner that respects the Kent countryside.

The release of new employment land

4.14 Employment land provided through the planning system is intended primarily for business uses (mainly office, manufacturing and wholesale distribution)¹ although in practice other uses may occupy that land. In Kent as a whole growth in retail, leisure and other services as well as new business space have contributed to recent employment growth. Even so, it is important to set guidelines for the quantity of new employment land and a number of factors have been considered in this:

- *The strength of the local economy*

The Structure Plan seeks to ensure that the supply of land is generous to achieve a strong local economy throughout Kent. Some Districts such as Thanet, Swale and Shepway need new development because of unfavourable employment structure, slow growth, or low earnings.

- *Market Demand for new development*

The Structure Plan aims to stimulate demand where it is weaker by the release of land and by improved accessibility. Other than in West Kent and Canterbury, the take up of sites has lagged behind the availability of land, especially at the coastal towns.

- *The scale and variety of new development already planned*

The Plan provides for a ready and varied supply of employment land, although there are areas with a relatively small land supply (less than 200,000 sq.m). Sevenoaks, Canterbury, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells have been subject to varying degrees of restraint, but Shepway has also had limited scale and choice of development sites.

- *The future labour supply and the balance with jobs*

Land supply must be sufficient to match future growth and reserves of labour in each area. The largest increases in workforce based on the housing quantities in Policy HP1 will be in Ashford and Kent Thameside (in the order of 19,000). New employment land provisions in Ashford and Medway reflect expectations of significant reserves of labour, including commuters that existing business land commitments alone will not match.

4.15 In much of Kent there is sufficient employment land already committed for the new Plan period, and the priority is to develop the planned major sites. Policy FP1 confirms the existing land supply and proposes to supplement this where needed to ensure that land supply is not an impediment to full employment. In meeting the provisions of this policy, the objectives set out in the Spatial Strategy Chapter with regard to the reuse of previously developed land, and the requirement for mixed-use developments should be rigorously applied. In particular in Kent Thameside a full range of service, community and residential land uses will be encouraged on the major mixed use sites so that the land required to support the employment and population growth of the area can be largely met within those sites

¹ Use Classes A2/B1/B2 and B8

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4.16 In addition to the considerations governing the scale and management of land supply set out in Policies FP1–FP3, the local planning authorities may need to reassess the quality and availability of existing employment land. This should include the identification of replacement sites, and the mix of land uses envisaged for existing employment land where compatible with the other policies and proposals of this Plan. Environmental improvement schemes should be prepared for existing sites which are unattractive to investors and occupiers because of their appearance.

POLICY FP1: Employment Land Provision

(a) Priority will be given to developing sites in Kent with planning consent or identified in local plans for financial and professional services, business, industrial and warehousing uses (Use Classes A2/B1-8) as at 2001.

(b) In addition new land should be identified as follows:

- In Medway at least 20 ha. for a wide range of employment uses as part of mixed use development at Chattenden;
- At Canterbury City up to 10 hectares to provide specifically for knowledge and technology uses linked to the education sector in Canterbury;
- At Herne Bay-Whitstable up to 10 hectares to ensure a continuing supply of land for the relocation and expansion of local firms and to attract inward investment to the coastal towns;
- In Shepway provision of up to 20 hectares to improve choice and support inward investment;
- At Ashford further employment land up to 40 ha. will be provided to support its role as a regional growth point based on balanced employment and housing growth;

(c) Accordingly the total provision for net additional floorspace provision for financial and professional services, business, industrial and warehousing uses will be:

Local Authority Area	Net Commitment at 2001 (000's sq. m)	New Provision (000's sq. m)	Total 2001-21 (000's sq. m)
Ashford	603	140	743
Canterbury	179	70	249
Dartford	500		500
Dover	504**		504**
Gravesham	410		410
Maidstone	150		150
Sevenoaks	87		87
Shepway	147	70	217
Swale	933		933
Thanet	397		397

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Tonbridge & Malling	316	- 75#	241
Tunbridge Wells	128		128
KCC Area	4,354	205	4559
Medway	505	70	575
Kent	4,859	275	5134
North Kent	2,348	70	2,418
East Kent Triangle	1,080	70	1,150
West Kent	531	-75	456
Channel Corridor	900	210	1110

(d) At Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone the existing supply of land and premises for business use should be carefully managed. Best use will be made of existing employment sites and previously developed land to sustain the provision of business space.

(e) Existing commitments may be reviewed through Local Development Documents. Sites, including constrained or poor quality sites, may be replaced by alternative, more marketable and better located allocations provided that this:

- does not prejudice the scale and implementation of strategic locations for business development supported and safeguarded by this Plan (Policy FP 3);
- does not conflict with other Structure Plan policies.

Schemes will be encouraged to improve unattractive sites where this is a main reason for their lack of investment.

(f) Employment uses in addition to those covered by Policy FP1 (but excluding retail) may be included on the major sites provided that this does not conflict with the policies of this Plan, notably in respect of the location of major generators of travel demand.

Notes to Policy FP1:

**** Includes land at Richborough-Sandwich previously occupied by a variety of uses and now available for redevelopment.**

Figures for Tonbridge and Malling allow for revised mix of land uses at Kings Hill and reduced B1 content pursuant to Policies HP1 and WK3

Net Commitments include local plan allocations, planning permissions and vacant plots within existing employment sites.

New provision based on 3,500 sq. m per ha.

Policy FP2: Location of New or Replacement Employment Land

Proposals for employment and business development other than (a) those already identified in adopted local plans or (b) identified pursuant to Policy FP4 or FP6 should be located in, or adjacent to, principal urban areas where they are easily accessible by a choice of transport and attractive to the market place

4.17 Achieving the strategy of this Plan and securing the impacts on employment structure and growth that it seeks will rely on key strategic employment sites. These are identified and safeguarded under Policy FP3. Where necessary, measures will be taken to bring forward these sites including claims upon national or European funding to resolve access or infrastructure constraints, or to provide mitigation for impact on the environment.

4.18. There are other important areas of regeneration with considerable potential for mixed use including employment notably Medway Waterfront, in Kent Thameside and at town centres and the central parts of the principal urban areas.

Policy FP3: Locations of Strategic Importance for Business, Industrial or Distribution Uses.

In contributing to the provisions of Policy FP1 the safeguarding and implementation of the following strategic employment locations will have priority:

- **Ashford :Eureka Science Park**
- **Ashford :Orbital Park**
- **Ashford :Waterbrook(Sevington)**
- **Ashford : Cheeseman's Green**
- **Dartford : North Dartford (including Fresh Marshes)**
- **Dartford : Crossways Business Park**
- **Dartford : Eastern Quarry**
- **Dartford/Gravesham :Ebbsfleet Valley**
- **Dover : Land at Richborough**
- **Dover : White Cliffs Business Park**
- **Shepway : Shearway Business Park : Folkestone**
- **Shepway : Link Park: Lympne**
- **Swale : Neatscourt: Queenborough**
- **Swale : Lappel Bank : Sheerness**
- **Swale : Ridham Kemsley**
- **Swale : Eurolink: Sittingbourne**
- **Swale : Abbey Park: Faversham**
- **Thanet : Eurokent**
- **Thanet : Manston Park**
- **Tonbridge and Malling :Kings Hill ***
- **Medway : Kingsnorth and Grain**
- **Medway : Rochester Airfield**

* Subject to the provisions of Policy WK3

Other considerations for the release of employment land

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4.19 Existing sites may not meet the needs of all businesses and notwithstanding the guidelines in Policy FP1, selective new land provision may be needed to:

- Promote innovative sectors and encourage business 'clusters' that exploit links with one another and/or with science and research institutions;
- Allow key businesses to expand at their existing location or meet a very specific locational requirement;
- Replace sites which are unlikely to be developed with more attractive land with good access to a choice of transport;

Technology and knowledge “clusters” in Kent

4.20 The technology and knowledge based businesses in Kent do not form a closely knit cluster in the sense originally defined. Kent has a number of major employers in electronics, pharmaceuticals and research spread throughout the County but with little linkage one with another. The higher education institutions are relatively small and the examples of linkage between research and industry are on a small scale.

What are clusters?

A “cluster” has been defined as “a geographical concentration of inter-connected companies, specialist suppliers, service providers, firms in related industries and associated institutions”. “Technology” and “knowledge” industries include those which rely on new research, scientific, professional or technical understanding and do not include everyday financial and business services.

The *UK Competitiveness White Paper* (DTI 1998) emphasised the importance of promoting the expansion and creation of “clusters” or networks of “knowledge driven” industries. This objective is found in national guidance and regional strategies.

Policy RE9 of RPG9 states that high value activities should be encouraged, including the provision of sites close to universities. Policy FP1 includes provision for such a new site at Canterbury for “*knowledge and technology uses linked to the education sector*” which is important in the City.

4.21 Nevertheless, individually the major employers have potential to expand or to act as the core for new businesses in linked activities. Collectively there is particular scope to attract new investment building on the strong presence in Kent of pharmaceuticals and agricultural research. The existing major technology and research institutions are considered to be very important to the future of the Kent economy. Their intensification, and, where appropriate, expansion in-situ is supported by this Plan. Policy FP4 sets out the circumstances in which the release of employment land for these reasons will be permitted. With the exception of land already identified at Canterbury and Richborough, development of new land pursuant to this Policy will be additional to the Policy FP1 guidelines.

Policy FP4: Land for technology and knowledge clusters

High quality proposals for the intensification or expansion of established key employers and/or institutions in the technology and knowledge sectors will be supported at the following locations unless there are exceptional and overriding environmental impacts which cannot be adequately mitigated:

(a) a new site at Canterbury linked to the University (pursuant to Policy FP1);

(b) expansion of technology and knowledge activities at:

- Fort Halstead (Sevenoaks District);
- Horticultural Research Institute (HRI : East Malling) and Kings Hill;
- Pfizer and land in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough;
- Sittingbourne Research Centre;
- Rochester Airfield and Chatham Maritime (Medway).

(c) the expansion in situ of other key employers in technology and knowledge sectors.

Premises for small firms and “bad neighbours”

4.22 The encouragement of small firms through the provision of suitable premises is an important part of economic strategy because of their growth potential, particularly in new economic activities and the support given to ‘home grown’ employment growth. This includes premises in inner urban areas which are accessible to the local population on foot and by public transport. Local authorities should identify suitable sites for the relocation of businesses which cause pollution or other environmental disturbance in residential and mixed-use areas.

Policy FP5: Premises for small firms

Premises for small firms will be provided:

- (a) within larger industrial estates;
- (b) within new mixed-use developments;
- (c) as part of clusters of similar economic activity (pursuant to Policy FP3)
- (d) through the development of small infill sites; and
- (e) through the conversion or alteration of suitable existing buildings.

The Rural Economy

New employment uses in rural areas

4.23 The main potential for future economic development in Kent lies in the regeneration of urban areas and the strategic sites which are close to the centres of population (see Policies FP1 and 3). However the strategy recognises that not all investment should be directed to the towns - rural communities also need new economic investment.

4.24 The Rural White Paper (2000) underlines the need for planning policy to do more to assist the diversification of farms and to support the wider rural economy. However this should not undermine continued protection of the countryside. Structure Plan policy in Kent must judge the scale and character of new businesses that should be permitted to encourage diversification of farms and the rural economy while preserving the character

and environment of rural areas. Policy FP 6 accepts the development of suitable small-scale business uses at rural service centres and larger villages and sets the requirements for development elsewhere.

Policy FP6: Development of employment uses in rural areas

Provision for small scale business development (B1-B8) and service industries should be made within, or adjoining, the built up area of rural service centres (identified on the Key Diagram) or of larger villages that can provide a sustainable form of development. Development should be appropriate to the scale of the settlement and without detriment to its amenity, character or setting.

No provision for business development will be made elsewhere except where:

- **it is required for the expansion of an established business and/or is required for the processing, storage, distribution or promotion and research concerning produce from Kent agriculture, horticulture or forestry; and**
- **good access can be provided to the primary road network and bus or rail services; and**
- **there is no overriding environmental objection.**

All business development supported within the terms of this policy should have no unacceptably adverse impact on the local transport network and will be subject to the restriction of subsequent expansion if in conflict with the policies of this Plan.

Diversification of farm businesses

4.25 The problems facing agriculture have been well articulated in recent years. Further pressure for change will arise from EU proposals to switch funding for agriculture from support for production to grants for rural development and environmental protection and enhancement. It will be particularly difficult for small farms to survive on agricultural income alone. A study of the land based economy in Kent ² has made recommendations for policy towards farm diversification and the rural economy which have been taken into account in this Plan.

4.26 Diversification of farm businesses may include the introduction of new crops and other measures that do not require planning consent, but the processing and packaging of produce for example, may require conversion or construction of buildings. Larger projects on behalf of a number of farms may also come forward; for example if farms co-operate to achieve economies of scale from local distribution and processing.

4.27 Many farms have surplus buildings and the re-use of good quality buildings will usually be preferable to new buildings in the countryside. Existing buildings may be appropriate for activities not related to agriculture, such as small-scale offices, workshops or tourist accommodation, which can be suitable for location on a farm. Policy FP7 sets out the circumstances in which conversion, alteration or re-use of existing farm buildings, and small new buildings, will be acceptable.

² The Land Based Economy of Kent: Final Report March 2003. Land Use Consultants/Kernon Countryside Consultants for Kent County Council and SEEDA

Policy FP7: Farm Diversification

Conversion, alteration or re-use of existing farm buildings to support agriculture, horticulture and forestry based on Kent, or other locally sourced, produce will be permitted where the traffic and environmental impacts are acceptable and it is demonstrated that the proposal is:

- (a) necessary for the efficiency or viability of an existing business or required for a new agriculture, horticulture or forestry business; or**
- (b) a suitable small-scale non-agricultural use which secures the viability of a farm.**

New small-scale buildings for the above purposes may be permitted if no existing buildings exist which could be converted, and there are no overriding environmental constraints.

All such proposals should be supported by a business case or farm plan which demonstrates effective management of the farm in the long-term.

Agricultural land

4.28 A competitive and sustainable agricultural industry is vital to the economic, social and environmental well being of rural areas. Planning decisions affecting the future of the 'best and most versatile' agricultural land (DEFRA Grades 1, 2 and 3a) should take account of a wide range of planning considerations which determine the value of land to the community. If necessary, advice on the quality of land should be sought from DEFRA, English Nature and others. The quality and character of the landscape, biodiversity, recreational amenity, historic and cultural heritage and accessibility are amongst the important considerations that must be weighed in planning decisions. Policy FP8 protects the best agricultural land unless there are good planning reasons for its development because alternative sites have greater environmental value or are less accessible.

4.29 This policy will be applied to a range of circumstances across the County. Access to urban areas, including London, and pressures on housing and rural roads tend to be greater in the west of Kent where Metropolitan Green Belt policy applies particular restraint upon development. The relative local importance of agriculture as a source of employment is greater in east and south Kent, and the largest areas of best and most versatile agricultural land are in the north of the county.

Policy FP8: Protection of agricultural land

- a) In order to protect the long term productive potential of agriculture, development of agricultural land will only take place when there is an overriding need identified in the Development Plan which cannot be accommodated within the major/principal urban areas, rural service centres or on other previously developed land;**

- b) **Best and most versatile agricultural land (DEFRA Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will be protected from development unless:**
- **there is no alternative site on land of poorer agricultural quality; or**
 - **alternative sites have greater value for their landscape, biodiversity, amenity, heritage or natural resources; or**
 - **the land proposed for development is more accessible to infrastructure, the workforce or markets than the alternatives.**

Tourism

Economic impact of tourism in Kent

Tourism and leisure are important to Kent's economy. In 1998 there were 5.5 million staying visitors and 32.8 million day-visitors, with an estimated expenditure of almost £1,200 million. About 20,000 full-time jobs are supported directly by tourism and leisure expenditure, rising to perhaps 30,000 jobs if the benefits to other businesses are taken into account

4.30 Kent has considerable attraction for tourism. Much of its coast and countryside are of national and international importance and there are outstanding historic towns and strong associations with famous writers and painters. Access from the rest of England and from mainland Europe has improved substantially and will continue to do so.

4.31 There are a wide variety of tourist destinations in coastal, urban and rural Kent. Making tourism sustainable in environmental, economic and social terms implies reducing its environmental impact, moving towards higher value products and acknowledging that tourism development should contribute to the alleviation of social exclusion in the county's coastal towns and rural areas. In sensitive countryside and heritage sites, such as the designated World Heritage Site of Canterbury Cathedral and that proposed at Chatham Historic Dockyard, the economic gain of tourism has to be carefully balanced with the visitor impact on the historic fabric.

4.32 The tourism policies in this Plan encourage development which will increase the attraction of Kent as a tourist destination and direct large projects to previously developed sites within urban areas in order to save greenfield land and maximise access by means other than the private car.

Policy FP9: Sustainable Tourism Development

Development of tourism facilities, such as accommodation and visitor attractions, will be supported if:

- (a) **they are designed to a high standard which enhances their setting and the attraction of Kent as a tourist destination; and**
- (b) **there are clear economic advantages to Kent; and**

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| <p>(c) there are no adverse environmental impacts or such impacts are capable of being adequately mitigated ; and</p> <p>(d) access is possible by a choice of means of transport, particularly by public transport, cycling and walking; and</p> <p>(e) equal access is provided for all social, economic and cultural groups and to people with disabilities.</p> |
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Spatial priorities - selective development and regeneration

4.33 Investment in tourism and leisure will help to achieve the Structure Plan priorities for regeneration, economic change and growth. In the Kent part of the Thames Gateway there is the opportunity to develop a business visitor market as well as environmental and attraction based tourism. Astride the M20 and the International Passenger Station Ashford is a key location for both a significant visitor attraction and a convention centre. The coastal resorts have a tradition of tourism but here the emphasis is on diversifying the economic base and supporting proposals which promote higher value added activity, reduce seasonal fluctuations, upgrade the accommodation stock and improve the local environment.

4.34 Sports, shopping and other leisure activities can be a major component in the regeneration of our urban areas and there are existing or prospective examples in Kent at Chatham Maritime, the harbours of Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate, and at Whitstable and other town centres. The location of these and other tourism uses within or near to town centres, and their incorporation in mixed use developments, is particularly valuable in creating a thriving and attractive urban core.

4.35 Heritage and the arts can also provide strong tourist attractions especially for higher spending visitors. They are a suitable use for refurbished buildings and can stimulate regeneration of urban areas, especially where there is a strong history and architectural character. Kent has a number of historic centres which would benefit from such investment. Additionally there is a need in Kent for a small number of "green tourism" and interpretation centres, such as the proposal for a visitor centre at Pegwell Bay.

<p>Policy FP10: Tourism development and regeneration</p>

<p>New tourist attractions and leisure facilities, and the upgrading of existing tourism facilities, in or near to town centres at the major/principal urban areas will be supported where they assist regeneration and cause no harm to the environment or to the amenity of nearby residential areas.</p>
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<p>Priority will be given to such development:</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- within the Kent part of the Thames Gateway;- at the coastal resorts of the East Kent Triangle and Shepway;- at Ashford. |
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<p>Proposals for new or refurbished buildings of historic interest, particularly in "clusters", for arts or cultural use will be supported where they cause no environmental harm.</p>

Tourist Accommodation

4.36 New tourist accommodation has been supported by previous planning policies. 31 new hotels have been built in Kent since the end of the 1980s, of which 25 are located close to the main business and tourist routes through the County, and only five are at the traditional resorts at the coast. Even so, the number of bed-spaces in Kent has declined over the last decade, especially at the coastal resorts.

4. 37 It is important that good quality accommodation is retained, especially where there has been decline. The change of historic pubs and inns to residential use should be resisted. To meet growing demand for budget accommodation, and to provide high quality, business and conference hotels in Kent, sites will be identified within urban areas and in town centres. Improvements in the range and quality of accommodation stock will be supported where possible.

Policy FP11 Tourist accommodation

- (a) **Sites will be identified in town centres and within urban areas for the development of high quality tourist, business and conference hotels and for budget hotels;**
- (b) **Proposals which would result in the loss, without replacement, of good quality accommodation at the coastal towns will not be permitted unless there is overriding economic advantage to the area from the development ;**
- (c) **The conversion or extension of existing buildings to provide small hotels, bed and breakfast or self catering accommodation will be permitted provided this causes no harm to the local environment;**
- (d) **the improvement of touring and static caravan and camping sites will be permitted if the development benefits the local environment.**

Other tourism developments in rural areas

4.38 There is a presumption against development in the countryside, particularly when at a distance from settlements. However small scale, high-quality development for tourism or recreation which contributes to the diversification of a farm may be acceptable under the terms of policy FP7.

Major Tourism/Visitor Developments

Major attractions

Kent lacks modern attractions which draw visitors on a substantial scale from the UK and abroad. Such attractions include major exhibition and conference centres and 'flagship' arts, cultural or sports developments. The Eden Project in Cornwall, the Botanic Garden of Wales, and projects in Birmingham and Tyneside have changed the perception and prospects of the areas in which they are located.

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4.39 New projects which would bring exceptional benefits to Kent and which are designed to the highest architectural standards will be encouraged to take advantage of the County's international transport and access to London. Policies QL13 and QL14 encourage the development of high quality venues for sport and entertainment.

4.40 The priority locations for such development are at the urban areas of Thames Gateway, Ashford or the coastal towns of east Kent. Developments of this stature with an essential requirement for a large amount of land may require consideration of greenfield locations but would need to meet strict criteria in relation to accessibility, design and impact and demonstration that environmental concerns are clearly outweighed by the economic and social benefits to the County:

Policy FP12: Major Tourism/Visitor Attractions

Proposals for major tourism/visitor attractions in Kent of national or regional significance will be encouraged. All such developments should be of an exceptionally high standard of design and landscaping.

The priority for the location of such development is within the urban areas of Thames Gateway, Ashford or the coastal towns of east Kent.

The location and associated land take of proposals outside the principal urban areas will require exceptional justification and should demonstrate that the development:

- **is capable of bringing major benefits to Kent's economy; and**
- **will make an important contribution to diversifying and upgrading the tourism and visitor attractions in the county; and**
- **is well related to the passenger rail and primary road networks; and**
- **is located so as to minimise its impact on the environment including landscape, wildlife, the best and most versatile agricultural land and areas of archaeological and historic importance; and**
- **Incorporates satisfactory provision for mitigation of adverse impacts on the locality'.**

Ensuring Prosperity in Towns and other Centres

4.41 Town centres provide a broad range of services to the community including financial services, tourism, culture, administration and public services. However shopping and related consumer services remain the lynch pin of the economy of town and district centres although changes in retailing in recent years have reduced and changed their role.

Some of the significant recent changes in retailing include:

- the Bluewater regional shopping centre, first permitted in the late 1980s, which opened in 1999;
- some major town centre schemes anticipated in the 1996 Structure Plan have proceeded e.g. at Canterbury, but elsewhere there has been delay;

- some of the main food retailers have developed smaller scale stores and introduced them into rural centres ;
- two factory outlets centres have been developed outside town centres (at Ashford and Dover)and a third is under construction at Chatham Maritime;
- out of centre development for bulky goods* retailing has expanded;
- proposals for large out of centre food store proposals have diminished due to stronger planning constraints although extensions to existing stores continue to be sought;
- proposals to diversify the range of goods sold from food superstores and retail warehouses increasingly challenge the core retail functions traditionally associated with the High Street**;
- new leisure uses have been built, but predominantly outside town centres;
- retail and leisure development at Westwood Cross has been permitted as a new town centre for Thanet.

**Stores specialising in an aspect of comparison retailing such as DIY/home improvement products, major electrical items, motor accessories, furniture and carpets and garden products.*

***Generally higher value non food products e.g. clothing and footwear, jewellery, books etc*

4.42 Retail expenditure has continued to grow substantially. Along with demands for qualitative improvements in shopping and changing consumer preferences it is a key influence on continuing pressure for new floorspace and the redevelopment or refurbishment of existing provision. Increased access to the car and the general mobility of shoppers has caused increased competition between centres. Other forms of trading such as internet sales are making an impact on sectors of both retail and leisure spending – internet retailers ('e-tailers') have no restrictions on hours, size and types of goods sold. In consequence if town centres are to retain their custom there is a constant need to upgrade the quality of their shops and their general environment.

4.43 These trends and influences require strong support for existing centres. There is a need to establish a strategic hierarchy of centres and to:

- give priority to locating all categories of retailing, leisure and other major travel generating uses within them;
- require developers to pursue a form of development suited to these locations;
- apply the same planning criteria to all retail development including special forms of trading e.g. factory outlet centres

The retail hierarchy in Kent

4.44 Town centres in Kent fulfil different roles according to the size and composition of their retail 'offer' and the range of ancillary services supported. The hierarchy identified by this Plan is set out below. It is closely related to the overall settlement hierarchy set out in Chapter 2, Spatial Policy, but in this instance distinguishes the relative functions of centres within larger urban areas (e.g. the Thanet Towns).

4.45 Bluewater is an established out-of-centre shopping development with a **regional** catchment extending across much of Kent and into London and Essex. Turnover and other

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measurements indicate there are four **sub-regional centres** in Kent, which provide a wide range of comparison shopping and other services and have extensive catchment areas. They have higher rents and greater potential for investment.

4.46 A distinction can also be drawn between the **principal town centres** in each District, which provide shopping, local government and other services, and **district centres** which serve smaller urban areas, parts of urban areas or as rural service centres are at the centre of rural catchments. The principal town centres offer greater physical capacity and investment potential. In terms of total retail turnover little separates some of the middle ranking principal town centres and the larger district centres but the former are distinguished by their more varied function.

Table FP4: Strategic Network of Retail Centres in Kent and Medway

Regional Centre		
Bluewater		
Sub Regional Town and City centres		
Canterbury		Maidstone
Chatham		Tunbridge Wells
Principal Town Centres		
Ashford	Folkestone	Sittingbourne
Dartford	Gravesend	Tonbridge
Dover	Sevenoaks	Westwood (Thanet)
District centres: (1) Urban District Centres		
Broadstairs	Hythe	Sheerness
Deal	Margate	Strood
Faversham	Rainham	Southborough
Gillingham	Ramsgate	Swanley
Hempstead Valley	Rochester	Whitstable
Herne Bay		
District Centres: (2) Rural Service Centres		
Borough Green	New Romney	Staplehurst
Cranbrook	Paddock Wood	Tenterden
Edenbridge	Sandwich	Westerham
Headcorn		West Malling
Lydd		
Local Centres: To be defined in Local Development Documents		

4.47 This hierarchy of centres will generally be maintained. The county's sub regional centres will be supported and strengthened, especially those within the central part of Kent (Maidstone and Chatham) which require major new investment and which lie within the wider catchment of Bluewater. The principal town centres within North Kent need to strengthen their roles as retail and service centres for their expanding communities.

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4.48 Investment in the principal town centres at the East Kent coastal towns will support wider regeneration initiatives and a more sustainable pattern of development by reducing reliance on longer distance (predominantly car based) travel to sub regional centres especially Canterbury. Further development at Canterbury which would prejudice regeneration of the coastal towns or the strengthening of Ashford's role will not be supported.

4.49 In Thanet there is no dominant town centre capable of stemming the substantial loss of comparison spending from this large urban area to other centres. Development opportunities in the existing town centres are very limited and their investment potential is constrained by limited catchments associated with their coastal location and the competition between the different centres. Westwood in central Thanet is already a major focus of travel demand for bulky and convenience goods retailing, includes a strategically important location for new employment and is astride the principal transport corridor linking Margate and Ramsgate. A new town centre at Westwood has been recently committed which will provide comparison shopping, leisure and other services which will complement existing uses and provide scope for multi purpose trips to the area.

4.50 Medway, like Thanet, is a multi centred urban area. Over time five discrete towns (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Rainham and Gillingham) have amalgamated to form Medway. Of these the largest is Chatham which serves as a sub regional centre but has been performing below its significant potential. Medway needs a strong 'city' focus and Chatham already fulfils much of this role. The aim is that Chatham Centre and Waterfront become a thriving city centre. The other four town centres are classed as district centres and their important role in Medway will be supported whilst ensuring that retail and other suitable developments will be focused on Chatham.

4.51 Accelerated growth over an extended period at Ashford will provide scope for enhancement of the town centre which can also capitalise on its role as a public transport node. The development provisions of the Structure Plan over a 20 year period will support significant population growth in the town. Its evolution to fulfil a sub regional role within the hierarchy is supported.

4.52 It will be essential to invest in the fabric of the principal centres to maintain or enhance their vitality and viability, commensurate with their established role as retail, service, leisure and business centres. Culture and education are also important roles for town centres. Projects to improve community facilities in town centres will encourage investment in shopping and other services. District centres provide convenience and limited comparison shopping and local services for smaller urban areas, urban neighbourhoods and the larger rural centres. Small scale retail and service development appropriate to the core catchment of these centres will be supported to sustain their role and enhance local self sufficiency.

Policy FP13: Development at the strategic network of town and district centres

The role of sub regional, principal and district centres forming the strategic hierarchy of retail and service centres in Kent, as identified on the Key Diagram will be safeguarded. Development proposals which enhance the quality, range and choice of shopping and/or expand or diversify service, business or leisure activities will be supported.

Development should achieve a high standard of design and enhance the visual quality, functioning and environment of a centre.

Local authorities will:

- (a) include policies in Local Development Documents to support the retail function of these centres including the allocation of suitable sites or areas for retail and other development to meet identified needs;**
- (b) identify measures to improve the environment and functioning of centres including pedestrian priority zones and networks and public transport access and interchange arrangements;**
- (c) pursue measures including, where necessary, compulsory purchase to make town centre sites available for planned development**

Criteria for new retail and leisure development

4.53 In order to encourage the viability of existing centres new proposals for retail and leisure development should be located on sites within town and district centres. Proposals at edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations, must demonstrate a need for the development and meet the “*sequential test*”, that is that alternative town centre or edge of centre sites do not exist. Need does not solely relate to the quantitative scope for additional floorspace but may embrace shortcomings in the quality of local retail and leisure provision. In considering the suitability of sites in town centres developers must be flexible about the design of shops. It is not sufficient to dismiss town centre sites because they are not suited to a particular building form, such as large single storey units.

4.54 The growth of retail spending over the life of the Structure Plan has been projected. Greater weight is given to the projections for the first 10 years of the plan period when there will be demand for new comparison shopping in addition to commitments already made. There are sites for new shopping in many of Kent’s town centres although opportunities are limited in some smaller centres.

4.55 In addition to the two factory outlet centres at Ashford and Dover a third is under construction (2003) at Chatham. Such proposals and those for other special forms of trading such as discount clubs are subject to the same policy considerations as conventional retail proposals.

Policy FP14: Sequential consideration of sites for retail and leisure use and development outside town/district centres.

New retail and leisure development should be located on sites within town and district centres. If there are no such sites then sites on the edge of these centres may be considered.

In the absence of edge of centre sites development of large food or bulky goods stores may be considered, exceptionally, at out of centre locations but within the confines of a major/principal urban area.

Development (including extensions to existing retail development) on the edge of, or outside, town and district centres must demonstrate that:

- there is a need for the development; and
- more suitable sites do not exist within town or district centres, or on their edge; and
- individually or cumulatively the development does not undermine the viability or vitality of existing town and district centres; and
- the development is accessible to a choice of public and private transport, and by walking and cycling; and
- the development will not prejudice readily available and accessible sites for business and industrial development

High Street, or “core comparison”, shopping

4.56 “Core comparison” goods, notably clothing, are the mainstay of town centre shopping following the relocation of much bulky goods and food shopping to large out-of-centre stores. The strategy gives priority to current major town centre investments, and encourages all town centres to maintain their place in the hierarchy. Development should be on a scale that does not jeopardise nearby centres and should not prejudice the character of historic centres. Larger scale development will be concentrated at:

- the sub regional centres which provide the greatest choice and have the best prospect of competing with out of centre shopping; and
- at the principal town centres experiencing major growth or where development will benefit wider area regeneration.

4.57 Expenditure projections suggest that there will be demand for a c.194, 000 gross square metres of ‘core comparison’ retail space in Kent by 2011, with about half of the potential arising in the four sub-regional centres:

• Canterbury	26,000	sq. m :
• Maidstone	21,000	sq. m :
• Medway	30,000	sq. m :
• Tunbridge Wells	17,000	sq. m :

4.58 Other centres with larger catchments and/or faster population growth also have significant demand, notably:

• Ashford	21,000	sq. m :
• Thanet	17,000	sq. m :
• Folkestone	12,000	sq. m :

4.59 In the longer term, to 2021, with sustained expenditure growth, most Districts have significant potential for new development but the locations above emerge as having the strongest demand and are the strategic priorities for new town centre shopping.

Policy FP15: Development for core comparison goods shopping

- a) Proposals for core comparison shopping should be accommodated at town or district centres in Kent.**

- b) **Development of comparison goods shopping in the sub-regional and principal town centres will be supported, particularly at :**
 - (i) Maidstone;
 - (ii) Chatham;
 - (iii) Ashford;
 - (iv) Folkestone;
- c) **The scale and character of development at Canterbury should not prejudice investment in, and strengthening of, the principal town centres in East Kent and at Ashford.**
- d) **Any development at Bluewater should not prejudice investment in, and strengthening of, the sub regional centres of Chatham and Maidstone nor conflict with the role of principal town centres in North Kent as the prime focus for local retail, service, cultural and leisure facilities.**
- e) **Development of a new mixed use town centre for Thanet at Westwood, adjacent to and integrated with existing major retail provision, and incorporating up to 25,000 sq. m of gross retail floorspace will be supported.**

Bulky Comparison Goods

4.60 Bulky goods shopping has also concentrated close to the sub-regional centres but much of the turnover is captured by out of centre retail parks. There are commercial pressures to widen the range of goods sold at out of centre stores to include core (High Street) comparison goods, increasing competition between high street and out of centre shopping.

4.61 Expenditure projections suggest that there will be demand for a further 143,000 gross metres of bulky comparison retail space in Kent by 2011, with about half in the four sub-regional centres. Currently committed developments will provide for almost half of the total demand. The remainder should be met wherever possible within town centres and could help to make smaller schemes viable. Developers and retailers must be flexible about the design and operation of stores to allow this to happen. Dartford, Dover and Gravesend are locations where the combined potential for core and bulky comparison shopping might support town centre based provision.

4.62 Where there are no suitable town centre sites new bulky goods shopping should be located at existing groups of similar outlets to provide scope for linked shopping trips with encouragement given to the improvement of public transport access to those sites and the wider shopping environment

Policy FP16: Development of bulky comparison goods retailing

- a) **Where it is demonstrated that the need for bulky goods shopping cannot be met at town centres development should be located with existing major out of centre retail developments. Planning conditions restricting the character of retail sales to bulky goods will be applied.**
- b) **At existing out of centre retail locations guidance will be provided to define the limits of retail use, improve pedestrian circulation and secure better access by public transport.**

Food and convenience goods

4.63 Expenditure projections suggest a potential for only a further 22,000 gross sq. m of convenience retail space in Kent by 2011. This is more than matched by current commitments, of 70,000 sq.m. However, further proposals for new or extended food and convenience shopping can be expected in order to improve the quality and choice of outlets and through competition for market share. Such proposals should be supported: where located at town or urban/rural district centres within the hierarchy; which make good a local deficiency in food shopping; or serve a new residential community. Extensions to existing out of centre food and convenience goods stores will be subject to the provisions of Policy FP14.

Policy FP17: Large food stores

Proposals for large new food stores should be located at town or district centres.

Local Development Documents will identify where new or improved convenience shopping, which cannot be accommodated within town or district centres, is needed to make good deficiencies in existing provision or to meet new requirements associated with major new residential communities including the Strategic Development Locations identified by this Plan.

Urban and Rural District Centres and Local Centres

4.64 District Centres in Kent are numerous and varied in their role and character. There are small historic towns such as Faversham and Whitstable, rural service centres including Tenterden and Cranbrook, and secondary centres such as Gillingham within larger urban areas. There is also a modern district centre at Hempstead Valley. These centres provide convenient and accessible shopping and services, primarily for their immediate communities. Meeting everyday needs for convenience and comparison shopping are at the heart of their role. This should be supported by small scale development and local measures to improve pedestrian access and the environment. Alongside District centres within the strategic hierarchy local planning authorities will need to identify other local, neighbourhood and village centres together with the measures required to maintain or enhance their vitality, viability and character and to respond to the retail and service needs of local communities.

Policy FP18: District and Local Centres

Small scale retail and service provision at the urban and rural district centres (as identified on the Key Diagram), and at local, neighbourhood and village centres identified within Local Development Documents, will be supported where it will underpin the role, vitality and viability of such centres.

Chapter 5: Housing Provision and Distribution

5.1 A central challenge for this Structure Plan is to provide sufficient housing whilst protecting Kent's countryside and enhancing the quality of urban and rural environments. People in Kent and Medway should have access to a range and diversity of good quality housing. With the relatively buoyant housing markets found throughout much of Kent the ability to purchase or rent affordable housing is very important.

5.2 This Chapter covers many of the critical policy issues in respect of housing provision, and has strong links with Chapters 2 (Spatial Strategy), 3 (Sub Area Policies) and 7 (Quality of Living).

Key Housing Development Issues in Kent:

- Balancing housing growth with economic development needs and opportunities
- Reducing reliance on greenfield sites in favour of previously developed land
- Respecting the extensive coverage of environmental and other policy constraints in Kent
- Rebalancing household growth pressure from West to North Kent and Ashford
- Responding to the housing needs of the whole community
- Accommodating regional requirements for housing growth

National and Regional Policy on Housing:

- *Aspirations to increase the rate of housing completions and ensure that Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) provisions are met; RPG9 suggests that the rate of regional housing provision will need to increase beyond 2006.*
- *The average annual rate of housing provision set out in RPG9 is 5700 dwellings per annum in Kent and Medway for the period 2001-2016, This is equivalent to a total of 85,500 dwellings.*
- *The Government in 'Sustainable Communities: building for the future' has identified 4 major growth areas in London and the South East. Two of these, Ashford and a substantial part of Thames Gateway, lie within Kent. In these areas Government policy is to secure a substantial increase in the supply of new housing.*

Public Consultation and Housing Provision

Earlier public consultation for this Plan produced strong support for policies of urban regeneration and renaissance; reduced reliance on greenfield development; an uplift in the quality and design of housing development and closer tailoring of housing provision to the needs of local communities. But there was a clear demand for better phasing of essential community support facilities and services and with the creation of new jobs to serve new housing development.*

*Mapping out the Future: Policy Directions for the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. Spring 2002

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5.3 In addition to projected household change (see box over) the housing distribution in this Plan takes account of the scale of existing labour markets in Kent, the distribution of prospective future employment and the strategic priorities for economic development and regeneration.

5.4 However the distribution has also to consider the varied and distinctive character and quality of Kent's environment, the incidence of development opportunities involving previously used or damaged land and the prospects for urban housing capacity. Past development has relied upon a significant contribution from greenfield development and the substantial currently identified supply of housing land also reflects considerable reliance upon this source, with 35% of the identified capacity in 2001 on greenfield sites.

5.5 The capability of Kent's environment to accommodate further greenfield development without adverse impact is limited. The easier options for expanding Kent's towns have been acted upon - most towns are now very close to, or hard up against, land that is protected from development, for example because of its intrinsic quality.

Insert map of national and strategic planning constraints in Kent

Commentary: *The map shows that some 95% of the land beyond existing built up areas is either subject to strategically important environmental designations or is affected by constraints such as flood risk.*

Issues: Influences on the Need for Housing

Projections of household growth reflecting trends over 20 years in population growth, net movement of people in and out of different parts of the county, changing age structures and household composition have been produced*.

If trends were to continue these projections indicate a need for some 5,700 dwellings per annum to 2016 in Kent and Medway (closely comparable with the regional guidance provision) but with significant decline in the rate of growth beyond 2016. The net increase in the housing stock in Kent and Medway between 1991 and 2001 was 50,100 (5010 dwellings per annum) – significantly below (-14%) the trend projection and the rate anticipated in regional guidance.

Almost three quarters of the projected household growth over the 20 year period 2001 –2021 is attributable to growth in the number of households (particularly one person) within the existing population. Consequently whilst movement of people into Kent accounts for the majority of population growth it accounts for only about a quarter of overall household growth, the main generator of housing needs.

Although in-migration is relatively modest overall it is very significant to certain areas particularly Ashford, Canterbury, Thanet and Shepway.

These projections do not constitute policy guidance for individual Districts – whilst projections of local household growth are one consideration in the development of housing policy they should not be slavishly converted into policy for the release of land for individual areas. A range of other factors need to be taken into account.

* *Details of these projections are contained in KMSP Working Paper 1/03*

Trend Based Population Change 2001 –2021: Kent and Medway

	Total Growth	Share of Change
Natural Change (Births – Deaths)	+ 27, 100	30%
Net Migration into Kent	+ 64, 600	70%
Total Change	+ 91, 700	100%

Trend Based Household Growth 2001 –2021: Kent and Medway

	Household Growth	Share of Change
Trend Based Growth including trend rate of net migration	104,500	100%
Trend based growth with nil gain/loss from net migration	75,900	73%
Effect of net migration	28, 600	27%

Proposed Housing Provision and its Distribution

5.6 The strategy for housing provision and its distribution provides for:

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An average annual rate of housing development of 5,700 dwellings between 2001 and 2006 in accordance with RPG9; • A rate of development between 2006 and 2016 in accordance with RPG9. This also reflects the provision for accelerated growth at Ashford beyond 2006, in line with its planned status as a regional growth area for the South East; • A lower overall average rate of housing development in Kent and Medway for 2016 – 2021 (5,300 dwellings per annum). This responds to demographic indicators of reducing indigenous household growth pressures as well as a continuation of Ashford’s regional role and a sustained but moderating emphasis on Thames Gateway; • The following total housing provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 89,600 dwellings for the period 2001-2016 ➤ 116,100 dwellings for the period 2001-2021 |
|--|

5.7 In meeting these quantitative requirements the housing strategy of this Plan takes account of:

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- The emphasis on reinvestment in and regeneration of towns, and the concentration of development at the principal urban areas. In particular the five major urban areas (see Chapters 2 and 3), are locations offering higher quality accessibility by public transport and the main focal points for services and employment;
- making the fullest possible use of previously developed ('brownfield') land taking account of the scale, pattern and timing of development opportunities associated with it - particularly in Thames Gateway;
- past experience of development within existing urban areas and opportunities for additional housing capacity within them;
- the full extent of existing housing land commitments including the contribution made by previously developed land ;
- A review of previously identified locations for strategic scale development that have yet to be implemented including the scope for their more intensive use;
- the scale of employment land provision and the impact of associated job generation;
- An extension of Ashford's strategic role over the medium and longer terms to reflect its location for regionally significant growth. This is subject to the resolution of critical infrastructure thresholds that will govern the rate at which development can be accelerated and to a more balanced pattern of housing and employment provision.
- No structural adjustment to the Green Belt in North and West Kent and retention of the Strategic Gap in Mid Kent;
- The identification of a need for new or extended strategic development locations in some areas

5.8 The Plan seeks an improved balance between housing and jobs, especially where housing provisions are set above locally generated requirements and would support greater net in movement of population into an area. In large parts of Kent and Medway improved local employment performance is essential if housing provision is to support a sustainable pattern of development. At Ashford it is a specific regional objective that growth provides for a parallel increase in jobs and homes. In parts of North and West Kent reliance on London commuting is currently strong. Improved accessibility to and from parts of Kent as a result of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and other service improvements will add to these pressures.

5.9 Furthermore, accommodation of these levels of housing throughout Kent is critically dependent upon the timely funding and provision of essential social, community and transport infrastructure. See Chapters 7 and 10.

Policy HP1: Housing Provision

Provision for housing for 2001-2021 will be made in accordance with the following quantities:

Dwellings (net)

	2001-2006	2006-2011	2011-2016	2001-2016	2016-2021	2001-2021
ASHFORD	3500	5000	5500	14000	6000	20000
CANTERBURY	2100	2100	2000	6200	1500	7700
DARTFORD	3900	4000	4500	12400	3100	15500
DOVER	1600	1600	1300	4500	1000	5500
GRAVESHAM	1400	1500	1500	4400	1100	5500
MAIDSTONE	2300	2200	2000	6500	1800	8300
SEVENOAKS	800	800	800	2400	700	3100
SHEPWAY	1800	1500	1400	4700	1200	5900
SWALE	2500	2500	2500	7500	2000	9500
THANET	1700	1700	1700	5100	1500	6600
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	2200	2100	2100	6400	1900	8300
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	1500	1400	1100	4000	1100	5100
[KCC AREA]	25,300	26,400	26,400	78,100	22,900	101,000
MEDWAY	3500	3900	4100	11,500	3600	15,100
KENT	28,800	30,300	30,500	89,600	26,500	116,100

Notes to Policy HP1

The quantities in Policy HP1 include all forms of housing development providing self contained dwelling units for permanent accommodation and relate to net increases to the housing stock after 31st March 2001 i.e. net of demolitions or other losses from the housing stock.

In order to secure the overall average annual rate of provision for the 2001/2016 period the quantities for the 3 phasing periods to 2016 are cumulative i.e. any surplus or shortfall from the early periods of the Plan are carried forward to subsequent periods. Provision for 2016-2021 is subject to review in the light of monitoring and a further review of RPG9

5.10 Some of the key considerations in housing provision for the sub areas of Kent and individual districts are discussed below and in Chapter 3, Sub Area Policies, which should be read alongside this section.

North Kent

5.11 Dartford and Gravesham (Kent Thameside)

- The provision made for new housing in Kent Thameside is set very substantially above demographic and household growth trends. They reflect the established strategic role of Kent Thameside and the particular concentration of development opportunities within the Dartford area.
- Housing provisions fully reflect the large scale development opportunities associated with brownfield land including mixed-use developments identified in Policy NK1. The planned capacity of these sites already takes into account higher density development associated with good accessibility to improved public transport.
- Beyond these opportunities further strategic scale land releases for housing would conflict with the careful and phased implementation of the long term programme of regeneration for the area, the protection of greenfield land and maintenance of Green Belt boundaries.
- The amount and phasing of development intended for Kent Thameside recognises that some sites are so large that their development will continue beyond 2016. This is particularly the case with Eastern Quarry within Dartford with its total envisaged capacity of more than 7000 dwellings.
- In Dartford and Gravesham the level and phasing of housing provision are indivisibly linked to progress with the chain of large scale strategic development locations identified in this Plan and the new urban form they will support. This scale of development requires physical and community infrastructure in support of both existing and new communities with the backing of central Government and a comprehensive investment programme by public and private agencies.
- The area will account for a greater share of the county's housing provision due to the extent of previously developed or damaged land available for development. Housing policy provides for significant population growth which will help support the area's substantial potential for employment growth.

5.12 Medway

- Housing provision in Medway is broadly comparable to its dwelling requirements based on recent demographic trends. These reflect the fact that Medway has modest population gains primarily as a result of positive natural change (more births than deaths) and recent data showing balanced in and out migration.
- The priority for housing development in Medway will continue to be the regeneration of key urban brownfield sites, particularly along the riverside. However these and other

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sites within the urban area will not be sufficient on their own to meet its housing requirements. Other opportunities for development are limited due to a combination of constraints. Chattenden and its immediate environment has been identified in RPG9a as having potential for development. The opportunity for a new or expanded settlement will centre upon the Defence Estate which comprises the only substantial area of previously developed land outside the urban area of Medway which could support development of such a scale. Its imminent release from military use is anticipated.

- The development of Chattenden will be phased to come on stream after the major urban regeneration sites are substantially completed and it is anticipated that its development will extend beyond 2016. The larger sites within the urban area together with Chattenden will need to be provided with employment, social and community facilities and appropriate infrastructure within a comprehensive development. The provision of employment will also help to meet Medway's strategic objective of reducing its dependency on out commuting.

5.13 Swale

- Although much of Swale (Sittingbourne area and Sheppey) is within Thames Gateway housing supply to date has been heavily reliant on greenfield development around Sittingbourne and parts of Sheppey (Minster)
- The level and phasing of housing provisions in Swale are therefore moderated in this Plan to :
 - ◇ better reflect distribution of previously developed land across Thames Gateway and Kent as a whole;
 - ◇ to provide a stronger focus on regeneration and urban renaissance within the principal urban areas ;
 - ◇ to concentrate on integrated housing, economic development and transport and accessibility improvements within the Sittingbourne /Sheerness axis.
- This Plan's housing provision remains well above locally generated demand and maintains recent average rates of development into the medium and longer terms but with reducing dependence on greenfield land. Commitment to completion of strategic development locations at North East Sittingbourne and Iwade is confirmed.

East Kent Triangle

5.14 Canterbury

- Trend based dwelling requirements are influenced by past high levels of in-migration. Strategic policy reflects restraint but provision is well above requirements associated solely with local population and household change and should be located to support growth in the Canterbury economy envisaged by this Plan.
- Subject to progress with implementation of identified urban housing capacity and regeneration opportunities and scope for more efficient use of previously allocated land, no requirement for implementation of new strategic housing locations is envisaged prior to 2011.

5.15 Dover

- Housing provisions are comparable to dwelling requirements based on recent demographic trends which reflect modest gains from net in migration to the District.
- There is a continuing need for strategic expansion at Aylesham (up to 1000 dwellings) recently confirmed through adoption of the Dover District Local Plan. Provision at Aylesham is intended to offset, in part, some of the restraint applied to the neighbouring Canterbury District. As previously the strategy does not envisage substitution between provision at Aylesham and land release elsewhere in Dover District.
- Additional provision to meet strategic requirements should be guided by detailed assessments of urban capacity, particularly within the principal urban areas of Dover and Deal. It should also respect the tight strategic environmental constraints around Dover e.g. the North Downs AONB and the need to support recent and continuing economic growth in the Sandwich Corridor. Policy EK2 earmarks provision of some 300 dwellings beyond 2006 for these purposes.

5.14 Thanet

- About three quarters of the dwelling requirement in Thanet based on a continuation of past trends is derived from in migration. However substantial increase in the housing stock in the 1990's have been accompanied by poor local economic and employment performance (despite reductions in unemployment).
- Housing provision is set substantially above household growth generated by local demographic and social changes. Challenging requirements for urban housing capacity are set, appropriate to the scale of this major urban area. There is a very limited current contribution to housing land supply from greenfield development.
- Concentrated provision for urban expansion will have an impact on high quality agricultural land if this is to be located close to existing public transport corridors serving the town and district centres or be accessible to the concentration of employment and retailing in the Westwood area (including the committed new town centre). Policy EK3 identifies a new Strategic Development Location adjoining the Thanet urban area at Westwood. Its phasing will depend on the outcome of local assessments of urban housing capacity elsewhere in Thanet. Examination of Westwood should also consider the housing provisions required beyond 2016.
- Given substantial progress with development of the local economy, implementation of key strategic employment sites and employment growth in the 'Central Island' area (particularly that associated with the developing role of Manston airport) strategic policy for the scale of housing provision in Thanet for the post 2011 period should be reviewed by 2006.

Channel Corridor

5.15 Ashford

- The provision for new housing in Ashford is set well above those implied by existing trends and provide for an accelerating rate of net in migration and local population growth. A close relationship between economic performance and housing provision is essential if balanced growth is to be secured in line with regional and strategic objectives.
- Continuation of rates of housing development provided for in the 1996 Structure Plan and their future acceleration in line with the conclusions of the Ashford's Future Study depends upon major investment in infrastructure, as set out in Policy CC1. Strategic housing provisions reflect a staged approach to growth at Ashford beyond 2006 that supports an average rate of development of c. 1200 dwellings per annum by 2021. Growth will continue to be strongly concentrated at the Ashford urban area.
- The prospects for continued growth beyond 2016 will be subject to review by 2011. This should take account of progress with the scale, form and balance of development in the interim and with the provision of the major elements of community infrastructure outlined in Policy CC1 that are essential to sustainable and balanced growth at Ashford.
- Greenfield land currently accounts for more than 80% of currently identified land supply. Urban capacity appraisal should increase the contribution of previously developed land and there is substantial scope to increase the efficiency of use within existing development provisions. However, further strategic scale greenfield land releases will be required beyond 2006 in locations close to the Ashford urban area and with good accessibility to it by a choice of transport types. Detailed definition of new strategic development locations will need to take account of the provisions of this Plan to 2016 and the potential beyond were Ashford's accelerated rate of growth to be sustained over the longer term.

5.16 Maidstone

- Household growth generated by local demographic and social changes is relatively high and above requirements based on recent trends which have reflected some net loss of population from the Borough as a result of migration.
- There are tight countryside conservation constraints around Maidstone and a strategic gap to the north and west maintains is separation from the Medway Towns and Medway Gap urban areas. Accessibility to the town centre and rail corridors is poor from the south and east of the urban area. Urban regeneration within central Maidstone has an important contribution to make to housing requirements.
- With these considerations in mind the amount of land for housing is set just above the level implied by indigenous population and household growth with a greater reliance on previously developed land.

5.17 Shepway

- Dwelling requirements based on an extrapolation of recent demographic trends are strongly influenced by migration into the District (accounting for some 60% of the overall trend based assessment of housing demand).
- Under this Plan the trend requirement is restrained but provisions remain set at a level well in excess of household growth generated solely by the local effects of demographic and social changes. This provides for continued growth from migration including workforce growth in support of economic regeneration and diversification.
- Policy provides for significant gains from urban housing capacity in conjunction with wider urban regeneration at Folkestone/Hythe (with particular emphasis on the harbour and waterfront opportunity areas) and completion of the strategic expansion of Hawkinge.

West Kent

5.18 Much of West Kent (Districts of Sevenoaks, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells) is in the Metropolitan Green Belt and the growth of the principal towns is also limited by other major planning constraints including nationally important landscape designations (AONB). Policy WK1 allows for no structural change to the Green Belt nor reliance on strategically significant releases of greenfield land.

5.19 Sevenoaks

- Dwelling requirements based on past demographic trends are very similar to those reflecting indigenous pressures for population and household growth.
- The size and character of Sevenoaks and Swanley (the two principal centres) suggest only modest potential for housing in the urban areas especially if a considered balance and mix of land uses, including safeguarding of employment land is to be secured. This Plan involves significant restraint on the trend requirement. However the proximity of the northern part of the District, including the Swanley area, to the regionally significant housing opportunities arising within Dartford and Gravesham (Kent Thameside) has to be taken into account.

5.20 Tonbridge and Malling

- The Borough has been gaining population from net migration in recent years although household growth generated by the local effects of demographic and social changes accounts for some two thirds of the overall trend requirement.
- The Borough includes Strategic Development Locations involving previously developed or damaged land identified through previous Structure Plans and set out in Policy WK3. Most of these remain unimplemented. The scope to make more efficient use land within these major development locations is, of itself, of strategic significance to housing capacity and its phasing.

5.21 Tunbridge Wells

- Trend based dwelling requirements incorporate only very modest gain from net in migration although more than four fifths of the requirement is attributable to indigenous demographic and household change.
- Housing provision equates with the trend dwelling requirement commensurate with a very strong emphasis on urban capacity to meet future dwelling requirements.

The Managed Release of Housing Sites

5.22 Housing land releases must be managed to ensure that land, especially greenfield sites, is not released unnecessarily or prematurely. The Plan extends to 2021 and a policy framework aimed at preventing undue early use of housing provision in the early years of the Plan is required. This has to:

- take account of the nature of existing commitments;
- provide for the flow of urban housing capacity across the plan period within built up areas; and
- allow the implementation of existing and new strategic development locations.

5.23 District planning authorities will need to make provision to ensure that sufficient land comes forward to enable the average rates for each phase contained under Policy HP1 to be achieved whilst optimising the use of previously used land within the major/ principal urban areas and at other sustainable locations for development prior to the use of greenfield land. Phasing will help to prevent the early release of greenfield sites from prejudicing urban regeneration. This will also help to achieve the recycling target for the use of previously developed land (Policy HP3).

5.24 Strong market demand in some areas may lead to pressure for the rapid development of allocated sites during the early stages of the plan period and for a higher than expected number of 'windfall' sites coming forward. Careful phasing of the release of land, including windfalls, will ensure that a steady supply of sites will be forthcoming throughout the whole of the plan period without exceeding targets. Phasing can also help ensure that, if necessary, community and other infrastructure can be improved or provided in parallel with the development of housing.

Policy HP2: Phased Provision of Housing Land

The local planning authorities will phase and manage the release of sites for housing development, including windfalls, to ensure that generally previously developed sites are brought forward before greenfield sites whilst meeting the housing requirements for the phasing periods set out in policy HP1.

5.25 The average annual rate of development for each district in each of the five year phases is shown in Table HP1.

**Table HP1: Annual Average Rates of Housing Provision By Phases: 2001-2021
Dwellings (net) ++**

	2001- 2006	2006- 2011	2011- 2016	2001- 2016	2016- 2021	2001- 2021
ASHFORD	700	1000	1100	930	1200	1000
CANTERBURY	420	420	400	415	300	385
DARTFORD	780	800	900	825	620	775
DOVER	320	320	260	300	200	275
GRAVESHAM	280	300	300	295	220	275
MAIDSTONE	460	440	400	435	360	415
SEVENOAKS	160	160	160	160	140	155
SHEPWAY	360	300	280	315	240	295
SWALE	500	500	500	500	400	475
THANET	340	340	340	340	300	330
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	440	420	420	425	380	415
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	300	280	220	270	220	255
[KCC AREA]	5060	5280	5280	5210	4580	5050
MEDWAY	700	780	820	765	720	755
KENT	5760	6060*	6100*	5980*	5300*	5805*

++ Rounded to the nearest five

* Including the additional provision associated with Ashford's regional growth point role from 2006.

Increasing Reliance on Previously Developed Land

5.26 Sufficient land needs to be identified and available to provide 89,000 dwellings in the period to 2016. Existing supply (2001), including sites with planning permission and sites allocated in local plans, on both previously developed and greenfield land amounts to some 54,000 dwellings but a significant element of this (c.11,000 dwellings), primarily

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within Thames Gateway (Dartford), represents prospective availability beyond 2011.³ Supply will be augmented by the contribution from sites identified through District based urban housing capacity studies and other previously developed land coming forward as a result of windfall planning permissions. Such sites involving previously developed land have been adding an average of about 1500 dwellings per annum to housing supply in recent years. Further housing gains as a result of increased densities (especially on larger greenfield allocations) can also be anticipated from existing committed sites.

5.27 Kent and Medway's Urban Capacity Protocol establishes a consistent framework for the assessment of potential urban capacity within the principal urban areas and other defined categories of settlement that will, in turn, inform local development documents and allow more efficient use of land.

5.28 In the light of these assessments, District Councils will need to consider the requirement to provide for greenfield development in order to meet strategic housing requirements. This should include reassessment of the phasing and capacity of existing greenfield allocations to avoid premature release of new greenfield land. It is unlikely that major retrenchment in the need for greenfield land currently committed for development will be appropriate over the Structure Plan period as a whole.

5.29 Strategic development locations already established involving both previously developed and greenfield land are largely retained and some new greenfield provision will be needed on a selective basis in the medium term. New or extended strategic development locations will be needed to accommodate requirements in Medway, Swale, Ashford, Shepway and Thanet. Subject to progress in the use of previously developed land, smaller scale additions to greenfield supply may be necessary in Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells in the longer term. In assessing such requirements account should be taken of the indicative provisions for the 2016-2021 period which should be regarded as minimum requirements for this period.

5.30 Policy HP3 establishes a policy objective for the county and individual Districts for the proportion of housing development for 2001-2016 to be met from previously developed land. Targets for post 2016 will be established in conjunction with a future review of housing provision for this period. These targets take account of:

- the previously developed and greenfield elements of the existing committed housing land supply;
- indicative scope for increasing the housing capacity of strategic development locations and other major housing allocations (where not previously assessed against current objectives);
- expectations for future capacity of previously developed land;
- provision made in this plan for new or extended strategic development locations involving both previously developed and greenfield land.

5.31 Given the extent of, and continuing reliance upon, existing committed greenfield land these targets rely upon a much higher proportion of housing supply newly identified after 2001 arising from previously developed land.

³ A small element of this longer term (post 2011) supply in Dartford (residual part of Eastern Quarry) is likely to represent availability post 2021

Policy HP3: Contribution of Previously Developed Land to Housing Provision 2001-2016.		
	Housing Provision 2001-2016	Target for Previously Developed Land (%)*
ASHFORD	14,000	30
CANTERBURY	6,200	70
DARTFORD	12,400	95
DOVER	4,500	65
GRAVESHAM	4,400	75
MAIDSTONE	6,500	65
SEVENOAKS	2,400	90
SHEPWAY	4,700	60
SWALE	7,500	30
THANET	5,100	80
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	6,400	90
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	4,000	90
MEDWAY	11,500	80
KENT	89,600	70

5.32 These policy targets for the use of previously developed land are indicative and subject to testing through urban capacity assessments and the preparation of local development documents. In interpreting the target in Policy HP3 local planning authorities must nonetheless ensure that the overall housing quantities in Policy HP1, and those for the individual phasing periods it contains, are accommodated.

Priorities for the Location of New Housing Development

5.33 In the past a substantial yield of housing development on urban sites has been produced from a variety of sources. These have included:

- recycling land and buildings formerly in non-residential use;
- developing vacant and previously undeveloped land;
- providing residential accommodation above commercial premises in town centres;
- intensifying development within established residential areas by way of subdivision and redevelopment of the existing housing stock, infill, and backland development.

5.34 Such sources should continue to be explored. The potential of vacant houses could provide a valuable source accommodation if brought back into use, for example, through the application of empty homes and other strategies. However the housing provisions of this Plan relate to new, additional provision – reoccupation of vacant dwellings does not contribute to meeting Policy HP1 requirements unless a gain in dwelling units is involved e.g. through conversion of property.

5.35 Whilst full use of urban development opportunities for housing is desirable, this should not prejudice the improvement of the urban environment, the protection of valuable

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amenities, including open space, within settlements nor the safeguarding of centrally located and accessible business and employment land.

5.36 When preparing Local Development Documents, this Plan requires a sequential test to be applied to the principal urban areas and rural service centres and to give priority to the use of previously developed land. Reliance on similar capacity within smaller rural settlements, beyond small scale infilling, will need to demonstrate the potential for a sustainable form of development with housing, employment and other facilities in close proximity. In these circumstances such opportunities will take precedence in the search sequence over the release of greenfield sites involving extensions to the principal urban areas or rural service centres.

5.37 This Plan identifies strategic development locations important to the implementation of its development strategy. In the case of greenfield development their release and phasing will be dependent on the prior application of the search sequence in Policy HP4 to ensure that priority attaches to the use of previously developed land. Similar considerations will apply to smaller scale greenfield land releases identified through Local Development Documents. The latter will need to have regard to the nature and impact of strategic environmental and planning constraints at the principal urban areas and the rural service centres.

5.38 Identification of land for new housing at rural settlements should normally be through Local Development Documents. . This will not imply continuing grant of planning permission at those settlements on sites other than allocations in local plans/development documents. The amount of any new development should be consistent with the scale of the existing settlement.

5.39 Development allied to nodes of good, or potentially good, public transport corridors will need to take account of both the intensity and frequency of public transport services and the connections to centres of employment and major service provision. Proposals should be accessible i.e. within reasonable walking distance of a railway station or an existing or prospective bus stop.

5.40 All sites considered as allocations for housing should be assessed to ensure that new development is well located, accessible to essential services and supported by adequate physical and community infrastructure whilst minimising environmental impact.

Policy HP4: Sequential Approach to Location of New Housing Provision

In identifying sites to be allocated for housing to meet the housing requirements in Policy HP1 a search sequence will be applied as follows:

- 1. The re-use of previously developed land and buildings:**
 - a) within Kent's major/ principal urban areas; followed by:**
 - b) within Kent's rural service centres; followed by:**
 - c) within a smaller rural settlement, as defined in Local Development Documents, with the potential for a sustainable form of development ; followed by:**

- 2. An extension to:**

- d) a major/principal urban area; followed by:
- e) a rural service centre; followed by:
- f) a smaller rural settlement ,as defined in Local Development Documents, that can provide a sustainable form of development including ready access to good quality public transport

Where practicable consideration of a settlement extension should give priority to the use of previously developed land.

Policy HP5: Assessment of New Housing Land

In applying Policy HP4 the suitability of both previously developed and greenfield sites for housing development should demonstrate:-

- (a) good quality accessibility to jobs , shops and services by means other than the car including the potential for improving such accessibility; and
- (b) adequate capacity within existing transport, utility, social and community infrastructure to absorb further development or the ability for new or enhanced facilities to be provided; and
- (c) the role of development in sustaining local services and facilities;
- (d) the absence of material harm arising from physical and environmental constraints affecting the development of land.

Housing Development in the Countryside

5.41 New house building in the open countryside, away from established settlements or areas allocated for development in Local Development Documents, should be strictly controlled. The fact that a single house on a particular site would be unobtrusive does not by itself make development acceptable. A precedent could be set and a proliferation of such developments could occur. Minor development within the defined confines of rural settlements should not be detrimental to the character of the settlement.

5.42 One of the few circumstances in which isolated residential development in the countryside may be justified is when accommodation is required to enable farm or forestry workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their work. When formulating rural housing policies, local planning authorities should apply the criteria set out in PPG7 (Annex I).

Policy HP6: Housing Development in the Countryside

Housing development outside the confines of the major/principal urban areas will not be permitted unless it:

- (a) a site allocated for housing development in a Local Development Document; or otherwise consistent with Policy SS5;or
- (b) minor development within the confines of a rural service centre or smaller rural settlement; or,

- (c) a single dwelling demanding a rural location for farm or forestry workers; or,**
- (d) the rebuilding, conversion or modest extension of a dwelling currently in residential use; or,**
- (e) (e) the conversion of a redundant commercial, institutional or industrial building to meet an identified need for housing, which does not conflict with a need to retain local employment opportunities.**

Housing development must not be detrimental to the character of the countryside and, as appropriate, the character of rural settlement.

Housing Type and Need

5.43 Housing needs are diverse. New housing development has an important role in meeting needs but must be considered in conjunction with the very substantial existing housing stock. The provisions of this Plan will add less than 1% per year to the total housing stock of Kent. It is the combined effect of new development and turnover in existing housing that meet demands arising from both newly forming households within Kent and those moving into the area.

5.44 The majority of projected household growth will consist of one-person households. The need to expand the stock of smaller accommodation should take account of the size characteristics of the existing housing stock. A range of factors including purchasing power and lifestyle influences the relationship between household size and size of dwelling. The anticipated growth in one-person households is highly diverse in terms of age, economic resources, lifestyle requirements. It would be incorrect to assume that one-person households necessarily require smaller dwellings.

5.45 In order to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including affordable and special needs housing (such as that for older people and those with disabilities), Local Development Documents should make provision for wider housing choice and a mix of dwelling sizes, types and locations. The creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics should be avoided and socially mixed, balanced and inclusive communities encouraged.

5.46 Residential development within, or close to, Kent's town and district centres has an important part to play in contributing to both housing choice and the vitality and regeneration of such centres. Centrally located accommodation, accessible to a range of services and facilities may prove particularly attractive to households with lower levels of personal mobility and those which, for reasons of cost or preference, seek smaller units of accommodation. Town centre locations have provided opportunities for purpose built sheltered accommodation for older people. The stock of accommodation in and around town centres, including the upper floors of town centre commercial premises, also offers an important reservoir of lower cost accommodation.

5.47 Local housing needs assessments should be used to determine the type and size of additional housing to be provided. Full account should be taken of the composition of existing and future households, the requirements for both subsidised and market housing, and the character and condition of the existing stock. The need for sheltered housing, including extra care sheltered housing, should be assessed given the anticipated growth of almost one third in the population aged 85+ over the next twenty years, the current paucity of extra care housing in Kent and the strategies of Kent and Medway Councils towards sheltered housing. District based assessments of needs should be undertaken in a consistent manner across wider housing market areas where there are significant cross-boundary movements for employment and/or housing between Districts. Local development document policies and other site-specific guidance should set out clear guidance for house builders regarding the type of housing expected for the principal development sites to ensure that specific housing needs are met.

Policy HP7: Range and Mix of Housing Provision

Housing development will be required to incorporate a mix of dwelling sizes and types, including sheltered housing, which will contribute towards meeting the identified needs of all sections of the community

Affordable Housing

5.48 The housing needs of all in the community should be recognised. With a continuing rise in house prices in Kent in excess of growth of average earnings, many households can no longer afford to buy or rent housing at market prices. This is particularly the case in high housing cost areas, notably in the west of the county.

5.49 Insufficient provision of affordable housing also has adverse consequences for the local economy, new commercial development and public services (including those provided privately such as in the social care sector). The recruitment and retention of 'key workers' is impeded since they are unable to satisfy their housing needs. Insufficient affordable housing can also adversely effect quality of life by requiring people to travel long distances to work from lower priced areas. RPG9a stresses the importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing as an essential ingredient of regeneration efforts in the region.

5.50 This Plan defines affordable housing as that which is made available, at a subsidised cost, to people with insufficient incomes to enable them to afford adequate housing locally, commensurate with their needs, in the prevailing conditions of the local housing market. This includes social rented and shared equity housing provided by registered social landlords or local authorities in line with Housing Corporation target rents. It also includes 'Intermediate Housing' – other rented housing at below open market levels, low cost homes for owner occupation available for initial purchase at a price below prevailing market levels and key worker housing. Shared equity housing has a distinctive role to play in offering a ladder of progression towards owner occupation.

5.51 RPG9 sets a '*provisional indicator*' of 18,000 to 19,000 affordable homes a year for the region. This indicator is not divided between structure planning areas. It is equivalent

to almost half (48%) of the total annual housing requirements and well in excess of current levels of provision. Government advice is that it is inappropriate for the Structure Plan to include detailed guidance and targets for the level of affordable housing provision in particular localities as this depends upon detailed local assessments of need.

5.52 A strategic assessment of future affordable housing supply in Kent and Medway has been carried out to consider the applicability to Kent of the RPG9 indicator.⁴ This assessment focussed on newly arising need over the Plan period rather than any outstanding 'backlog' of need. It concluded that household growth implied an indicative 1600 –1800 net additional affordable dwellings per annum to be derived from building for rent, shared ownership and other forms of low cost housing. This suggests some 30% of total provision should be in the affordable sector on the basis of household growth alone. This assessment does not provide indicators at District level for which individual need assessments will be required but nonetheless is indicative of the overall scale of the requirement.

5.53 Within the context of the strategic housing provisions established by this Plan and their own local needs assessment District Councils, should define in local development documents the balance to be struck between affordable housing development and other housing provision and between the different forms of affordable housing. All provision made for affordable housing will contribute to meeting the Policy HP1 quantities. Local Development Document policies should indicate how many affordable homes need to be provided throughout the plan area, establish the site size thresholds appropriate for the negotiation of affordable housing provision given the needs and circumstances of the District and set indicative targets for specific sites. The requirement for sheltered affordable housing, and the levels of associated care to be provided should be identified jointly with the Social Services authorities and taken into account when considering the composition of affordable housing sought for specific sites.

5.54 The negotiation of cross subsidy arrangements between market development and affordable housing will depend on the circumstances of individual sites including their relationship with the existing pattern of services and facilities, accessibility to public transport and local evidence of need. It will be important to ensure that both low cost market and subsidised housing for rent are kept affordable in perpetuity, possibly through partnerships with registered social landlords and through the use of legal agreements. The contribution of sites to affordable housing provision should also take full account of contributions required to other infrastructure and services directly related to the development in accordance with Policy IMP1.

Policy HP8: Affordable Housing Provision

Provision of all affordable housing will contribute to meeting the housing quantities in Policy HP1.

Local Development Documents should:

(a) establish the proportion of strategic housing provisions identified in Policy HP1 that should be met by affordable housing on the basis of District housing

⁴ Needs for Affordable and Market Housing in Kent: Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research: Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge 2001

needs assessments including the respective contributions planned for social, intermediate and key worker housing;

(b) indicate the site size thresholds that will apply to provision of affordable housing and provide indicative targets for the level and composition of the contribution required from specific sites.

5.55 Where sites are allocated for housing in rural service centres or other rural settlements affordable housing should normally be secured either through cross subsidy or another acceptable form of provision.

5.56 At villages which do not have land allocated for residential development local planning authorities may consider evidence of local needs as a material consideration in determining whether to release land for housing involving sites that would otherwise not be considered as acceptable for residential development. Schemes brought forward as exceptions to policies of constraint will need to be justified on the basis of serving local needs. Mixed development involving cross-subsidy with open market housing on the same site would not be appropriate given the exceptional circumstances that justify the release of such sites for housing. Housing permitted in accordance with Policy HP9 will contribute to meeting the Policy HP1 provisions for the District although such schemes by definition are likely to make only a modest contribution to overall provision.

Policy HP9: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

As an exception to policies of constraint, a policy may be included in a Local Development Document which permits affordable housing at rural settlements on sites that have not been allocated for housing where this is justified to meet a proven local need.

Provision for Gypsy Accommodation

5.57 Irrespective of their ethnic origin gypsies are distinguished by their nomadic way of life which is directly associated with their means of livelihood.⁵ Although a tiny proportion of the population local planning authorities must have regard to meeting gypsies' accommodation needs and make adequate site provision in their development plans. In addition to the year round population, in parts of Kent there is a seasonal presence of gypsy groups seeking temporary work or passing through the area. A variety of sites may be needed including sites for settled, long-term use, temporary stopping places and transit sites. To tackle the problem of unauthorised traveller encampments Government is revising policy and funding to facilitate the provision of temporary, transit and emergency stopping places for travellers. Provision of such facilities needs to be considered over a wide area to provide a network of opportunities. In conjunction with Kent and Medway Councils District authorities should include in their Local Development Documents an

⁵ See Department of the Environment Circular 18/94 :Gypsy Sites Policy and Unauthorised Camping

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assessment of the identifiable need for gypsy sites in their area (both permanent and transit sites) and indicate how this need is to be met.

5.58 Government guidance (Circular 1/94) advises that it will not be appropriate to make provision for gypsy sites in areas of open land where development is severely restricted e.g. AONBs, SSSIs and other protected areas. Green Belt land should not be allocated for gypsy sites in development plans. Sites on the outskirts of built up areas may be appropriate provided care is taken to avoid encroachment on open countryside and consistency with agricultural and countryside policies is ensured. There are other criteria which need to be taken into account in establishing gypsy sites, for example access to schools, health care and other community facilities, and provision of mains services such as water and electricity.

Policy HP10: Provision of Permanent and Transit Gypsy Accommodation

Where a need for permanent or transit gypsy accommodation is established, provision should be in accordance with the Structure Plan's policies for protection of the environment, countryside and the Green Belt.

Sites should be provided within the principal urban areas or rural settlements. In the absence of such sites locations with good accessibility to the principal urban areas or rural service centres and with easy and safe access to primary and other main roads will be preferred.

Proposals should be located to avoid adverse impact on residential amenity, highway capacity and highway safety.

Chapter 6: Promoting Quality of Living in Town and Country

Introduction

6.1 Through this Plan we are seeking to make towns and villages in Kent vibrant places to live, work, and enjoy leisure time. This Chapter looks to bring about an 'urban renaissance' and the revitalisation of rural communities. It focuses upon those policies which affect the quality of places including, design, density, the protection of the wealth of built heritage in Kent, community services and infrastructure.

Key Issues in Kent:

- Ensuring high quality in design and construction of new development
- Preserving the separate identities of different settlements
- Making towns and villages more attractive, safer, places to live, work and visit
- Securing more efficient use of land
- Encouraging mixed uses in our towns and other centres
- Conserving our built and man made heritage
- Enhancing community and other infrastructure
- Providing better facilities and opportunities for sport and recreation

6.2 These policies are at the heart of improving economic, social and environmental well being and were strongly supported by public consultation on the Vision for Kent and Mapping out the Future, which formed the basis of this Plan.

The quality of development and design in town and country

6.3. Kent has a valuable legacy of attractive and historic built environments. However, some towns and villages have unexceptional or poor townscapes because of heavy industry, the poor design of more recent development and the impact of traffic, creating pollution and impeding pedestrian movement.

6.4 The character of Kent villages and small rural towns, and their setting in the landscape, are intrinsically valuable, helping to mould the image of the County and contributing to the quality of life for everyone who lives in and visits Kent. Structure Plan policies have protected the countryside and rural settlements from inappropriate development and must continue to do so; any development in the rural areas must respond carefully to its location and environment.

6.5 There is now a clear onus on the planning system to promote sustainable and well designed development and this is reflected in a range of PPGs and other Government publications⁶. It is important that development responds well to the distinct character of each settlement, which is formed by the buildings, open spaces landscape, street pattern,

⁶ For example : Better Places to Live by Design : Companion Guide to PPG3
By Design : Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

landmarks, materials and other features. Each town or village therefore has a different set of physical design problems and opportunities to address. Achieving good design requires attention to the function, convenience and context of a development as well as the appearance and appropriateness of its architecture. It must address the public domain including the space between buildings. It requires the contribution of stakeholders and the community in reaching decisions.

6.6 Good design can often be achieved at no overall additional cost. Greater attention to street maintenance, public open space and pedestrian routes through good urban design and management can result in economic benefits to an area as well as making places more attractive. The *Kent Design Guide* has been prepared as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Kent's local authorities. It advocates a high quality of design in new development in harmony with its surroundings but which does not stifle innovation.

Policy QL1: Quality of Development and Design

All development should be well designed and be of high quality. Developments, individually or taken together, should appropriately reflect the scale, layout pattern and character of their local surroundings. Development which would be detrimental to the built environment or the amenity and functioning of settlements or the countryside will not be permitted. Existing built environment of high quality and character will be protected and enhanced.

Local authorities and others will:

- (a) ensure that the distinctive character of towns and villages is conserved and improved;**
- (b) apply the principles of the Kent Design Guide when determining planning applications and preparing site-specific development guidance;**
- (c) require that a design statement accompanies proposals for development with accurate illustrations of the development in its surroundings;**
- (d) develop design policies for their area based on an analysis of the quality, character and significance of the surrounding built and natural environment.**

This will include:

- (i) identification of areas where local design policies will apply to take take account of their special character;**
- (ii) design guidance within development briefs and master plans for major development sites and areas of change**

The benefits of good design:

Good urban design and high quality architecture will be instrumental in delivering strategic planning policies in Kent in a number of ways:

- by accommodating higher density and mixed use development satisfactorily, and integrating new uses for vacant sites, thus contributing to the targets for development on previously used land;
- by increasing the confidence to invest, particularly in town centres and the inner parts of our urban areas;
- by making it easier and safer to move on foot or cycle, thus reducing dependence on the car;
- by bringing different housing types and local services together, and encouraging community development;
- by producing buildings and layouts which reduce energy and water consumption, improve public health and safety, and reduce crime;
- by incorporating the flexibility for buildings to be adapted and extended throughout their life to meet changing needs and requirements;
- by making towns more attractive, through high quality building and landscape;
- by reducing physical isolation and encouraging social inclusion, for example by making areas better connected and accessible and encouraging dwelling design to “homes for life” standard;
- by adopting design which complements local architecture and contributes to urban character.

6.7 The overall character and identity of a settlement is of important – to its economic well being and the quality of life of its residents. Investors are influenced by the cultural, leisure and retailing vitality of settlements. The application of urban design principles helps to make towns more attractive and successful places in which to live and work. High quality urban design has an important place in delivering wider community objectives. In particular the Structure Plan and Community Strategies aim to encourage journeys by foot and cycle, improve health and safety and reduce crime. An important contribution to these aspects of quality of life can be made through programmes for pedestrian and cycle priority and circulation, for the appearance and treatment of open spaces and the spaces between buildings and townscape improvement especially in town centres.

Policy QL2: Maintaining the identity of settlements

The separation of settlements will be maintained including:

(a) Safeguarding of the open and undeveloped character of the countryside around and between settlements, including the use of landscape buffers;

(b) The allocation of land on the edge of settlements for uses which maintain or enhance their setting;

(c) The protection of important features and views.

Policy QL3: Priorities for the Public Realm

Local authorities will establish priorities and programmes for:

- (a) pedestrian priority and reduced traffic speeds in existing residential areas and in major new development areas;
- (b) the provision of safe pedestrian and cycle routes to schools;
- (c) a network of high quality, direct and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes linking public open space, safe streets and parks in urban areas, residential areas with community facilities/services and the principal urban areas with the surrounding countryside;
- (d) the improvement of townscapes, stimulation of new development and pedestrian priority within town centres

Where directly related contributions from developments to the implementation of such programmes may be required.

Making effective use of development land

6.8 It is important to make best use of the development land. The greater part of most Kent towns have not been developed at high densities and land is not always used efficiently. There are opportunities to increase the density of residential and commercial development e.g. through redevelopment of single storey buildings or through changes to parking provision, and to create more interesting and lively townscapes, whilst also conserving the best character of Kent's towns. New development or intensification can utilise loft space, additional storeys, basement and terraced building forms to optimise efficient use of land. Higher densities can be achieved without compromising wider design objectives or the quality of development.

6.9 In the future there will be more one and two person households in younger and older age groups, for whom smaller dwellings close to public transport and community services will be in demand. Higher densities can be assisted by reduced car parking, especially where there is good access to good quality public transport.

Policy QL4: Density of development

New development will be subject to minimum average net densities* as follows:

- 30 dwellings per hectare for residential use;
- 50 dwellings per hectare for residential use in central urban areas or close to major public transport nodes;
- 3500 sq. metres per hectare for business uses (Use Classes B1-B8) outside town centres.

More efficient use of land should be achieved through redevelopment of low density uses, especially within the central parts of the major/principal urban areas.

* Ratios apply to the area of land used for residential and business use excluding major roads and landscaping, and other uses.

Vibrant mix of uses

6.10 Developments which have a mixture of land uses can have strong advantages compared to large areas in a single use. They can reduce the need for travel to employment and services and improve the prospects for investment, by spreading risk and maximising value. Mixed use also creates more interesting environments, whilst a range of house types fosters more balanced communities. Significant new land releases including major regeneration sites should provide mixed uses capable of creating communities with good access to a full range of services, either within themselves, or by association with existing development. Major allocations or developments based on a single land use should, where practicable, be reviewed with a view to introducing a wider mix of use provided that this would not conflict with other Structure Plan policies or meeting strategic development requirements for housing or new employment.

Policy QL5: mix of uses on major sites

- a) **New large scale developments will include a mix of residential and employment uses, unless an appropriate mix can be achieved through proximity to, and integration with, existing development. They will incorporate appropriate community and other services if not available within walking distance or if they cannot be provided in extended facilities nearby.**
- b) **Opportunities should be taken to introduce an appropriate mix of uses into existing developed areas and on major sites currently planned for single use where this would lead to a better balance in the mix of development.**

Heritage

6.11 Kent's historic environment is an irreplaceable asset which contributes greatly to the character of the county but which is vulnerable to damage or destruction. There is a duty of care for once lost, components of the historic environment can never be replaced. The conservation of our heritage has economic and social benefits. It helps to maintain varied and attractive places to live and work, provides historic places to visit and enjoy, and encourages investment and re-use of old buildings. Features and areas of archaeological or historic importance should be protected, conserved and enhanced where possible. Some of these features are statutorily protected, for example Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas, while others are recognised as being of more local importance.

Conservation Areas

6.12 Kent's most important areas of special architectural or historic interest have been designated as conservation areas (almost 500 such areas in Kent and Medway). Designation helps to ensure protection against harmful development and encourages environmental improvement. The sense of history and the type and quality of buildings, spaces, trees and other features contributes to the special character of these areas.

6.13 The variety of building styles from different historical periods can add to the character and interest within a conservation area. New buildings do not always have to copy their older neighbours to be successful. Innovative design of new buildings may be appropriate provided it is of high quality and is sensitive to the character of the conservation area.

6.14 It is important to take into account the impact of proposals outside conservation areas as these can affect important views into, and out of, conservation areas. Highway improvements and maintenance will be carried out in a manner sensitive to their surroundings to minimise adverse environmental impacts on conservation areas. Co-ordinated environmental improvement schemes will be undertaken in appropriate locations.

Policy QL6: Conservation Areas

The primary planning policy towards conservation areas is to preserve or enhance their special character and appearance.

Development within conservation areas should preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area. Development which would harm the character of a conservation area will not be permitted.

District Planning authorities should:

- 1) include policies within local development documents that protect within conservation areas the plan form, buildings, architectural features, archaeological sites, trees, streets and spaces, and the relationships between these features, which contribute to their special character and setting;**
- 2) review the boundaries of existing conservation areas and, where appropriate, identify new conservation areas;**
- 3) carry out conservation area appraisals identifying important features or characteristics which need to be protected and develop strategies for the enhancement of conservation areas.**

Archaeological Sites

6.15 Kent has a wealth of archaeological sites, ancient monuments and historic landscapes. These provide valuable information about the past and make an important contribution to education, leisure and tourism. Because of its location close to mainland Europe, Kent was well-placed for trade and the receipt of new ideas, yet at the same time vulnerable to invasion. This is reflected in the county's archaeology. From earliest times Kent supported prosperous and socially and politically advanced communities. Along the coastline are the remains of defensive works dating from the Roman period through to the Second World War. It is strategic policy to preserve, record and promote this rich archaeological heritage.

6.16 The emphasis should be on preserving archaeological sites 'in situ' (i.e. in their original position). If this is not appropriate or possible, then an archaeological investigation for the purposes of 'preservation by record' will be required before the site is developed. This is likely to involve a full archaeological excavation and recording of the site, conservation of any finds, and publication of the results. Provision should be made for the

long-term storage of the site archive, including the finds, for future generations. Temporary or permanent displays can help people to appreciate the value of archaeology and provide a sense of history for new and existing communities. The Kent Extensive Urban Archaeology Survey provides an overview of the archaeological resources of Kent's historic towns and sets out a framework for taking this into account in assessing development proposals. This will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Policy QL7: Archaeological Sites

The archaeological and historic integrity of scheduled ancient monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

Where important or potentially important archaeological remains may exist, developers will be required to arrange for archaeological assessment and/or field evaluation to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications.

Where the case for development affecting an archaeological site is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ. Where preservation in situ is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record will be required.

Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

6.17 Kent has the second highest number of historic buildings of any other shire county (over 18,000 Grades I, II* and II listed buildings in Kent and Medway). They make a valuable contribution to tourism and the cultural heritage of Kent. It is important to protect them and their settings.

6.18 Generally, the best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to retain them in the use for which they were originally intended, or in their current use. Where change of use of a listed building is proposed, new uses may be acceptable where it would be the best way of retaining or refurbishing it.

6.19 Demolition of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will require a very strong case to be made. In such cases there is a legal requirement to allow English Heritage reasonable access to a building for the purposes of making a record of it.

6.20 Alteration of a historic building can involve the destruction of important features and this should be avoided. Prior to works being carried out a suitable record should be prepared. Where demolition or alterations would damage part of the structure of a building of special architectural or historic interest, applicants may be expected to provide full documentation of the impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric before the application can be determined.

6.21 Kent's built heritage is identifiable by the use of local stones, bricks and tiles made from locally produced clay, as well as flint, thatch, oak and weatherboarding. The use of

similar materials for alterations, repair and new build can help to maintain and enhance the character of the county's buildings of historic or architectural interest, conservation areas and other visually sensitive areas.

Policy QL8: Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

Listed Buildings will be preserved and their architectural and historic integrity and the character of their settings will be protected and enhanced. Changes of use will be permitted where these will provide the best reasonable means of conserving the character, appearance, fabric, integrity and setting of listed buildings.

The demolition or partial demolition of a listed building will require exceptional justification. Where demolition, partial demolition or alterations would damage part of a listed building, appropriate arrangements for the investigation and recording of its historic fabric may be required.

The Historic Landscape

6.22 The historic landscape includes World Heritage Sites, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields as well as the wider landscape itself (as recognised by Policy E2). Historic landscape features are special because of their contribution to the character of the urban and rural historic environment. The settings and views into, and out of, areas of historic landscape are also important and should be protected.

6.23 The "Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England" is compiled by English Heritage. Its main purpose is to help ensure that the special features and qualities of these assets are safeguarded. There are other parks and gardens, which are of local importance (for example as listed in the Kent Gardens Compendium), and these may also deserve protection.

Policy QL9: Historic Landscape Features

Development will not be permitted which would have a materially adverse impact upon the historic and archaeological importance, landscape character and physical appearance of historic landscapes, parks and gardens.

The settings and views into, and out of, historic landscapes, parks and gardens will be protected and where possible enhanced.

Enabling Development

6.24 In certain cases funds for repairs and restoration of a 'heritage asset', that cannot be generated from any other source, can be provided by permitting 'enabling development'. This ensures the preservation of the asset through cross subsidy. A heritage asset embraces any component of the historic environment, including scheduled monuments

and other archaeological remains, statutorily listed historic buildings and others of more local significance, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens and battlefields and other historic landscape features.

6.25 Proposals for enabling development can only be justified on the basis that the benefit to the community of preserving or enhancing the heritage asset outweighs any harm. The enabling development must preserve that asset, not detract from its archaeological, architectural, historic, landscape or biodiversity interest or harm its setting. Proposals must demonstrate that the development is the minimum necessary to secure the long-term future of the asset, and minimise any adverse effects. Further guidance is contained in English Heritage's Policy Statement on "*Enabling development and the conservation of heritage assets*" (2001).

Policy QL10: Heritage Assets - Enabling Development

Development for the purposes of protecting a heritage asset will be permitted only where this is the sole means of protecting and securing the long term future of the asset. The scale of development shall not exceed that required to achieve this objective and be in a form that minimises dis-benefits.

Community services, sport and open space

6.26 People want to live in safer, more prosperous communities with access to good housing and public transport, improved education, health and leisure facilities and jobs. Such communities are also likely to have lower unemployment and rates of dependency on social security benefits. Through their Community Strategies the local authorities are working in partnership with service providers to improve community services, increase public safety and reduce crime. The Structure Plan can assist these objectives particularly through policies that promote sustainable settlements and regeneration, improve accessibility and meet community needs for development.

6.27 A wide range of services is essential to community well being, notably education, health, social care, sport, youth and community services, recreation and the arts. The existing pattern of development has allowed some areas to become deficient in services or dependant upon the car for access to them. The Structure Plan can contribute to a co-ordinated approach to providing community services by requiring:

- high quality urban design, which itself encourages a sense of community
- land and buildings for community services, especially where new housing is built
- land for recreation and open space

6.28 Full account must be taken of the diversity of local communities and opportunities taken to promote social inclusion and maximise life chances and independence. People with disabilities, older people and the young are less mobile than the majority of the population but need access to a wide range of facilities. The number and proportion of older people in the population as a whole is set to increase but new communities have a high proportion of young people. Gender and ethnic groups also have particular needs. This diversity should be reflected in the type and design of development. In particular, planning policies should ensure that they do not isolate any section of the community from

housing, services, employment, shopping and other support. An important reason for concentrating development in the principal urban areas is that they will be able to sustain a full range of services including good quality public transport.

Providing for community services

6.29 Existing community buildings and open space will be protected from development where there is a continuing need for them, but new facilities may be needed where growth is taking place, to remedy existing deficiencies or to accommodate the investment plans of service providers.

6.30 Planning for community services can be complex. There are few dominant service centres among the small to medium sized towns in Kent, and rural areas rely extensively on the urban areas. Services are provided by both the public and private sectors, and must adapt to changing demands and to new arrangements for service delivery - for example by combining library, adult education and other services into single buildings and the multiple use of buildings as meeting places and local service centres. This can reduce the need to travel, make efficient use of land and premises while improving accessibility to services. Health and social services will require new forms of accommodation that provide supported living, residential and recuperative care. The standard of existing service provision will be important, as will the need to respond to local requirements and innovations in service.

Policy QL11: Existing community services and deficiency

Existing community services* and recreation facilities will be protected as long as there is a demonstrable need for them. Provision will be made for the development of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly where services are deficient. Flexibility in the use of buildings for mixed community uses, and the concentration of sports facilities at schools, will be encouraged.

Note: * community services includes schools and other education provision, social services, adult education, youth and community services, health, culture, recreation and amenity space, sport, local shopping, public utilities, and transport.

6.31 Standards for the provision of land for community services in new residential development, e.g. as set out in the KCC Guide for Developers will be used in assessing proposals where there is insufficient unused capacity in existing community buildings. The precise requirements for a development are likely to be determined in development briefs and through negotiation with developers, but Local Development Documents should safeguard land for community purposes early in the planning process. Community services should be located wherever practicable in multi use facilities at town, district or local centres and not be reliant upon transport by the private car.

6.32 The expansion of Further and Higher Education could support wider regeneration initiatives in Medway, growth at Ashford as well as building on existing strengths in these sectors at Canterbury. Housing growth will often require increased provision for education both on new sites and at existing schools. Other major community needs include enhanced health care facilities in West Kent.

6.33 It is essential that unless exceptional circumstances prevail the costs of providing new community facilities which arise from new housing or other development is borne by the development in question. Policy on meeting such costs of new development is set out in Chapter 9, Implementing and Monitoring the Structure Plan.

Policy QL12: Provision for new community services and infrastructure

- a) Provision will be made to accommodate local community services* within new residential, commercial and mixed use developments, and in response to growth in demand from the community as a whole;
- b) Residential development will not be permitted until the funding for the community services it requires has been identified and agreed;
- c) Provision will be made in Local Development Documents for major new community facilities. Specifically land will be provided for:
 - ◆ expansion of Further and /or Higher education at Canterbury and Medway and Ashford;
 - ◆ primary and secondary schools in areas of major new dwelling provision;
 - ◆ a new general hospital at Tunbridge Wells;

New community services will be located where they are accessible by walking and cycling and by public transport from the area they serve. Whenever practical they will be located in town, district or local centres.

Provision for open space, sport and recreation

6.34 Sport is a vital part of education, can help to develop community spirit, engender good health, enhance community safety, and contribute to regeneration. Kent has a large population and a wide range of sports facilities, although provision for the most specialised and large scale sport and recreation is hampered by the absence of a strong regional centre within the County. There are few facilities of strategic significance in Kent.

6.35 High quality sports venues, which can also be used for entertainment and other purposes, have considerable value in regenerating urban areas. As a potential location for such facilities Kent can benefit from its proximity to London, its international and national transport links and from the areas of major growth within the County notably Thames Gateway and Ashford.

6.36 The provision of new sports facilities must have regard to standards that identify the minimum requirement but must also be based on an assessment of local demand and the quality of existing facilities. In rural areas clustering of facilities should be examined to provide focal points for sport and recreation and to add to the sustainability of key settlements. Kent's '*Strategic Framework for Sport*⁷' identifies deficiencies in the number of single sport and multi sports facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools and recognises the role that dual use and joint provision can play in addressing those needs.

⁷ Kent: The Champion County: The Strategic Framework for Sport in Kent 2003-2008: Kent County Council.

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6.37 This Plan encourages the investment needed in local sports facilities, but also supports provision of more specialised venues and major competition facilities that respond to county wide, regional or national requirements with a particular focus on the regional priority areas of Thames Gateway and Ashford.

Policy QL13: Provision for major sporting venues

The development of high quality venues for sport to serve Kent and wider regional or national requirements will be encouraged. Assessment of the potential for such facilities will give particular emphasis to Thames Gateway and Ashford. Any such provision should be accessible to the County as a whole by a choice of transport and preferably be at a major or principal urban area.

Policy QL14: Formal recreation/sport facilities

All major new formal recreation and sports facilities, including intensively used facilities in rural areas such as golf courses, should be accessible by a choice of transport and designed to avoid nuisance from traffic, noise and lighting.

Local Development Documents will make provision for sport, informal and formal recreation facilities taking account of the potential for dual use and /or joint provision. Where there is a continuing need, existing facilities will be protected and where these are deficient land will be identified for improvements.

The need for new facilities within major new residential and mixed-use developments will be assessed and appropriate provision made.

Where additional facilities are needed in rural areas priority should be given to clustered provision at rural service centres.

6.38 Kent is an important area for water sports and recreation, due to its long coastline and the estuaries of the Thames, Medway and Swale which provide a major area of sheltered sailing close to London. Facilities for mooring landing and launching craft may need to be improved to capitalise on this but congestion and conflict between users should be taken into account. There is continuing potential for inland water recreation through sensitive restoration of mineral workings. Particular considerations apply to water sports because of the sensitive nature of the areas in which they concentrate. Whilst this Plan protects the undeveloped coast opportunities to add to facilities within existing urban areas or where existing port or commercial uses are declining should be examined.

Policy QL15: Water recreation

Development that improves or extends water recreation in Kent will be permitted provided it causes no material harm to species, natural habitats or the wider environment.

6.39 Open space, playing fields and informal recreation areas should be protected from development. As a feature central to the quality of urban living it is also important to both identify and greatly improve the network of open space within urban areas and its connection to the edge of towns and the wider countryside.

Open spaces networks in urban areas:

- add to the quality of development;
- encourage investment by improving the setting of development sites;
- provide a local amenity and opportunities to support wildlife;
- accommodate safe pedestrian and cycle routes - to succeed fully as communication routes they must be continuous, direct and easy to access.

Policy QL16: Green-space networks and rights of way

- a) **In urban areas local authorities will establish and extend green-space networks as corridors for movement by foot and cycle, as havens for wildlife and natural habitats and for leisure, amenity and recreational use. Where practicable green linkages should be encouraged from within settlements to the open countryside;**
- b) **Existing open space and public rights of way will be protected and improved as part of these networks, which, where possible, should extend through major new development sites and connect directly with community facilities, employment areas and transport hubs;**
- c) **In rural areas the rights of way network will be protected and enhanced**

6.40 The major urban areas of Kent Thameside and Medway in Thames Gateway and Thanet, Canterbury and Ashford are bordered by extensive highly valued environmental assets. The establishment of '*regional conservation parks*' would provide for the conservation and enhancement of these high quality countryside assets and improved public access to them. Sustainable management of improved recreational opportunities within these areas would be an essential requirement. The extent and definition of the parks and linkage with adjoining urban areas (including the green space networks within them) require closer examination on a sub regional basis.

Policy QL17: Regional Conservation Parks

The potential for Regional Conservation Parks will be investigated in North Kent (within Kent Thameside and Medway) and within the Stour Valley catchment in East Kent. Where appropriate, they will be defined and safeguarded in Local Development Documents.

Chapter 7: Managing the natural environment and our natural resources

7.1 Kent's natural environment is a prized asset, recognised as superb in places. The earth's resources, such as air, water, and sources of energy, are essential in meeting day to day requirements. Protecting and enhancing the environment, and using resources wisely (especially where they are not renewable) is fundamental to ensuring wellbeing and prosperity of this and future generations. The challenge for the Structure Plan is to do this whilst accommodating essential development needs and tackling the implications for Kent of global climate change.

Key Issues for Kent:

- Protecting the countryside, coast, fauna and flora
- Conserving and enhancing the differing landscapes of Kent
- Understanding and tackling the effects of global climate change
- Moving to renewable forms of energy production
- Reducing pollution and improving air quality
- Ensuring water resources are managed sustainably
- Combating the effects of flooding

Countryside and Coast

7.2. Kent's Countryside and Coast are varied. Their many distinctive features include: the North Kent Marshes; the steep cliffs around Dover and Thanet; the scarp slopes of the North Downs; the intimate woodlands of the High Weald; the vast shingle beaches and open expanses of Romney Marsh; and traditional patterns of streams, fields, hedgerows and orchards.

7.3 Landscapes operate at many levels. From local networks of wildlife habitats, river catchments such as those of the Stour and Medway, through to the way people live, work and enjoy the countryside. Both natural and man made elements such as geology and soils, topography, vegetation cover and enclosure patterns influence the structure of the countryside.

7.4 The Kent Coast and estuaries are an important local and national resource, particularly in terms of nature conservation value, scenic quality and as a recreational resource. However, they are subject to development pressures from a variety of commercial and recreational uses. Opportunities for development within undeveloped stretches of coast are increasingly

The **landscapes of Kent** are important for themselves and also to the quality of life of those who live, work and visit the county. The benefits include:

- Supporting the economy of rural areas, including farming;
- Influencing perceptions of the Kent and encouraging tourism and investment;
- Contributing to people's enjoyment, education, health and well-being;
- Providing an attractive setting for our villages and towns;
- Supporting features which help maintain day-to-day living, for example, the flood defence function provided by coastal habitats;
- Maintaining natural systems such as water catchments which contribute to daily needs;
- Preserving our relationships with past cultures.

limited and these areas should not accommodate development which does not require a coastal location. The coast may be the only suitable location for certain types of proposals e.g. port facilities and related development or sea defence works. In such cases the local planning authorities should assess the impacts of development on coastal or estuarine landscape and conservation. They should also consider defining the extent of undeveloped coast in local development documents pursuant to the objectives of Policy E1.

7.5 Future protection and enhancement needs to reflect the way in which the countryside and coast is valued, take account of the factors which have helped shape them, and respect the functions they serve.

Policy E1: Kent's Countryside and Coast

Kent's countryside and undeveloped coast and estuaries will be protected for their own sake. Development should maintain or enhance the character, structure and function of these areas together with their natural and cultural heritage, and should not harm their scenic, heritage or scientific value. Development which would adversely affect the coast or countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need which outweighs the requirement to protect them.

Landscape Character

7.6 Kent's identity as the Garden of England is well established but its character is being eroded, even in protected landscapes. Changing agricultural practices, new transport infrastructure, and other development have all had an impact.

7.7 Necessary and inevitable change in the countryside should be managed in a way which, as far as possible, strengthens its pattern and diversity rather than eroding character and distinctiveness. Government guidance places increasing emphasis on the conservation of the countryside based on an assessment of landscape character. This approach will help to ensure that Kent's character and distinctiveness are safeguarded, and where possible, enhanced.

The seven main natural character areas of Kent identified by the Countryside Agency and English Nature are shown on this Character Map:

- Greater Thames Estuary
- North Kent Plain
- Kent Downs
- Wealden Greensand
- Low Weald
- High Weald
- Romney Marshes

(Insert map of character areas)

7.8 Each of the main character areas shown on the map has a unique make-up of geology and soils, biodiversity, appearance, settlement and land use patterns, history, locally distinctive architecture, and degree of tranquillity. The main areas are divided further into local character areas which have broad priorities for the conservation, restoration, reinforcement and creation of distinctive landscape features.

7.9 Local Planning Authorities will need to undertake more detailed character assessments for their areas within the period of this Plan. Supplementary Planning Guidance on county wide landscape character assessments will accompany the Structure Plan and assist the preparation of Local Development Documents. Kent County Council's Landscape Strategy

Map, Medway Council's Landscape and Urban Design Framework, and the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, provide guidance and information to assist in the implementation of the policy. The historic dimension of the landscape is also addressed by Policy QL9. The Landscape Strategy Map offers guidance on a Kent wide approach to landscape protection and enhancement, priorities for landscape action and, in circumstances where development is justified how its type, scale and form might respect countryside character.

Policy E2: Landscape Character

The diverse and distinct landscape character, sense of place, heritage and ecology of Kent's countryside will be protected and enhanced. Development will maintain and, where possible enhance, the character of the countryside, taking into account the elements that contribute to its condition and sensitivity to change. Important features and characteristics will be retained.

Where a need for development in the countryside is justified, proposals will reflect the need for conservation, reinforcement, restoration or creation of countryside character and provide for the appropriate management of important features and the wider landscape.

Designated Landscapes

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast

7.10 Kent has two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Kent Downs and the High Weald, and two stretches of Heritage Coast, Kingsdown - Dover and Dover - Folkestone. These are nationally important landscapes with similar status to national parks. The emphasis within them is to conserve their natural beauty whilst having regard to the area's economic and social well being. Any effects of development proposals outside the designated area on the natural beauty of an AONB should be considered.

7.11 Past policy has served these areas well but evidence indicates that their natural beauty and distinctiveness is threatened by a range of activities, many of which are not under planning control. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the preparation of AONB Management Plans. The conservation and enhancement of AONBs will be achieved through measures and action set out in these Plans, alongside policies in the Structure Plan and local plans/development documents.

Policy E3: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast

Protection will be given to the nationally important landscapes of:

- **the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and**
- **Kent's Heritage Coast between Kingsdown and Dover and between Dover and Folkestone.**

The primary objective in these areas will be to protect and enhance landscape character and natural beauty.

Major commercial, mineral or transport infrastructure developments will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- 1) there is a proven national interest;
- 2) there are no alternative sites available or the need cannot be met in any other way; and
- 3) appropriate provision can be made to minimise harm to the environment.

Other development which would be detrimental to the natural beauty, quality and character of the landscape and quiet enjoyment of the area will not be permitted. Development that is essential to meet local social or economic needs should be permitted provided that it is consistent with the purpose of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast.

Special Landscape Areas

7.12 Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) have been designated in previous Structure Plans because of their strategic landscape importance and scenic significance in a county-wide context. Their detailed boundaries have been defined in local plans. Recent county-wide study has revealed that landscape character in some of these areas has declined.

7.13 SLAs are retained in this Plan and should continue to provide a focus for the conservation and restoration of landscape character, but they should no longer extend over the nationally designated AONBs.

Policy E4: Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

Special Landscape Areas are defined as follows and indicated on the Key Diagram. Detailed boundaries of the SLAs will be reviewed and defined in local plans /development documents

**North Downs
Greensand Ridge
High Weald
Eastern Low Weald
Old Romney Shoreline
North Kent Marshes
Sandwich Bay/Pegwell Bay
Dungeness
Blean Woods**

The primary objective in Special Landscape Areas will be the long term protection and enhancement of the quality of the landscape whilst having regard to their economic and social well-being.

7.14 In pursuing the principal aim of protecting and enhancing the landscape character and natural beauty of both AONBs and SLAs, the needs of agriculture, forestry, the rural

economy and communities should be taken into account. Whilst these areas can play an important part in meeting informal recreational needs such development should be consistent with the conservation of natural beauty. New development needed to meet the social and economic requirements of local communities within AONBs and SLAs should be located within or immediately adjacent to existing settlements. Support for diversification of the rural economy applies within these areas (Policy FP7) but should be consistent with AONB and SLA objectives.

Nature Conservation

7.15 Kent contains a wide range of wildlife habitats and their associated species including downland, woodland, meadows, rivers, coastal habitats and wetlands. Pressures on these nature conservation resources remain. For example, wild bird populations, a general indicator for biodiversity, continue to decline in Kent. This is a national trend due to pressures from development and other activities such as agricultural intensification. We need to protect and enhance these important resources, both for their own sake, and for future generations.

7.16 Nature conservation can improve our quality of life. For example, green spaces supporting wildlife interest can be of great importance to local communities. Contact with, and access to, wildlife as part of people's everyday lives contributes greatly to our health and wellbeing.

7.17 Development and other activities can have direct and indirect impacts on areas of nature conservation interest. Impacts can occur at considerable distance from development sites, especially those related to air quality or water resources. The impact of one development may be small but the cumulative impact of several can be significant. Impacts can be avoided and gains achieved by guiding development away from sensitive sites, and through careful design. Opportunities should be taken to undertake specific measures to mitigate or compensate for impacts.

7.18 The Plan provides protection for wildlife and seeks to identify opportunities for enhancement taking account of its international, national or local importance. Supplementary Planning Guidance on Nature Conservation will be prepared elaborating the aims, objectives and targets of the UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plans and how these can be delivered and integrated with development.

Internationally and Nationally Important sites

7.19 These designated sites contain the best examples of our natural heritage. Sites of international importance are designated under the terms of:

- the Ramsar Convention as Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites);
- the European Habitats Directive as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs);
- the European Birds Directive as Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

7.20 Natura 2000 is the network of European sites (SPAs and SACs). Development likely to affect such sites is subject to thorough assessment (Conservation [Natural Habitats &c.] Regulations 1994).

7.21 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) have been notified for their nationally important wildlife or geological features. Some are managed as National Nature Reserves (NNR). There is a duty on public bodies, including local authorities, to further the conservation and enhancement of the special interest of SSSIs. Development proposals must demonstrate that they will not adversely affect these sites.

Policy E5: International and National Wildlife Designations

Development will not be permitted where it would directly, indirectly or cumulatively, materially harm the scientific or nature conservation interests of any of the following categories of sites:

- a European site;
- a proposed European site;
- a Ramsar site;
- a Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- a National Nature Reserve

Sites of Strategic Importance

7.22 The network of local sites is of strategic importance for delivering biodiversity targets as they contain many important habitats such as ancient woodlands and lowland grassland.

7.23 Local Nature Reserves are a statutory designation. Their objectives are to increase the public enjoyment and understanding of nature, as well as nature conservation. County Wildlife Sites (designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust) and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites are of both strategic and local importance for wildlife and the earth's heritage. Many hold a proportion of nationally important habitats and contribute to the maintenance of wildlife diversity.

Policy E6: County and Local Wildlife Designations

Development which would materially harm the scientific or nature conservation interests, either directly, indirectly or cumulatively, of:

- Local Nature Reserves
- County Wildlife Sites identified in Local Development Documents
- Regionally Important Geological /Geomorphological Sites

will not be permitted unless there is a need which outweighs the local nature conservation or geological/ geomorphological interest and adverse impacts can be adequately compensated.

Biodiversity

7.24 The Kent Biodiversity Action Plan underlines the commitment to safeguarding biological diversity in Kent. It considers whole ecosystems, recognising that safeguarding and enhancing the wildlife resource cannot rely only on conserving specific sites. It seeks

to safeguard and enhance priority habitats and species found in the wider countryside as well as identify areas of potential for biodiversity and where net gains can be achieved.

7.25 Habitats often occur as fragments within the landscape, providing wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one habitat to another. Preventing further fragmentation by safeguarding existing habitats and improving linkages between them will help to maintain the current range and diversity of our flora and fauna.

7.26 Future development should seek to maintain existing habitats, reverse fragmentation by identifying areas where the biodiversity potential is greatest, and concentrate restoration and enhancement efforts in areas where there is scope for significant nature conservation gain or where the most valuable and fragile habitats and species occur.

Policy E7: Biodiversity

Important wildlife habitats and species will be protected, maintained and enhanced, especially through long term management and habitat creation schemes, particularly where they have been identified as national and county priorities in the UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plan(s), or where they are protected under wildlife legislation. This will be secured by:

- 1) Ensuring that site evaluation is undertaken to establish the nature conservation value of proposed development sites;**
- 2) Identifying, safeguarding and managing existing and potential land for nature conservation as part of development proposals, particularly where a connected series of sites can be achieved;**
- 3) Local planning authorities identifying locations and proposals for habitat and species management, restoration and creation.**

Development likely to have an adverse effect, directly, indirectly or cumulatively, on important habitats or species will not be permitted unless:

- (a) there is an overriding need for the development that outweighs the nature conservation interest; and**
- (b) loss of an important nature conservation resource can be adequately compensated and lesser impacts mitigated.**

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

7.27 Trees, woodland and hedgerows are important features in the Kent and Medway landscape. Woodland and hedgerows have many benefits. They contribute to landscape character, provide wildlife habitats, contribute to biodiversity, and help to maintain the balance of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Woodland can also have a commercial value. Woodland within built-up areas and around the urban fringe can provide further habitat refuge and enhance damaged landscapes.

7.28 It is strategic policy to increase tree cover in Kent, which is one of the least wooded of the

Insert: Chart of woodland cover in SE
Forestry Commission (2002)
National Inventory of Woodland and
Trees: Regional Report for the South
East.

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counties in the South East (see chart). Hedgerows and woodland have been lost largely through agricultural intensification and development. However, Kent does possess more identified ancient woodland than any other county in the UK - around 10% of the national total. This is a unique resource in terms of biodiversity, heritage and landscape character.

7.29 New development provides an opportunity for planting trees, woodland and hedgerows. This can improve the character of settlements and enhance the appearance of the countryside around it. It can link remnants of ancient woodlands, enhance biodiversity and improve access for recreation. The scope for major new woodlands will be greatest adjoining larger urban areas, particularly where significant new development is planned such as in Kent Thameside, Ashford and in urban fringe locations where it could help to restore damaged land. At other appropriate locations (such as Thanet, or in the former East Kent Coalfield), smaller woodland planting will be encouraged.

7.30 Kent and Medway Councils will continue to carry out tree planting and manage the trees and woodlands on their own land, especially with a view to increasing the cover of broad-leaved woodland, improving the management of small woodlands including the county's significant resource of coppice, marketing woodland products, and fostering community interest in woodlands.

Policy E8: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

Provision should be made for the creation of new woodland, especially indigenous broad-leaved species at appropriate locations in Kent, including provision of new habitats as part of development proposals.

Tree cover and the hedgerow network should be maintained and enhanced where it would improve landscape. Ancient and semi-natural woodland will be protected and, where possible, enhanced.

Community Forests and Woodlands

7.31 Creation of Community Forests around major urban areas give communities access to green space and can be an important tool in the management and enhancement of the urban fringe. Such forests, especially of native species, can enhance the landscape, create recreation opportunities and bolster economic confidence and investment. Care is needed to ensure that existing wildlife habitats and landscape character are protected. The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan encourages consideration of Community Forests in the regional growth areas. Their potential in Thames Gateway (Kent) and Ashford should be examined and where this is confirmed proposals included in Local Development Documents.

Policy E9: Community Forests and Woodlands

The potential for community forests or community woodland sites will be investigated in North Kent and at Ashford and where appropriate, defined and safeguarded in Local Development Documents.

Urban Fringe

7.32 The countryside around our towns can make an important contribution to our quality of life. It connects built-up areas with the wider open countryside allowing people access to green space, woodland and recreational activities. The urban fringe is subject to a wide range of pressures, particularly from new development and other activities, and it often contains damaged land. But there are opportunities to enhance its appearance, accessibility and wildlife value through careful management and planning. Enhancement of the urban fringe is particularly important in areas such as Kent Thameside and Ashford and other places where significant changes to urban form and structure are proposed.

Policy E10: Urban Fringe

Local Planning Authorities will work together and with others to draw up strategies for ensuring effective environmental management and high quality design for urban fringe areas, particularly in Dartford/Gravesham (Kent Thameside), at Ashford and where other large-scale new developments are proposed.

Local Development Documents will provide policies for such areas that ensure:

- The maintenance or enhancement of landscape and urban character;
- The creation of new habitats;
- The safeguarding of land for public access and the provision of recreational networks, including linkage with existing communities/built-up areas;
- Where appropriate, the enhancement of damaged or degraded land.

Rural Lanes

7.33 Kent possesses a rich heritage of ancient lanes which date back to medieval, Saxon and even pre-historic times. As well as their historic value they contribute to nature conservation and to the distinctive character of the countryside. Some are experiencing pressure and need to be protected and enhanced. Local authorities should identify such lanes in Local Development Documents supported as appropriate by surveys and environmental and archaeological advice.

7.34 Measures might include traffic restraint, speed restrictions, limiting road upgrading, planting initiatives and tree preservation orders. Other options include traffic orders, and voluntary routing agreements with adjoining landowners and key industrial, commercial or agricultural users. The Greensand Ridge Quiet Lanes scheme is one of two national demonstration projects which aims to make lanes more attractive for cyclists, horse riders and walkers while maintaining essential access for local residents, essential services and businesses. Other rural transport initiatives and policies can be found in the Transport Chapter of this Plan and in the Local Transport Plan for Kent.

Policy E11: Rural Lanes

Rural lanes which are of landscape, amenity, nature conservation, historic or archaeological importance will be protected from changes and management practices which would damage their character, and where possible will be enhanced.

Climate Change

7.35 There is growing concern about the pace and implications of global climate change. The most significant cause is considered to be carbon dioxide emissions from industrial activities, power generation and traffic movements. Although carbon dioxide are falling nationally, the proportion attributable to road transport has risen accounting for almost a quarter of the total in 2000.

Chart of CO₂ emissions nationally and targets / dates

Recent Earth Summits in Kyoto and Johannesburg have agreed targets which seek to slow down the pace of climate change. These commitments are taken forward in legislation and guidance. The UK aims to move beyond the Kyoto target and by 2010 aims to have reduced CO₂ emissions to 80% of 1990 levels.

Issue: Climate change

Scenarios for the UK produced in 2002 suggest that the average annual temperature could increase by 2 to 3.5°C by 2080. There will be more extreme weather conditions, more storms, and wetter winters with an estimated increase in annual rainfall of between 10- 20% by 2050, and a 20% increase in peak river flows. Summers will be hotter and drier. This will mean lower river flows and less water reaching underground aquifers. It is also expected that there will be an increase in relative sea level of 6mm per year. The practical impacts of these changes will include:

- *Property and heritage* - An increased risk of flooding and run- off which may damage property, including listed buildings and sensitive features.
- *Landscape and habitats* - Possible increased erosion of the coast. Beaches may need to be more regularly maintained to protect settlements and habitats may be lost or become fragmented. Species will change to adapt to changing habitats and weather.
- *Agriculture and forestry* -changes in crops and livestock, greater demand for water, increased risk of pests and storm damage.
- *Recreation and tourism* - Kent may become a more popular holiday destination and there may be increased opportunities for outdoor leisure and water based activities.
- *People and health* - Increased risk of skin cancer and a reduction in air quality.
- *Water resources* – Reduced water quality and availability exacerbated by increased demand.
- *Energy requirements* - less energy will be needed for heating in winter but more energy may be needed for air conditioning in summer.

7.36 Responding to climate change will require concerted action at the national and international level. Kent must play its part and adapt to the changes already underway. This Plan will help to achieve this by:

- Ensuring development decisions take account of climate change;

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- Supporting more sustainable solutions to protection against flooding and coastal erosion;
- Promoting water efficiency and effective water supply ;
- Improving air quality;
- Reducing energy demand and promoting renewable energy;

Energy

7.37 Energy is essential to power industry and transport and to run our homes. Lifestyles are energy intensive and while most people can afford this, some cannot. Fuel poverty affects the quality of people's lives and their health. There is a fine balance to be struck between ensuring that energy is affordable and ensuring that it is used wisely. It must also be provided in a way which does least harm to the environment.

Promoting alternatives to fossil fuels

7.38 Fossil fuels are currently the prime source of fuel for energy production although nuclear energy makes a significant contribution. Petrol is the main fuel for transportation and natural gas accounts for a significant proportion of the domestic heating market. Dependence on fossil-based fuels raises a number of concerns:

- They are not renewable and reserves will eventually become exhausted. They need to be used wisely and plans made for their replacement;
- Fossil fuel plants make a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions that in turn contribute to climate change.

7.39 Fossil fuel use can be reduced and greenhouse gas emissions lessened by promoting the generation of energy from alternative, renewable sources.

- *The `Renewable Obligation` targets for England and Wales propose that 10 % of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2010. The Government now proposes doubling this target to reach 20% by 2020.*
- *The "Energy Review"⁸ also proposes a target of 10,000 MW from combined heat and power by 2010.*

Power production in Kent:

Energy generation in Kent is important for supply both locally and further afield. Some two thirds of the power generated in the county is exported via the National Grid to other areas. This partly reflects Kent's proximity to London with its significant energy requirements. Energy production in Kent is currently dominated by a number of fossil-fuel based power stations along with nuclear production at Dungeness. Some power plants have recently ceased or suspended production including Richborough and Littlebrook. Dungeness A nuclear fuel plant is also planned for decommissioning.

⁸ Performance and Innovation Unit: The Energy Review. February 2002

- *Draft Regional Strategy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (2002)*⁹ suggests a target of 6% for electricity generation within the South East from renewable sources by 2016 (unlike the national targets this excludes energy derived from waste).

Renewable Energy

7.40 Renewable energy involves harnessing energy from sources that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment. Unlike fossil fuel based energy it is emission free. Sources include energy from heat (including solar and geothermal), water (including tidal, waterfalls and wave action) and wind. The technology that harnesses these energy flows is continuing to develop and their potential implementation in Kent is discussed in the box alongside. What is not economically viable now may well improve in the future, allowing increased exploitation. Regulatory and fiscal measures aimed at creating more favourable conditions for the development of renewables have an important part to play. The Climate Change Levy is charged on non-domestic energy derived from non-renewable sources and there is a variety of capital grant schemes to assist the development of schemes and technologies.

Potential renewable energy production in Kent

7.41 The draft SEERA strategy includes an assessment of potential deployment of all sources of renewable energy in Kent, with a total of 155 MW capacity by 2010 and 308 MW by 2016. There is a strong emphasis on wind energy, particularly offshore.

Tables to be converted to graphs

Kent – Potential Renewable Energy Production by 2010(MW)

Biomass	Offshore wind	Onshore wind	Bio and sewage gas	Solar	Small scale hydro	Tidal and wave	Total
Installed Capacity (MW)							
Up to 25	100	24.5	1.5	3.2	0.3	0	155

Kent – Potential Renewable Energy Production by 2016(MW)

Biomass	Offshore wind	Onshore wind	Bio and sewage gas	Solar	Small scale hydro	Tidal and wave	Total
Installed Capacity (MW)							
Up to 30	200	40	2.5	5.6	0.3	30	308

Source: SEERA: A Draft Strategy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in the South East: October 2002

⁹ SEERA: Harnessing the Elements: A Strategy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy: Consultation Draft: October 2002.

7.42 There are economic benefits in moving to renewable energy generation. The development of new technologies presents opportunities in manufacturing, installation/construction, servicing and operation. Use of natural resources to provide a fuel supply e.g. coppiced woodland and other energy crops can provide new employment and assist rural development and agricultural diversification.

Other energy sources

Energy from Waste

7.43 Energy can be produced from industrial, agricultural and domestic waste. Landfill (methane) gas can also be used to produce electricity rather than being released into the atmosphere. This is not a renewable fuel as waste is not naturally occurring and will decrease over time but it is an efficient use of waste as a resource.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

7.44 Combined heat and power (CHP) plants and associated district heating systems use excess heat from electricity generation or industry to heat or cool buildings in the local area. It is a highly fuel efficient means of producing heat. CHP can be very effective if associated with new development but should be planned into development from an early stage. It may be particularly relevant where large scale and concentrated new development is planned in areas such as the Thames Gateway and Ashford.

Encouraging Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Facilities

7.45 Power production, whether from renewable or non-renewable sources, has an environmental impact. It can give rise to traffic generation, visual impacts, smells and noise. Offshore facilities may impact on shipping lanes and radar usage and will still require some onshore grid connection facilities. Some methods of production such as wind farms and barrages can only be sited where appropriate conditions exist and there may be tensions with other strategic interests, such as visually important landscapes and ecology. A balance has to be struck between the benefits of promoting certain types of production and its local impacts. There may be scope to mitigate impacts either by carefully siting structures or providing screen planting. It may be possible to compensate for wildlife impacts by providing offsite mitigation. Where appropriate, proposals for energy production should be supported by Environmental and Health Impact Assessments.

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The potential for renewable energy generation in Kent

Solar Energy

South East of England enjoys the highest number of sunshine hours in the UK. Solar energy can be harnessed through panels attached to buildings, which convert light to energy (photovoltaic cells). Any surplus can be exported to the local network. Stand alone systems can be used for powering communications equipment in remote locations, or for powering parking meters and street lighting and signage.

Geothermal Energy

South East England, like the rest of northwestern Europe, is not an active geothermal area and it is therefore unlikely to be suitable for strategic scale power generation. However, smaller scale applications are possible which can be used for ground heating systems.

Wind Energy

Wind levels in Kent and Medway, particularly around the coast are relatively high. The massed use of wind turbines, particularly offshore, provides the most viable option to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Every 1 MW of power generated by a wind turbine is sufficient to provide power for some 600 homes year. Due to the inconsistent nature of wind this is lower than, say, 1MW of power generated by a biomass plant which could provide power for 1000 homes. Much of the Kent coastal plain along with the North Downs have wind energy potential.¹ Walland Marsh, Dungeness and Romney Marsh in particular have annual mean wind speeds of 6.5 to 7.5 metres per second, which may be conducive to commercial wind energy production. However parts of these areas include nationally or strategically important landscapes (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Areas) and/or nationally or internationally important areas for wildlife. Prospective semi-offshore locations include harbour walls and jetties - there are a number around Kent that are potentially suitable including Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate. Onshore potential may lie not only in larger schemes but in small scale opportunities involving single or small clusters of turbines. The potential for offshore wind generation around Kent's very extensive coastline is recognised as probably more substantial and with scope for lesser visual impact.

Hydro Energy (Wave and Tidal)

Wave energy around Kent is not as significant as other parts of the UK, but it could still make a contribution to energy requirements. The tidal range can be harnessed by tidal barrages. There are a number of places which may have suitable tides, including the Goodwin Sands, Deal and from Dover to South Foreland. The viability of tidal barrages can be enhanced if combined with other facilities such as flood prevention and wind power.

Hydro Energy (Streams and Rivers)

Kent's geography means that it is not suitable for large-scale hydroelectric power generation. However, there may be potential for smaller scale systems including mobile water turbines situated in streams and rivers, possibly providing power for agriculture and fixed turbines at sluices and weirs. Larger scale systems could, provide a power source for development close to faster moving streams and rivers. Prospective locations have been identified in Kent on the River Medway and on the Stour¹.

Bio fuels

Using coppice and similar woodlands for power generation can help to reduce carbon emissions in the short term. The carbon produced in combustion is absorbed by the woodland growth. Other bio fuel sources include energy crops, crop residues, wood residues, animal manure, and other organic agricultural and putrescible wastes. Biomass plants have been identified as one of the renewable energy sources with the greatest potential in the region.¹ Their potential role in helping to support agricultural diversification and rural employment is a significant consideration.

7.46 The aim of the Structure Plan is to:

- *Enable a continuity of energy supply ;*
- *Bring about a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our reliance on fossil fuel and promoting renewable energy through positive development planning policies;*
- *Ensure that the type, location and design of energy production and transportation minimises detrimental environmental and health impacts;*
- *Encourage the harnessing of local energy sources to supply and assist the development of more sustainable communities;*
- *Foster patterns of development and design which are sustainable and reduce the need for energy (Policy SP1 and Chapter 6) ;*
- *Promote clean production and decommissioning methods;*

7.47 Under the Electricity Act 1989 the Department of Trade and Industry grants planning permission for new power generation proposals with a generating capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW). Local authorities are consulted on these applications. District planning authorities determine energy proposals of less than 50 megawatts. Local Development Documents will play an important role by identifying suitable sites, establishing detailed assessment criteria for proposals for sustainable energy production and promoting guidance, pursuant to Policy SP1 of this Plan, on the location, form, design and mix of development that will minimise energy demands.

Policy E12: Energy Generation

Proposals for energy generation will be assessed by the local planning authorities in terms of:

- **Their impact on landscape and nature conservation, health, built environment, air quality, atmosphere (including the level of emissions) and water resource interests; and**
- **The effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures; and**
- **The proximity of proposals to the energy source and their contribution to meeting the energy needs of local communities; and**
- **The prospective life of energy plants and, where appropriate, the site restoration measures proposed.**

Policy E13: Renewable Energy Production

Development necessary for the production of energy from renewable sources will be supported where there would be no overriding conflict with environmental interests. Prospective sites for renewable energy facilities and production, including consideration of provision integrated with new development, will be identified in Local Development Documents.

Examination of site potential for wind energy facilities should include the following areas of search:

- **Walland Marsh, Romney Marsh and the Kent coastal plain;**
- **Port and harbour areas**

Policy E14: Combined Heat and Power Generation

Proposals for combined heat and power generation and district heating systems will be supported particularly where they are based on the harnessing of renewable energy sources and can be integrated with new development. Local Development Documents should assess, and where viable, provide for such schemes in the planning of major development proposals.

A Clean Environment

Sources of Pollution

7.48 Pollution adversely affects our environment and our quality of life:

- *Water pollution affects the quality of water resources and can impact on wildlife;*
- *Ground and soil pollution can affect agriculture and blight development opportunities;*
- *Air pollution causes acid rain, which can affect buildings and trees. Poor air quality may contribute to asthma and bronchial conditions;*
- *Noise pollution, such as from airports, can cause a serious nuisance to local residents;*
- *Light pollution from development projects can be visually intrusive*

7.49 Industrial developments, major road schemes, waste treatment and disposal facilities, sewerage treatment and energy generation, can be potentially polluting developments but may be needed to sustain economic development or to support day to day living. Whether the pollution caused will give rise to specific problems will depend on a number of factors including:

- Scale of development
- Prevailing background levels of pollutants
- Cumulative impacts of developments
- Type and level of pollution
- Sensitivity of nearby land uses

7.50 A number of agencies are responsible for controlling and preventing pollution. Environmental health legislation governs noise pollution at local level; pollution arising from industry or waste disposal is a matter for the Environment Agency. Development plans should not duplicate controls which are the responsibility of other bodies but can reduce the impact of pollution by influencing the location and design of new development and encouraging better practice. The Structure Plan can contribute by:

- *promoting "clean production methods";*
- *ensuring that all development is designed to minimise the risk of pollution;*
- *promoting a pattern and mix of development that reduces the need to travel and promoting less polluting means of travel;*

- *ensuring that existing and potential sources of pollution are adequately taken into account in development decisions;*
- *ensuring that sensitive development does not take place in areas exposed to significant levels of pollution and that existing sensitive uses or areas are protected ;*
- *ensuring that potentially polluting developments are located where they will have least adverse impact on local communities and the environment*

Air Quality

7.51 Since 1993 the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership has been monitoring and modelling air quality. AQMAs in Kent are primarily related to residential property located near to the major traffic routes but some are also related to port and industrial activity. As at 2002 seven local authorities in Kent have declared AQMAs and the locations include parts of the M2, M20, M25, A2 and A25 corridors.

National Priorities for Air Quality:

- *The National Air Quality Strategy (March 1997) aims to meet a series of Air Quality Objectives for eight priority pollutants¹ by 2003-2005. It establishes a range of measures to support these objectives, including stricter vehicular emission limits and discouraging the use of high sulphur fossil fuels.*
- *The Environment Act 1995 places a statutory duty upon local authorities to review and assess air quality and to identify where additional measures may be required. If there is the potential for one or more of the national air quality objectives to be exceeded the local authority is required to designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). An AQAP can include planning and traffic management measures, such as additional pedestrianised areas within a town centre, encouraging public transport and reducing public parking.*

7.52 It may not be appropriate to prevent any development in an AQMA as this could sterilise economic growth and inhibit social improvements. The impact of proposed development is the key consideration and the action that could be taken to mitigate that impact. To allow assessment to be made proposals should be supported by sufficient information such as monitoring and modelling data and proposed mitigation measures.

Policy E15: Pollution Impacts

The quality of Kent's environment, including the visual, air, noise, ecological, geological, historic and water environments, will be conserved and enhanced.

Development should be planned and designed to avoid, or adequately mitigate, pollution impacts. Proposals likely to have adverse implications for pollution should be the subject of a pollution impact assessment.

In assessing proposals local authorities will take into account:

- a) Impact on prevailing background pollution levels; and**
- b) The cumulative impacts of proposals on pollution levels; and**
- c) The ability to mitigate adverse pollution impacts; and**
- d) The extent and potential extremes of any impacts on air quality, water resources, biodiversity and human health.**

Development which would result in, or significantly contribute to, unacceptable levels of pollution, will not be permitted.

Policy E16: Development Sensitive to Pollution

Development which would be sensitive to adverse levels of noise, air, light and other pollution, will not be supported where such conditions exist, or are in prospect, and where mitigation measures would not afford satisfactory protection.

Policy E17: Air Quality Management Areas

The local authorities will seek to ensure that air quality in designated Air Quality Management Areas is improved. The scale and character of development in, or adjoining such areas, should not adversely affect this improvement.

Water Resource Management

7.53 Water supply and wastewater disposal are essential for domestic, commercial and industrial uses. The natural environment needs water to support wildlife. Rivers need sufficient water flows to dilute discharges. Protecting water quality of rivers, groundwater and around the coast is essential to health and to protect fauna and flora.

7.54 Increases in the demand for water and for wastewater treatment are not solely linked to new development. The consumption of water per head of population is increasing. The standard expected of water quality and wastewater treatment has also risen. For example, all wastewater treatment works are now required to have primary and secondary treatment. A substantial proportion also incorporate tertiary treatment. The EU Water Framework Directive promotes a more integrated approach to water management, increased water quality standards and better environmental protection.

7.55 The Structure Plan needs to ensure that the water supply and wastewater disposal needs of existing and future development can be met. It promotes the sustainable use of water resources and high standards of wastewater treatment. This includes balancing additional demand against supply, making best use of existing resources (for example, locating development where water supply is or can be made readily available) and planning for new resources in a way which reduces overall environmental impact.

7.56 Water supply and treatment have been taken into account in deciding on the scale and distribution of development in this plan. The planning and construction of water supply and wastewater treatment facilities have long lead times. The development strategy set out in this Plan will help to inform infrastructure providers on where new or improved facilities are likely to be required. Future investment needs to offer flexibility to respond to changing circumstances, make the most effective use of resources and minimise environmental impacts. Local Development Documents will need to address the detailed requirements for increased water supply and wastewater treatment having regard to environmental impacts. This may include reservoirs, pipelines or treatment works.

Water Demand and Supply Balance

7.57 There is considerable uncertainty in the factors that influence the balance between water supply and demand. These factors include:

- Growth in consumption per head
- Growth in summer peak demand
- The impact of climate change on resource replenishment and water demand
- The impact of the European Water Framework Directive
- The level and pattern of future development

Water supply in Kent

The key sources of water supply in Kent are:

- Abstraction from Bewl reservoir in East Sussex
- Abstraction from underground aquifers
- Transfer of resources from other areas
- Surface water abstraction - mainly from the river Medway

The County is strongly dependent on groundwater for water supplies (about three –quarters of the total).

7.58 The Environment Agency's South East Water Resources Strategy 2001 envisages the transfer of water between supply areas in Kent to meet deficits in the short term. These cross-catchment transfers can provide an important means of reconciling supply surpluses and shortfalls in different parts of the region and provide flexibility within the overall network. Transporting water over long distances, however, can have environmental impacts such as encouraging the movement of alien species.

7.59 As demand increases over the medium to long-term the strategy suggests that new sources of supply will be needed. The extent and timing of these will depend upon the distribution of development and the effectiveness of water demand management and other strategies including leakage control. It is anticipated that between 2010-2015 either Bewl or Darwell reservoirs (both in East Sussex) will need to be enlarged. Water company plans assume this will be Darwell but Bewl may offer a greater yield and more operational flexibility to satisfy demand in Kent. The other reservoir would need to be enlarged by 2015/16.

7.60 Water demand management has a key role to play in the overall supply and demand equation. Even if water were plentiful, treating, supplying and disposing of it, is a costly process. The design of new development can play an important part in reducing the demand for water, for example, by promoting the use of water efficient appliances, rain water collection and grey water recycling.

7.61 If metering and/or related water efficiency measures are not successfully implemented further resource development or supply enhancements are likely to be necessary. This might include a new strategic-scale reservoir in Kent (for example at

Broadoak near Canterbury), transfers of water from South London, effluent reuse or desalination. All options will have environmental impacts and significant costs.

7.62 The demand /supply relationship for individual parts of Kent is summarised on the map alongside:

Map of water supply characteristics in Kent:

Annotate map as follows:

- Medway, Swale and Sheppey have adequate resources;
- Thanet will be dependent on additional transfers from elsewhere (e.g. from Medway);
- Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells will rely on enhancing local groundwater and water transfer from neighbouring areas;
- Canterbury and Maidstone have slight surpluses in the short term but in the medium term new water resources would be required (e.g. between the North Downs and Maidstone and between Medway and Canterbury);
- Ashford will be dependent on additional resources (e.g. transfers from Weald/Canterbury and in the longer term development of new resources). The pace and timing of future growth will be an important influence on this requirement.
- Dartford and Gravesham (Kent Thameside) may need to rely on water transfers from the Thames region which may be affected by increasing demand from London.
- Dover and Folkestone are dependent on aquifers close to their sustainable limits

Water Supply and The Environment

7.63 Much of Kent is over licensed for groundwater abstraction during dry months. This can impact adversely on wildlife. Peak demand causes particular problems, as this is when summer groundwater, rivers and streams are receding. Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS), prepared by the Environment Agency aim to find the appropriate balance between the needs of abstractors, water users and the environment.

Water Quality

Groundwater quality

7.64 Ground water quality can be affected by pollution from nearby developments. Protecting and monitoring water quality within aquifers is important. Construction impacts and providing for long term maintenance of aquifers also need to be considered. The Environment Agency's aquifer protection maps indicate where potentially polluting developments should be avoided. These provide broad guidance. Aquifers outside of the protected zones may also be sensitive. Applications for potentially polluting developments should be supported by appropriate technical information and subject to consultation.

Water Quality in Rivers and Estuaries

7.65 Water quality in rivers and estuaries is influenced by the quality of treated wastewater and pollutants carried in run off and discharges from farms and industry. The Environment Agency undertakes assessments of the chemical and biological quality of water in rivers and estuaries. Kent's river quality can be described as 'good to fair' but there are still significant problems, particularly at times of low flow during the summer months.

Coastal Water Quality

7.66 *Bathing* water quality is important for tourism in Kent. Although about half of the effluent discharged by Kent's sewage works is to the sea, 97-100% of beaches comply with the EC mandatory standards and 30% with EC guidelines. Schemes to improve wastewater treatment and disposal can greatly improve coastal water quality. In many coastal towns there are combined sewerage systems which in times of heavy rainfall can overflow carrying a mixture of rainwater and untreated sewage into surface waters. With more stringent EU requirements for the quality of water discharges at coastal locations, water companies are undertaking a major investment programme to upgrade the treatment processes provided at coastal sites. Coastal sewerage systems have been substantially improved at Dover, Folkestone and Whitstable.

Wastewater Treatment

7.67 Wastewater treatment and disposal includes the provision and maintenance of public sewers and wastewater treatment plants. In some locations there may be a role for sustainable waste disposal systems in order to relieve pressure on main drainage.

7.68 Large volumes of sewage sludge arise from wastewater treatment and will significantly increase with introduction of secondary/tertiary treatment plants. Previously this sludge has been disposed of to land but tighter standards may require alternative disposal strategies. Treating effluent for indirect reuse may be costly but it may have benefits in terms of increasing water supply (e.g. during periods of drought) and reducing the quantity for disposal.

7.69 The Ashford Discharge at Bybrook is operating close to its consented limits. Even in relation to current demand, there is insufficient dilution in the Stour to meet river standard objectives. Continuing and accelerated growth at Ashford will require substantial investment in wastewater treatment capacity in the medium term if water quality is not to be compromised.

Policy E18: Water Quality

Development will not be permitted where it would give rise to an unacceptable impact on the quality or yield of Kent's watercourses, coastal waters and/or ground water resources.

Policy E19: Water supply and wastewater treatment

The development of new or expansion of existing water supply or wastewater facilities will be supported where:

- **there is a demonstrable need to serve existing development and/or development proposed in accordance with the development plan; and**
- **this represents the best environmental option; and**
- **land use and environmental impacts are minimised through appropriate mitigation.**

Land required for expanded or new facilities for water resource management or wastewater treatment will be identified and safeguarded in Local Development Documents. This will include provision for the enlargement of Bewl reservoir and additional wastewater treatment facilities in the Ashford area.

River Corridors

7.70 The County contains the main river valleys of the Darent, Medway, and Stour. Rivers and their adjoining areas are of great importance for water resource and flood risk management, nature conservation, fisheries, recreation and tourism. They often make a significant contribution to the character of the landscape and provide pleasant green corridors in many of Kent's towns. They offer potential for safe and convenient walking and cycling. New development or redevelopment should minimise flood risk and enhance the river and riverside environment, for instance by increasing public access, improving water-related habitats, landscape or water quality, or by securing the restoration of natural river features.

Policy E20: River Corridors

The environment within river corridors, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced. Provision will be made for:

- **increased opportunities for access and water recreation;**
- **delivering environmental benefits through sustainable water resource and flood risk management;**
- **increased public access for walking and cycling; and**
- **links to existing rights of way and cycleway networks.**

Flood Risk

7.71 Flooding, particularly adjacent to rivers and the coast, is a natural process essential in maintaining many ecological systems and to enhance soil fertility. But it can have far reaching effects on people by damaging property, isolating communities and restricting travel. It can affect farming, industry, leisure, housing and transport and can also damage features of cultural and environmental importance. In extreme conditions it can lead to injury and loss of life and places extreme demands on the emergency services. Flooding can also lead to an overloading of sewerage and drainage systems increasing the risk of pollution and nuisance. This Plan seeks to reduce the risk of flooding.

Causes of Flooding

River Flooding - Flooding from rivers occurs following excessive rainfall (or snow melt) where run-off from land and discharges from drainage systems exceeds a river's capacity. Flooding is more likely to occur if the ground is already saturated, if development has taken place creating impermeable areas through which water cannot pass or if channels are obstructed.

Coastal Flooding - Inundation by the sea is largely due to a combination of high tides, storm surges and wave activity. It may also result from structural failure of flood defences. Coastal defences may deteriorate at a faster rate as a result of the increasing severity of storms at sea due to climate change.

'Flash' Flooding - Flooding can take place away from the coast and rivers. Intense rainfall may cause localised flooding where surface flows exceed the capacity of drainage systems. Flooding can also occur where the local geology is unable to absorb water and the land becomes saturated. Roads can transfer floodwater into areas beyond the flood plain. Local topography can also concentrate surface flows and cause flooding.

7.72 Flood plains fulfil an important natural role in absorbing water during times of heavy rainfall. The impact of flood risk can be aggravated by:

- Building on flood plains which reduces flood storage, obstructs flood flow, increases the rate or volume of run off and creates additional risk elsewhere;
- Inadequate maintenance of flood defence systems;
- Inadequate maintenance of watercourses, surface water sewers, culverts and road gullies leading to channel blockage;
- Modifying, culverting and diverting watercourses;
- Agricultural practices such as deforestation and ploughing at right angles rather than parallel to contours;
- Sewerage systems being overloaded by surface water run-off causing pollution

7.73 Large parts of Kent are naturally at risk of river or coastal flooding: see map alongside, which also shows that many developed areas are already protected by flood defences. Whilst defences reduce the risk of flooding they do not remove it completely. Over time the protection they offer will diminish unless they are improved to respond to the impacts of climate change.

Map of Areas at risk of flooding with key flood defences shown

Responses to flooding

7.74 Catchment Flood and Shoreline Management Plans are prepared by the Environment Agency. These will be the key mechanisms for identifying the appropriate response to flood risk in a particular area. They consider including nature conservation as well as property and cost. The plans may include proposals for new or improved

defences or recommend approaches to deal with land use change. The Structure Plan seeks to develop an integrated approach to flood risk management and ensure that these policies are taken forward into Local Development Documents /planning decisions.

Flood risk mapping

7.75 The Environment Agency's flood plain maps show the limits of the flood plain (see Kent-wide map). This is the area, which could be affected by 1 in 100 year river floods and 1 in 200 year tidal floods. The maps represent the best available information on the extent of flood risk at a given point in time. They are however only indicative and are not intended to be the sole basis for decisions. More local issues may also need to be considered such as the effects of culverts or other manmade obstructions. They do not make any allowances for flood defences, as these are not infallible. Applications and potential land allocations for development therefore need to be assessed on a case by case basis.

Identifying Flood risks

Flood risk issues are likely to arise for developments:

- within a river flood plain or washland, or a coastal flood area, identified as Flood Risk Zone 3 in PPG 25 (see below);
- of significant size or importance within Flood Risk Zone 2 as defined in PPG25;
- within, or adjacent to, any watercourse, particularly where there might be potential for flash flooding; including flood banks or other flood control structures;
- situated in an area where the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board or Local Authority have indicated that there may be drainage problems;
- likely to involve the culverting or diverting of any watercourse; or
- of such a size or nature relative to the receiving watercourse/drainage system that there could be a significant increase in rate or volume of surface water run-off from the area.

PPG25 defines flood risk as follows:

Zone 1: Little or no risk

Zone 2: Low to Medium Risk - River 0.1-1.0%, Tidal and Coastal 0.1-0.5%

Zone 3: High Risk - River 1.0% or greater, Tidal and Coastal 0.5 or greater

A risk of 1% means there is a 1% probability of a flood occurring in a year.

Avoiding development in the flood plain

7.76 For all development proposals which raise flooding or run-off issues, whether proposed in a local development document or a planning application, local authorities should undertake appropriate consultation with the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies such as Internal Drainage Boards, Parish Councils, sewerage undertakers and navigation authorities. In accordance with PPG25 local planning authorities are required to apply a risk-based, sequential approach in the preparation of development plans and in development control decisions.

Managing flood risk

Flood Defences

7.77 Coastal flood defences generally comprise large sea walls or management of beach deposits by groynes and recharging shingle. These can have a significant visual impact and can exacerbate the risk of erosion elsewhere. They can also be costly to maintain. In some cases sea walls can have positive environmental benefits, for example, where they protect valuable fresh water grazing marsh. However, they can also prevent the natural shift of coastal habitats. 'Softer' solutions include defences being set back from the sea front to allow habitats to shift. Defences against river flooding may include building up riverbanks and providing storage reservoirs and sluices. Softer engineering solutions may include channel widening, creating meadows, swales and wastelands into which river flows can be diverted. These measures can also help to create new wildlife habitats.

Drainage Systems

7.78 In order to reduce the risk of flooding from surface run-off it is important that all developments are adequately drained and, in particular, can cope with intense storms. Culverting of open streams should be avoided as this can contribute to flood risks. Sustainable Drainage Systems, (SUDs), which allow water to percolate into the ground, can help to recharge groundwater, reduce run-off and reduce the need for flood improvements elsewhere. They may include water attenuation ponds which can have wildlife benefits, infiltration basins, porous surfaces and soakaways. These systems may have long term maintenance implications that need to be addressed at the outset.

Mitigation by design

7.79 Where it is essential for development to take place in areas at risk of flooding it is important to minimise the impact of that risk. This can be done through detailed design such as raising ground levels or building on stilts. Planning conditions can also help to reduce the impact of flooding by controlling occupation, removing Permitted Development rights or ensuring prospective occupiers are given information about flood risk.

Policy E21: Development and Flood Risk

Development will be planned to avoid the risk of flooding and will not be permitted:

- i) if it would be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding or where it would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere or require the construction of new defences;**
- ii) Where it would prejudice the capacity and integrity of flood plains or planned flood protection or coastal defence measures;**

iii) Where it will hinder the implementation of future flood protection or coastal defence measures;

iv) if it would adversely affect the ability of the land to drain.

Where development is necessary in areas at risk of flooding it should be designed and controlled to mitigate the impact of flood risk.

Local Development Documents will include policies to:

(i) ensure that a risk based sequential approach, reflecting degrees of flood risk, is adopted in guiding specified categories of development away from flood risk areas;

(ii) secure the provision and maintenance of appropriate drainage systems in new developments to alleviate flood risk;

(iii) ensure that proposals for development are accompanied by flood risk assessments appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risk.

Policy E22: Flood Protection

The development of new or replacement flood protection or coastal defence measures that are in accordance with a Catchment Management Plan, Shoreline Management Plans or Coastal Defence Strategies will be supported. Where these are required to service a development their provision and maintenance should be funded as part of that development.

Chapter 8: Quality and Accessibility in the Transport Network

8.1 Transport has an important influence on the quality of life and the economic prosperity of Kent and Medway. Opportunities for work, education, shopping, social and leisure need to be accessible and goods need to be moved efficiently. However, transport, particularly road traffic, can have adverse impacts, including hazard, noise and air pollution. Many of Kent's towns and rural lanes are dominated by congestion and heavy traffic flows, which detract from their character.

8.2 Peoples' travel behaviour has changed over time and will continue to change. People are travelling greater distances to meet their daily needs and the convenience of the car has contributed to this. Continuing to rely too greatly car travel is unsustainable as it will exacerbate congestion, adversely impact on the environment and will ignore the problems faced by those without access to car. If people are to be persuaded to change their travel behaviour, they need to be offered a choice of alternatives tailored to their needs. Improving accessibility must not make existing transport problems worse.

8.3 Kent has a number of distinctive characteristics which influence travel patterns. These include the high volume of international traffic passing through the County, large numbers of commuters to London by road and rail and the pattern of medium sized towns and rural villages with no dominant urban area. They all mean that there is significant movement between and within the principal urban areas and the countryside. While parts of Kent and Medway are generally well served by the rail, motorway and trunk road networks, other parts are more remote.

Key Transport issues for Kent include:

- *economic and social problems associated with congestion and journey reliability*
- *Kent's dispersed settlement pattern*
- *the environmental, social and health impacts of heavy traffic*
- *ensuring more remote areas have access to public transport;*
- *limited facilities for cyclists and walkers*
- *reducing dependence on the car especially for journeys to, and within, urban areas*
- *The impact and opportunities created by new development*
- *Maintaining the existing road network*

Map of existing transport infrastructure in Kent

8.4 The Regional Transport Strategy (RTS)

- promotes investment in alternative modes to the car.
- identifies a number of regional hubs where there is the potential to build upon existing transport networks to achieve a higher level of accessibility by non-car modes.
- hubs will include high quality interchange facilities, improved public transport and better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- the hubs identified in Kent and Medway are Ebbsfleet, Rochester, Maidstone and Ashford.

- Canterbury and Tonbridge are also identified as important transport interchanges

The Strategy for Transport:

- facilitate national, regional and local inter-urban movements whilst minimising harm to the environment
- promote a pattern and form of development that reduces the need to travel
- promote accessibility for all sectors of the community
- address local and global environmental concerns
- support economic performance
- address the broad transport needs of individual areas and the interrelationship between them
- ensure that new housing, employment and other development is served by a choice of means of transport including public transport, walking and cycling routes.
- maintain and make efficient use of the existing transport network
- provide travel choice and alternatives to the private car, including public transport, walking and cycling;
- promote travel plans for large developments
- introduce and support measures to influence and manage demand
- reduce the impact of travel on communities and the wider environment;
- reduce the increase in congestion and improve journey reliability
- improve air quality, safety and personal security and reduce social exclusion
- secure improvements to the transport network

Strategic Transport Improvements

8.5 To meet future transport requirements there will need to be a targeted programme of major improvements to Kent's transport infrastructure and public transport services. Some road building will continue to be needed to ensure adequate capacity to accommodate through traffic and inter urban movements. The priority for transport improvements will be judged in accordance with the overall strategy of this Plan and with the assessment criteria in Policy TP1. These criteria will be used to inform future reviews of the Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway and responses to schemes promoted by the Department of Transport or the Strategic Rail Authority.

Policy TP1 : Assessment Criteria for Transport Proposals

All proposals for enhancing the transport network in Kent and Medway will be assessed according to the balance between social, transport, economic and environmental impacts with specific regard to: -

- the relationship to the overall strategy of this Plan;
- the contribution towards achieving a more sustainable pattern of development;
- the likely impact on areas of special environmental quality;
- the likely effects on air quality;
- the economic and operational benefits likely to be achieved relative to the cost of the proposal;
- the contribution to the movement of passengers and freight by rail;
- the need to concentrate traffic on the most suitable routes;
- the impact on road casualty reductions;
- the need to maintain or improve town centre accessibility by sustainable means;
- the need to accommodate improvements for bus services, pedestrians and cyclists; and
- the ability to enhance the environment for local communities.

Major Local Transport Plan Schemes

8.6 The schemes listed in Policy TP2/Table TP2 cover the rail, motorway and trunk road networks and local highway network schemes in the 2001-6 Kent and Medway Local Transport Plans or in government programmes. These schemes will improve the operation of Kent's strategic transport network and support economic development. The Local Authorities will use their influence to secure the early completion of these schemes.

Policy TP2: Safeguarding of Programmed Strategic Transport Schemes

The programmed major transport schemes listed in Table TP2 will be promoted and land required for their construction safeguarded.

Rail Investment

8.7 The principal change to the rail network in Kent and Medway will be the completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) identified in Table TP2. While this will bring much needed additional capacity the full benefits of the CTRL can only be realised when the issues of the use of CTRL by domestic passenger services and freight are resolved and the availability of modern rolling stock and power supply and track improvements to the existing network are secured.

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

8.8 Major development of the rail network, beyond that already programmed, is required to encourage the use of the rail travel and reduce pressure on the road network. It will also avoid the financial and environmental costs of more extensive expansion of the road network. A number of schemes are identified in table TP3. Some of these schemes are outside the administrative boundaries of Kent and Medway but they are crucial to making the best use of the rail network in Kent. A major constraint to travel between Kent and the rest of Europe with the rest of the UK is the blocking effect of London on rail traffic. This particularly affects long distance rail freight. Rail services are primarily focussed upon commuting, often at the expense of orbital services that would avoid the need to travel into, and out of, the capital.

Policy TP3 : Support for Strategic Rail Schemes

Kent County Council & Medway Council will press Government and the Strategic Rail Authority to implement the rail schemes listed in Table TP3 within the Plan period.

Motorway and Trunk Road Investment

8.9 There is a need to tackle existing and potential points of congestion on the motorway and trunk road network, which are not currently addressed within the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements. Multi modal studies will be key to considering the appropriate package of measures for relevant parts of the network. Table TP 3 identifies potential locations.

Policy TP4: Motorway and Trunk Road Network:

Kent County Council and Medway Council will press Government and the Highways Agency to identify and implement multi-modal solutions to the existing and predicted congestion problems on the sections of the Motorway & Trunk Road network listed in Table TP4.

Local Authority Major Transport Schemes

8.10 There are a number of major transport schemes not currently in Local Transport Plans, which may need to be implemented in order to improve inter-urban transport movements, provide local environmental benefits or enable allocated development sites to be brought forward. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient finance to implement all these schemes. Whether these schemes will be taken forward will depend on detailed feasibility studies, justification and environmental impacts and potential contributions from developments. They will need to be prioritised in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy TP1. The schemes are listed in Table TP5.

Policy TP5: Future Strategic Transport Schemes

The Local Planning Authorities will safeguard land for the major transport schemes listed in Table TP5, which may be promoted through the respective Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway. These schemes will be subject to multi-modal scheme appraisal and will also be subject to Policy TP1.

Table TP2 : Programmed Strategic Transport Schemes	
Rail ⁽¹⁾	Channel Tunnel Rail Link (under construction) Crossrail Thameslink 2000 Strood Tunnel North Kent Resignalling Scheme
Motorway & Trunk Roads ⁽²⁾	A2/A282 Dartford Interchange Improvement A2 Bean – Cobham A21 Lamberhurst Bypass A249 Iwade to Queenborough including Second Swale Crossing
Local Transport Plan Schemes ⁽³⁾	A256 East Kent Access – Phase 1 (Sandwich – Ebbsfleet Lane)⁽⁴⁾ Fastrack – Phase 1 (Dartford town centre – Darenth Park-Bluewater-Greenhithe – A226 – Gravesend town centre)⁽⁴⁾ A228 Main Road – Ropers Lane ⁽⁴⁾ A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass Improvement⁽⁴⁾
Notes :	1. Schemes listed based on Transport 2010 2. Schemes are included in the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvement. 3. Schemes are included in the respective Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway (2000/01 – 2005/6) 4. Schemes provisionally accepted by Government.

Table TP3 : Strategic Rail Schemes	
<i>Schemes identified in Multi-Modal Studies</i>	
Increased rail capacity/capability around/through London South Coast Corridor rail capacity improvements (including Ashford- Hastings) Lower Thames Rail Crossing	
<i>Scheme Included in the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy</i>	
Woolwich Rail Crossing (Docklands Light Railway Connection)	
<i>Other Schemes</i>	
Domestic passenger services via the CTRL from/to Ashford and East and North Kent towns	
Thameslink 2000 : Extension to Gravesend and Maidstone	
Crossrail : Extension to Ebbsfleet and Medway	
Ashford – Thanet journey time improvements on existing line	
North Kent Line (Dartford – Gillingham) rail capacity improvements	
Medway Valley Line – improved junctions at Strood and Paddock Wood	
Rail Access to Manston Airport ⁽¹⁾	
Dover Western Docks rail freight link ⁽¹⁾	
Sheerness Docks rail freight capability improvements ⁽¹⁾	
Thamesport – London rail freight capability improvements ⁽¹⁾	
Notes :	1. Scheme funded in whole or part by development.

Table TP 4 : Existing or Predicted Problems on the Motorway & Trunk Road Network Requiring Multi-Modal Solutions	
Schemes included in the draft Regional Transport Strategy	M20 Junction 10 Improvement A21 Tonbridge Bypass – Pembury Bypass Improvement A2 Lydden – Dover Lower Thames River Crossings (road & rail)
Schemes identified in Orbit Multi-Modal Study	M25 Junctions 1b – 3 M25 Junction 5 – 7
Roads Subject to Existing Congestion ⁽¹⁾	M20 Junction 4 and sections between Junctions 3 – 5 A2 Bean Junction M20 Wrotham Hill A20 Townwall Street, Dover
Roads Subject to Heavy Stress Levels in 2010 ⁽¹⁾	M20 Junctions 7 – 8 M25 Junctions 3-5 A21 Kippings Cross – Lamberhurst A21 Lamberhurst – Flimwell
Additional roads potentially under pressure in growth areas of Thames Gateway and Ashford	A2 (M25 – M2) M20 Junction 9 and section between Junctions 9 and 10
Other Necessary Schemes	M25/M26 Additional Slip Roads M2/A2/A299 Brenley Corner A2 Canterbury Bypass Junction improvements
Notes :	1. Stress levels identified or forecast by Highways Agency.

Table TP5 : Other Strategic Transport Schemes to be Promoted Through Future Local Transport Plans	
<u>Funded partially or fully by development</u>	
Kent Thameside: Fastrack Future Phases (North Dartford, Stone, Eastern Quarry)	
Medway Waterfront Rapid Transit System (Rochester-Strood-City Estate-Chatham Maritime-Dockyard- Chatham-Rochester)	
Ashford : Orbital and radial bus priority schemes	
Ashford :A28 Chart Road Dualling and A28 – A2070 Link	
Sittingbourne Northern Distributor Road	
A260 Hawkinge Bypass	
A227 (A25) Borough Green Bypass	
A228 East Bank of the Medway	
A 228 Snodland Bypass Dualling	
<i>Other Schemes</i>	
East Kent Access Phase 2	

A228 Ropers Lane – Grain
A228 Colts Hill Strategic Link
A228/A26 Kings Hill – Seven Mile Lane
B2163 (A274) Leeds & Langley Bypass
A229 Maidstone : Upper Stone Street Improvements and All Saints Link Road
A26 : Tonbridge : London Road – Hadlow Road Link
Improved Links between Hempstead and Walderslade

Widening Choice

8.11 Providing solely for the private car is no longer a sustainable long-term strategy, particularly in urban areas. The use of buses, rail, cycling and walking, needs to be encouraged in the interests of the environment and to offer greater accessibility for those who do not have access to a car or who choose not to use one.

Public Transport

8.12 Those without access to a car are dependent on public transport to access those services which are not available locally. In urban areas where journeys may be relatively short, good quality public transport can provide a viable alternative to the private car for many trips. In rural areas, however, public transport may be less viable due to a more dispersed population.

8.13 Buses provide the principal means of public transport across Kent and Medway, having the ability to provide a wider level of access. Many bus services are operated commercially without the need for public funds but some services need to be supported particularly in rural areas, at evenings, on Sundays or to establish new routes. The ability of bus routes to serve larger developments will be crucial if their usage is to be supported. Where development is on a smaller scale, its accessibility to the public transport network will be equally as important.

8.14 There are over 100 rail stations in Kent and Medway. Many of them are well used, but some particularly in rural areas are not. Some rail routes are relatively slow while others are congested. There is scope to make better use of the rail network, for example by improving rail services, rolling stock, stations, access car parks and other facilities. Improved signalling and maintenance will also provide a more reliable and safer service. Physical and cost limitations mean that it is not possible to provide rail access to all parts of the County, but Kent and Medway Councils will continue to work together with the rail industry to make improvements wherever possible.

8.15 Public transport networks will need enhancing to respond to new patterns of development and to influence changes in travel behaviour. The potential for new bus interchanges or services should be considered where a development is likely to generate sufficient demand. The provision of new railway stations and services should be considered where this would provide greater opportunities for the use of public transport or improve integration with other transport modes. This may be coupled with the closure of existing stations where they no longer meet a justified need, or by remaining open would have a detrimental impact on rail journey times.

Policy TP6: Supporting Public Transport

The provision and use of public transport will be supported by:

- Better interchange between public transport and other transport modes, including better car parking;
- Better integration between bus and rail services, including through ticketing;
- The provision of improved and integrated public transport information;
- Improved facilities for passengers, especially access for the mobility impaired;
- Continued support for non-commercial but socially necessary bus services;
- Greater use of bus priority measures;
- Encouraging the improvement of the rail network and services using Government funding streams and developer contributions;
- The development of quality partnerships, such as those already in Maidstone & Thanet, in other areas such as Canterbury.

Table TP6

The following specific schemes to improve public transport services are planned:

- Improvements to Dartford Station and refurbishment of Greenhithe Station including public transport interchange
- Redevelopment of Maidstone East station and interchange improvements⁽¹⁾
- Reconstruction of Strood station and interchange improvements⁽¹⁾
- Enhanced bus/rail interchange at Ramsgate, Gillingham, Tonbridge Gravesend and Minster stations
- A20 corridor : Medway Gap: bus priority measures
- Improved rail interchange facilities on the Tonbridge – Ashford line and on the Ashford – Hastings line
- Manston Parkway Station
- Rail service and infrastructure improvements on the Medway Valley Line
- Enhanced daytime rail service between Minster, Sandwich, Deal and Dover
- Enhanced rail services on the Sheerness branch line
- Enhanced pedestrian facilities for Maidstone and Chatham station
- Enhanced access arrangements to Rochester station⁽¹⁾
- Disabled access improvements at Tunbridge Wells Station
- Continuing bids to the Government for funding bus services
- Web CCTV to enhance security at rural stations

(1) Scheme to be funded wholly or partially by development

Park & Ride

8.16 Park & Ride facilities can contribute towards reducing congestion in town centres and in other locations. Facilities can be appropriate on the edge of towns, either adjacent to a rail network or on the primary and secondary road network. However, it is important that Park & Ride facilities are located to intercept existing or potential car journeys and should avoid generating additional car trips. Park & Ride should be provided as part of an overall transport strategy for an area. This is particularly important when serving town centres, where the relationship between parking fees and fares will strongly influence the use of Park & Ride. For bus based schemes, bus priority measures may need to be provided to ensure that the benefits of bus travel are maximised. Park & Ride facilities can fulfil a number of different functions. For example as: -

- a collection/delivery point for goods purchased by shoppers in town centres.
- an interchange for school transport.
- an interchange for rural bus services.
- a service for workers in a town centre

8.17 Rail based Park & Ride facilities, in the form of 'parkway' stations, may also be considered in connection with longer distance rail journeys. For rail based schemes, adequate parking around stations will be required to avoid any inappropriate parking in nearby roads. Whilst these schemes may give rise to an increase in local car journeys there are potential benefits in terms of:

- reducing long distance car journeys,
- reducing congestion on routes to major town centre stations,
- improving interchange with bus and rail services.

Policy TP7 : Supporting Park and Ride

Bus and rail based Park & Ride facilities to serve both town centres and major traffic generators will be supported. Contributions towards the provision of such facilities will be sought from developers.

Walking & Cycling

8.18 On average 25% of journeys in Great Britain are under a mile. Walking and cycling are healthy activities that are becoming increasingly popular not just as leisure activities but also for day to day journeys. They offer scope for reducing the dependency on the car, particularly for short journeys and for longer ones when integrated with public transport.

8.19 Much can be done to improve the safety and convenience of pedestrians and cyclists through segregation from other road users, traffic calming and improved crossing facilities. Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be maintained and improved through the Local Transport Plans and through the development of local transport strategies. The use of such facilities will be promoted through travel plans.

8.20 Development proposals can facilitate pedestrians and cycle trips. Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists should be central to them. Design has a key role to play in developing permeable, convenient and safe environments that will encourage the use of these facilities.

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Developments should also complement or enhance the local pedestrian and cycle route networks.

Policy TP8: Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists

The provision and use of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be promoted. Local authorities should ensure that these are included in the design of all transport projects and developments. Land should be safeguarded to provide safe and direct pedestrian and cycle routes where necessary.

Location of Development

8.21 The location of development is a major factor in influencing the demand for transport and how it will be catered for. Throughout this Plan there is encouragement to integrate land use and transport planning with an emphasis on locating development to reduce dependency on the car and increase the use of public transport.

8.22 In preparing Local Plans/Local Development Documents and determining planning applications, local authorities will need to consider the location of the proposed development, the relationship to the existing transport network, accessibility to services and proposed transport arrangements. Larger scale developments may offer the scope to materially alter transport networks and support major public transport infrastructure. Smaller developments can still make a contribution to supporting sustainable transport, for example, by providing walking and footpath links. Developments should be avoided where they are only accessible by the private car.

Policy TP9 : Transport and the Location of Development

Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling, or will be made so as a result of the development. Travel plans should be established to actively promote their use. Developments likely to generate a large number of trips should be located where there is either a good choice of transport already available or where a good choice can be provided in a manner acceptable to the Local Transport Authority.

8.23 Where development that generates significant car and goods vehicle movements is justified it should be well related to the major transport networks to avoid long distance movements on inappropriate routes. It is also important, in the interests of safety, that new development avoids a proliferation of access points onto the Primary and Secondary route network.

Policy TP10: Development and Access to the Primary/Secondary Road Network

Development will not be permitted which involves either the construction of a new access onto the primary or secondary road network or the increased use of an existing access, where a significantly increased risk of crashes or traffic delays would result.

8.24 In determining the most appropriate location for a development it is important to have a clear understanding of the likely demand for travel that the development will generate, existing traffic flows, and the choice of transport proposed to meet the additional demand. Local Authorities will expect a Transport Assessment to be carried out for any development proposed on a scale that will have implications for local transport strategies. A Travel Plan will also be required. The level of detail will depend on the scale of the development but in general the transport assessment will be required to determine:

- the demand for transport movements associated with the development;
- any investment required for sustainable forms of transport to meet the predicted travel demand;
- the level of parking provision to be provided;
- any highway improvements necessary for the development to proceed.

Distribution

Rail freight

8.25 As much goods traffic as possible should be transferred to rail because it is more environmentally sustainable and energy efficient than road transport. This is especially relevant to the use of the Channel Tunnel for rail freight. It is unlikely that Kent's road network could be improved sufficiently to handle all the potential growth in transport movements during the Plan period, making rail vitally important in the movement of goods.

8.26 Transfer of freight from road to rail will be encouraged, through schemes that provide for additional rail freight capacity, improve road/rail interchanges facilities and directly serve major development sites, unless there are overriding planning or environmental constraints. Better rail freight access to ports in Kent and Medway would have a beneficial impact on road freight. This is dealt with more fully under Policies TP19-21. The priorities for major investment in rail infrastructure in Kent and Medway are identified under Policies TP2/ TP3.

8.27 The current rail freight network in Kent and Medway has a number of routes that have little or no freight movements. Increased use of these routes will be encouraged. With completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, Eurostar trains and some domestic trains will be removed from the existing rail network, providing capacity for additional freight services.

Policy TP11: Rail Freight and Handling Facilities

Development which will encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail, including the development of freight handling facilities, will be permitted unless there is overriding conflict with other planning and environmental considerations. If necessary, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions in order to maximise the amount of non-road borne freight movements.

8.28 Land adjacent to railway stations, former goods yards, railheads and marshalling yards may come under development pressure for alternative uses if it is no longer required for railway use. These sites may have an important role in broader transport terms, for example: -

- enabling better facilities for integration between rail and other modes of transport (e.g. bus stops/shelters, car parking, taxi ranks, cycle parking);
- enabling development that could utilise direct access to the rail network;

- improving rail stations;
- providing passing loops;
- new stations.

8.29 It is therefore important that this land is retained for future transport use rather than being lost to other forms of development even if there are no immediate proposals to utilise the land. Any proposals for temporary uses would need to demonstrate that the potential for future transport use was not jeopardised.

Policy TP12 : Safeguarding of Railway Land for Transport Purposes

Land used formerly for the railways will be safeguarded from development which would preclude its future use for transport purposes.

Road Freight

8.30 Whilst rail has the potential to transfer some international freight from the County's roads, road haulage will continue to be the predominant mode as it is often a more flexible and economic method of freight movement. An efficient road freight industry is essential for the UK's economy and its competitiveness, to meet our day to day needs and to service the workplace. The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has developed its 'Delivering the Goods' initiative to promote environmentally sensitive, economic and efficient deliveries of goods in towns and cities. Kent County Council and Medway Council support the work of the FTA and seek to reduce the impact of lorries in sensitive urban and rural areas, such as avoiding rat running.

Policy TP13: Development Traffic & Heavy Goods Vehicles

Development which generates significant increases in traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles will not be permitted if it is not well related to the primary and secondary road network, or if it would result in an increased risk of crashes or significant traffic delays.

Kent County Council and Medway Council will:

- **identify and signpost lorry routes so as to direct heavy goods vehicles away from rural and residential areas;**
- **work with others to achieve distribution of goods by sustainable means in the urban areas in Kent.**

8.31 Local transport strategies aim to provide a co-ordinated approach to transport planning. They should deliver a balanced and efficient transport system that offers a wider choice of transport and meets future needs whilst avoiding unacceptable environmental damage. District authorities in partnership with the highway authority, transport providers and local businesses, should develop these strategies with the involvement of the local community.

8.32 The aims of the local transport strategies will be to:

- *address transport needs of both rural and urban areas;*
- *ensure that a choice of transport is accessible from major development*

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- *minimise the need to travel and encourage alternatives to the private car*
- *require transport assessments and travel plans for major workplace, education, health care , leisure and other community developments;*
- *improve bus facilities and services including bus priority measures, interchanges and quality bus partnerships;*
- *encourage improvement in the capacity , use and quality of the rail network including new stations;*
- *provide Park and Ride facilities;*
- *provide for pedestrians ,cyclists , the mobility impaired, powered two wheelers and taxis;*
- *effectively manage parking controls;*
- *manage traffic speed, including traffic calming, 'home' and 20mph zones and the Quiet Lanes concept;*
- *improve the local highway network;*
- *make efficient use of the local highway network through traffic management, signing, width and weight restrictions and the use of high occupancy lanes*
- *establish freight quality partnerships to improve the efficiency and sustainability of goods deliveries;*
- *implement measures to tackle congestion;*
- *reverse road traffic related deterioration of air quality , especially in declared Air Quality Action Plan areas;*
- *provide for consultation, marketing and promotion*

Policy TP14 : Local Transport Strategies

Local transport strategies for urban and rural areas will be promoted in accordance with the transport policies of this Plan and the Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway. The prioritisation of investment in urban areas will have regard to the regional hubs and interchanges identified in the Regional Transport Strategy.

Minor Roads

8.32 The road network of Motorways & Trunk Roads, Primary Routes and Secondary Routes is shown in map xx¹⁰ and the majority of through traffic will be guided onto these routes. Traffic movement should be kept to a minimum outside the main transport corridors and traffic will be guided onto the most appropriate route through traffic management measures. Improving and maintaining the main transport corridors to a high standard should reduce the need for traffic to travel on minor roads other than for access and leisure purposes.

Policy TP15: Traffic and Minor Roads

Through traffic, particularly goods vehicles, will be discouraged from travelling on minor roads by the use of traffic management measures, regulatory measures, the control of development and freight quality partnerships.

8.33 It is important to ensure that the use of minor roads through, and between, settlements is safe and compatible with the local environment. Improving minor roads by widening and straightening would encourage non-essential traffic to use them and result in increased vehicle speeds worsening road safety particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. Such improvements can also be detrimental to landscape and conservation interests. Traffic management measures on the other hand can improve environmental quality, if designed sympathetically.

Policy TP16: Management of Minor Roads

Minor roads will not be widened or realigned unless safety considerations require it and no alternative method to resolve the safety problems is deemed practicable.

Roadside Services

8.34 Suitable facilities, for the rest and refreshment of lorry and car drivers and their passengers should be provided. Such facilities enable drivers to break their journey and reduce the risk of accidents. They are best located along the motorway, trunk road and primary route networks, which cater for longer distance traffic. They help to deter through traffic from diverting onto local routes. Given their potential environmental impact, the scale of these facilities should be limited to meeting the needs of drivers and passengers. More extensive commercial ventures in the open countryside should be avoided. The justification for schemes will depend on a number of factors including whether there are existing facilities along the route or whether there is scope to upgrade existing facilities in preference to developing new greenfield sites.

Policy TP17: Roadside Services

Facilities and services for road users will only be permitted on the motorway, trunk road and primary route network where a demonstrable need can be established and there is no overriding conflict with other planning and environmental considerations.

¹⁰ To be inserted

Parking

8.35 The strategy of this Plan is to reduce the need for people to travel by car and this should in turn reduce the need for on-site parking. The availability of car parking space at either end of a journey has a significant influence on the type of transport used. Managing the supply of parking can encourage people to choose alternative means of transport, but those alternatives must be available. Reducing parking provision without providing people with alternatives can result in inappropriate parking in nearby roads and may be adversely affect local businesses.

8.36 Both Kent County Council and Medway Council have adopted maximum standards for parking for different categories of land use. These constitute Supplementary Planning Guidance to Policy TP19. This guidance will be regularly reviewed to take account of any changes in circumstances. Local standards for individual town centres may be agreed with the district authority giving consideration to both transport implications town centre viability. There may be circumstances where it is appropriate to meet car parking needs away from the site as part of publicly provided parking space or in conjunction with Park & Ride schemes (see Policy TP7).

Policy TP18 : Vehicle Parking Standards

Development proposals must comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council.

Kent's Ports

8.37 The Channel ports and Channel Tunnel perform a vital gateway function facilitating the movement of goods and people in and out of the country. As well as the main facilities, the small wharves and ports around the Kent coast also provide further employment. These facilities support a range of valuable functions from the import and export of raw materials through to commercial fishing and marine leisure. The continuing prosperity of Kent's ports is important nationally and regionally but also to individual towns and to the County as a whole.

Employment in Kent's ports

- 6700 direct jobs; 2400 indirect jobs
- 3000-4000 jobs in three main deep sea ports of Thamesport, Sheerness and Chatham
- more than 11,000 people in the port related sector including processing, distribution and haulage

8.38 Some ports offer opportunities for expansion but others are constrained by their proximity to built-up areas and in a number of cases the presence of important environmental and landscape designations. Good quality access to the primary road and rail networks is critical to their future success and development. However, port traffic places substantial pressure on the County's transport system. The rapid growth in international traffic, has increased congestion on Kent's trunk and primary roads and increased environmental impacts throughout the County. If Port activity is to be promoted it must be done in a way that does not adversely affect the

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County's economic, social and environmental fabric. Many of Kent's ports are constrained by their proximity to built up areas and in a number of cases the presence of important environmental and landscape designations.

8.39 The Structure Plan strategy toward the ports includes the following elements:

- Qualified support for expansion of international traffic, where this is supported by improvements in the transport and rail network (within and beyond Kent) to reduce congestion and encourage a shift of traffic from road to rail;
- Support for the development of short sea shipping services as an alternative to land transport and greater use of the Thames and Medway for the movement of freight and materials;
- International traffic through Kent being accommodated within the major international arteries (A2/M2, A20/M20, CTRL and the existing rail routes);
- Support for two cross Channel modes (Tunnel and ports) in the interests of choice, competition, safety, flexibility, employment opportunities and spreading pressure on the transport network.
- Recognises the importance of the major deep sea ports in Kent and Medway and support for the provision of an essential standard of road and rail access to serve them.
- The assessment of proposals for the expansion of ports against criteria that includes economic, social and environmental impacts; and the need to encourage freight traffic from road onto rail;
- Support for redevelopment for other uses at specific ports and smaller wharves where port operations are no longer viable or transport access is inadequate will be carried out in partnership with the port owners and local planning authorities.
- Support for proposals to produce energy from renewable sources (wind) where these do not cause environmental harm or conflict with port functions (see Policy ER3)
- If the need for a second fixed cross Channel link is demonstrated, it should effects a substantial switch from road to rail and not jeopardise the choice of cross channel modes, meet environmental criteria and minimises the impact on the County's road network.

The Major Ports

8.40 The major ports are:

- *Dover* – The UK's principal ferry port with substantial freight, car, coach and cruise activities. There is scope for further expansion within the confines of the existing port, with the greatest potential lying within the Western Docks. Reinstatement of the rail link into the Western Docks is needed and improved access to the Eastern Docks via upgrading of the A2 Lydden-Dover to dual carriageway standard and improved traffic management on the A20 Townwall Street.

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- *Channel Tunnel* – Now carries significant volumes of cars and freight on its shuttles. Eurostar and international rail freight services also use the Tunnel, although volumes of rail freight are disappointing. There remains considerable potential to encourage freight transfer from road to rail. Capacity around London and better service quality are needed to assist this.
- *Thamesport* – The fourth largest container port in the Country. The opportunity exists for the further landward expansion and development of the port subject to the protection of nature conservation interests. The port needs improved road links via the A228 and increased capacity of the rail link to facilitate further development.
- *Sheerness* – Sheerness is the largest UK port for break bulk fresh produce. There are substantial opportunities for intensification of port related activity within existing boundaries and, if required, for expansion onto nearby industrial areas. Important nature conservation areas are immediately adjacent to the port. The Second Swale Crossing will significantly improve road access to Sheppey but improved rail access is needed to increase rail's market share.
- *Ramsgate* – The existing port is substantially underused with only freight services to Ostend, but now enjoys much improved road access and traffic flows to and from the port have increased to around 125,000 lorries during 2002. There is scope for the reintroduction of ferry services and the creation of facilities that take into account the expanding role of Manston Airport.
- *Thames Europort* – Currently roll-on/roll-off services from the port at Dartford to Zeebrugge, Vlissingen and Dunkerque. The port has potential for development although this is limited to the confines of the existing site. The port may ultimately relocate, with the existing site becoming part of the Crossways Business Park.
- *Chatham* – The existing port has further scope for new development within its existing site.
- *Folkestone* – The existing port is small and currently no cross-Channel passenger or freight services are operating from it. There are proposals to regenerate the port area, which include mixed use development that will diversify the range of land uses.

8.41 As required by its franchise Eurotunnel submitted a feasibility study for a second fixed link at the end of 1999. It is unlikely that proposals will be brought forward before 2010 as there is currently spare capacity in the existing link but given the long time scale needed to design and construct a new fixed link, proposals may come forward within the timescale of this Structure Plan.

Policy TP19: Gateway Function of the Ports

The role of the following ports as deep water and/or gateways to Europe will be protected and enhanced:

- **Dover**
- **Channel Tunnel**

- **Medway Ports, including Sheerness and Thamesport**
- **Ramsgate.**

At the 'core' ports of Dover, Sheerness, Thamesport and Ramsgate, the priority will be to safeguard the port function.

Proposals for development which will enable the growth of trade at Kent and Medway ports and wharves will be supported provided that:

- any measures required by the development to improve local access by road and rail are brought forward as part of the proposals;
- the proposals maximise the potential for passenger and freight traffic to be accommodated by rail;
- the proposals achieve a high standard of design; and
- there are no overriding adverse economic, social and environmental impacts

Deep water frontage in the Thames Estuary will be safeguarded for port or port related uses where good surface access by road, and preferably by rail, exists or can be readily provided. Elsewhere proposals which will assist the diversification of trade, port operations or land uses will normally be supported.

Policy TP20: Channel Tunnel Capacity and Second Fixed Link

Improvements to the capacity of the Channel Tunnel and to the loading gauge and capacity of the Channel Tunnel rail routes will be supported.

In the event of a second fixed cross-Channel link being proposed, the local planning authorities will consider the economic, transport, social and environmental impacts of such a proposal. A proposal that substantially increases congestion on the County's road network will not be supported.

Policy TP21: Kent and Medway Ports

- (a) Provision will be made for development which will enable growth of freight and passenger traffic through the port of Dover. Any such development, outside of the existing harbour walls, will be subject to the reinstatement of the rail link to the Western Docks to enable a significant proportion of freight to reach the port by rail;
- (b) At Thamesport further expansion of the port will be encouraged within existing port confines and through inland expansion at Grain subject to improvements to the capacity of the rail access to the port and improvements to the A228;
- (c) At the Port of Sheerness expansion should involve intensification of port use within existing port confines or expansion onto nearby land designated for

commercial use. Development that further expands the port will be subject to the availability of, and opportunity for, improved transshipment and rail access and the completion of the A249 Second Swale Crossing scheme;

- (d) At the Port of Ramsgate proposals should assist the growth of port trade and not compromise its role as a major gateway port. However within the area of the Royal Harbour, diversification will be supported subject to the overriding need to protect the historic character of the area;
- (e) At Thames Europort redevelopment of the port for other land uses will be supported;
- (f) At the Port of Folkestone, mixed use development which will assist in the regeneration of central Folkestone will be supported. This could include leisure and business uses as well as some retention of port and fishing activities ; and
- (g) On the Thames and Medway in North Kent, key deep water wharves will be retained and a programme of investment in modern facilities, rail access and good highway linkages will be pursued. A programme of rationalisation and restructuring of the wharves will be carried forward as part of the Thames Gateway initiative.

Major distribution and transshipment centres

8.42 Kent is a favoured location for distribution uses handling international goods and serving the major London market. The efficient handling of such freight is important to the economy as whole. The *Ports White Paper* and *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East* together provide criteria for the development of major freight distribution and transshipment uses which includes making best use of existing infrastructure, encourage movement of freight by rail and the development inter-modal interchange facilities:

8.43 The 1996 Kent Structure Plan supported development of major distribution and transshipment facilities at five locations. Each of these sites conforms to the criteria set out in national and regional policy, but only Dover has proceeded. Support is maintained for all of these as follows:

Annotated Map

- a) *Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey) and north of Sittingbourne*, on land with rail connections, where distribution uses linked to the wharves and ports could be developed;
- b) *Grain (Thamesport)*, where there is ample land with rail connection for distribution uses linked to the container port;
- c) *Dover*, on inland sites where development is proceeding to serve the port;
- d) *Manston* , where land adjacent to the airport could be used for storage and transshipment serving air and sea transport

8.44 There is concern that an inland road-rail interchange serving cross-Channel traffic such as the site previously proposed at Ashford (Sevington) could encourage freight to travel by road by reducing the viability of rail freight which, at present, is severely disadvantaged by the

need to assemble train loads in North London (Willesden). The location of such sites outside urban areas may also be in conflict with strategic policies to protect the countryside and this will be weighed against the need for the development. Firm evidence will be required to show that the rail facilities at such sites will be used.

Policy TP22: Major distribution and transshipment centres

(a) Proposals which encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail, or between road and air or sea, which are designed and landscaped to a high standard, will be supported at the following locations:

- on the Isle of Sheppey (Sheerness) and north of Sittingbourne (Ridham and Kemsley area) subject to the completion of the A249 second Swale crossing scheme;
- serving Thamesport on the Isle of Grain, subject to improvements to the A228 and to rail access;
- at Dover on allocated employment land to provide inland freight facilities for the port;
- at Dover through extension of the Dover Western Docks to provide a road-rail freight interchange, subject to economic and environmental considerations;
- at Manston Airport

(b) The provision of an inland road-rail facility to serve the Channel Tunnel, or a major new distribution and transshipment centre elsewhere in Kent, will be permitted only where :

- the site is easily accessible to the trunk road system and served by rail sidings and/or water;
- strong evidence is provided that the proposal is necessary and viable, and will reduce the overall volume of freight traffic carried by roads in Kent;
- there are no significant adverse effects on the local economy, countryside character or environment.

The long term use of the rail facility as an integral part of the operation of the site should be secured.

Kent 's Airports and Airfields

8.45 Over the last 50 years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of air travel for business and leisure. Good air links are important to businesses, providing access to new markets and attracting investment. Many of the UK's major airports are reaching their capacity and a forthcoming Government White Paper on airports policy will determine how future growth is to be accommodated over the next 30 years including the scale and pattern of additional airport capacity in the South East. It is assumed in this Plan that a major airport at Cliffe in North Kent is not selected as the Government's choice for future expansion of airport capacity.

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8.46 While there are social and economic benefits associated with expanding aviation services and regional airports can promote regeneration, environmental and community interests must be safeguarded.

London (Manston)

8.47 Manston Airport in Thanet has the potential to develop into a regional airport and become one of the largest single generators of economic activity within the County. It has the potential to handle 4-6 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2021 (comparable to the usage of Luton Airport in 2000) and up to 400,000 tonnes of freight per annum by 2015, subject to the development of terminal facilities, warehousing and apron space. In the longer term, there may be potential for passenger numbers to grow to 10 mppa. Its future growth is dependent upon its ability to attract passengers from the major London airports and capture new markets. Its expansion will have a significant impact on the East Kent economy, labour market, transport and urban development. It is important to ensure that the Airport's growth does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or on the quality of life of residents. Detailed proposals should therefore address:

- Surface access. Strategic road access to/from the west is good, but improvements to the local road network will be required to address potential congestion. The growth of the airport should be underpinned by the development of a choice of travel modes for both passengers and employees. An essential part of the process will be the phased improvement of public transport links to the airport, culminating with a direct rail link once the airport reaches a critical mass, in order to minimise congestion on the wider road network.
- Noise impact - Noise is likely to be a very important issue for affected communities in the vicinity of flight paths. The control of noise and introduction of mitigation measures will be essential to ensure no significant impact on local amenity.
- Air quality - The expansion of Manston Airport from will have an effect on local and regional air quality both air and road traffic. Air quality will need to be monitored and mitigation measures put in place to protect the local environment.

Lydd

8.48 This has an important role serving local business needs and providing opportunities for recreational flying. The future development of Lydd Airport should focus around the improvement of its existing facilities (including terminal and runway improvements). This will improve the ability of the airport to cater for general aviation and passenger traffic and to capture scheduled and charter business. Proposals will be assessed for their impact on the surrounding environment and local communities, the appropriateness of proposed mitigation measures and the availability of access by a choice of transport modes.

Headcorn

8.49 The potential for any further development at Headcorn is constrained by the location of this airfield within a sensitive environment. Notwithstanding this Headcorn has an important role to play in meeting business and general aviation needs particularly for recreational flying and related activities and there is potential to consolidate and improve existing facilities.

Rochester

8.50 The general aviation and business role of Rochester is to be safeguarded and the opportunity exists to improve existing facilities at the airport. Proposals for development will be assessed against their impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local communities.

Policy TP23: Manston Airport

The development of Manston Airport into a regional airport with a capacity of up to 6 million passengers per annum by 2021 will be supported. Proposals related to the development of the airport will be assessed for acceptability against the following criteria:

- (a) development being directly related to the operation of the airport unless otherwise forming part of a proposal in a Local Development Document; and
- (b) no significant detrimental impact on internationally, nationally or locally designated environmental areas; and
- (c) no significant adverse impact on the amenity of local communities which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated; and
- (d) appropriate measures being secured to mitigate the impact of development including noise control, air pollution, water pollution, landscape and habitat management; and
- (e) the requirements for surface access being adequately accommodated within the capacity of the existing or committed local transport network; and
- (f) measures being identified and secured to improve access by public transport modes including the provision of a direct rail link when the capacity of the airport reaches 4 million passengers per annum;

Policy TP24: Lydd Airport

The expansion of general aviation at Lydd Airport will be supported. Proposals related to the development of the airport will be assessed against the following criteria:

- (a) the impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local settlements;
- (b) the economic and employment advantages;
- (c) access from the main centres of population and the availability of a choice of transport modes; and
- (d) the existence of suitably located alternative flying facilities.

Policy TP25: Other Airports and Airfields (Headcorn and Rochester)

Proposals for the use of existing airports/airfields and the development of new facilities for commercial and recreational flying will be assessed against their impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local communities.

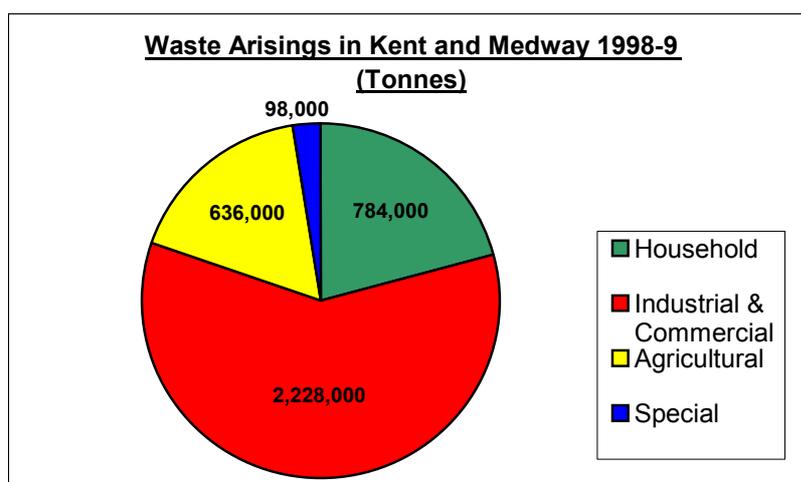
Chapter 9: Managing Our Waste and Mineral Resources

Introduction

9.1 The people and businesses of Kent and Medway continue to produce significant volumes of waste. (see Figure 1). Without adequate management and treatment, waste has the potential to cause significant environmental and health problems. It also has potential value as a resource if re-used or recycled. Long term provision needs to be made to manage waste in an efficient and environmentally sound manner. Measures must also be adopted to counter the trend of year on year increases in the volume generated.

9.2 National strategy and guidance towards waste seeks a more sustainable approach to handling and treating waste. This is driven by European Union regulations – particularly the Landfill Directive¹¹ which aim to prevent, or reduce as far as possible, the negative effects of landfilling of waste both on the environment and on human health. Other key influences include National Planning Policy Guidance and the Councils' own Waste Strategies.

Figure 1¹²:



[Source: Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000 – South East¹³.]

Key Waste Issues

- household waste has grown since April 1998 at an annual average rate of 4.5%.
- In 2001/2, each household produced an average of 1.3 tonnes of waste.
- Volumes of waste are likely to increase, at least in the short to medium term due to population growth, the increase in the number of one person households and growth in the economy.
- Increase in the number of homes in Kent by % (116,100) over twenty years.
- Reduced opportunities for landfill.
- Environmental impacts of waste disposal.
- Kent has traditionally taken waste from neighbouring areas and exported to others

image

The Structure Plan Strategy for Waste aims to:

- Reduce the overall amount of waste produced with initial emphasis on reducing the rate of growth.
- Allow flexibility to cope with variations in both the scale and pace of reduction
- Allow flexibility to cope with continued growth in the volume of waste.
- Promote best practical environmental options when disposing of waste
- Promote the reuse and recycling of waste

Waste Reduction

9.3 The most efficient way of tackling Kent and Medway's waste is to reduce the quantity produced in the first place. Local authorities should seek project waste plans in association with major development proposals both during construction and subsequent occupation. These might, for example, include shared waste collection points, allowing for waste to be separated and transferred for recycling or re-use. Policies should also encourage manufacturing using recycled waste as an alternative to raw materials.

Policy WM1: Securing waste reduction

Major development proposals will be required to demonstrate they are able to make a contribution to reducing growth in the volume of waste generated in Kent and Medway.

Local Development Documents will include policies:

- (i) **Requiring the submission of a waste minimisation plan alongside major development proposals and, where appropriate, provide for the use of conditions or agreements to secure waste minimisation;**
- (ii) **Providing for the accommodation of development for assembly manufacturing or processing related to recycled waste.**

Consideration of Waste Proposals

9.4 The application of BPEO is essential if Kent and Medway are to achieve a sustainable pattern of waste management.

‘ Best Practicable Environmental Option’ (BPEO) seeks to ensure that waste management options have regard to environmental impacts alongside social and economic considerations¹ and represent the most efficient and environmentally sound method. In particular, proposals will be expected to show that they accord with the following principles:

- Demonstrate Need
- The Waste Hierarchy;
- The Proximity Principle; and
- Self-Sufficiency.

Need

9.5 The assessment of need for a waste management proposal should take account of: waste arisings; the level and nature of committed management capacity, projected waste growth rates; and statutory recycling and diversion targets.

The Waste Hierarchy

9.6 The national waste hierarchy gives preference to reduction, followed by re-use and then recovery (recycling, composting, energy recovery). Only if none of these offers an appropriate solution should waste be disposed of to landfill. The appropriate waste management option will vary according to the type of waste and local considerations. It is possible to refine this hierarchy further to ensure that optimal advantage is taken of recycling and to ensure that statutory targets in this area are fulfilled.

The Proximity Principle

9.7 This requires waste to be disposed of as close to its source as possible because transporting waste itself has an environmental impact. Wastes that require specialist management facilities may justify transportation over longer distances if there are no local facilities that are capable of handling it. It would, for example, be preferable to transport long distance waste by rail rather than by road.

Self – Sufficiency

9.8 Local Planning authorities should attempt to deal with their own waste so as to regional self-sufficiency, that is, treating or disposing of waste within the ‘region’ in which it is produced. However the geographical proximity of areas needs to be taken into account alongside the local circumstances. For example parts of West and North Kent are close to regional boundaries and are also subject to nationally important planning constraints such as the Green Belt.

9.9 In 2001/02, approximately one third of Kent’s household waste was exported to Essex in the East of England Region. Whilst this Plan seeks to ensure that Kent and Medway manage the equivalent of their own waste (Policy WM3) – some discretion may be

required in the application of the self-sufficiency principle where this gives rise to tension with the proximity principle.

Policy WM2 : Assessment criteria for waste proposals

Proposals for the treatment, storage, transfer, processing or disposal of waste will be required to show that they represent the most efficient and environmentally sustainable method of managing a specific type of waste. Proposals should demonstrate that they:

- (a) Meet a need that overrides material agricultural, landscape, conservation, traffic and other environmental or land use concerns; and**
- (b) Are the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO);and**
- (c) Accord with the provisions of the national waste hierarchy; and**
- (d) Comply with the proximity principle, taking into consideration the environmental impact of the mode of transport proposed; and**
- (e) Contribute to the achievement of self-sufficiency.**

Provision for Waste Management Facilities in Kent and Medway

9.10 Kent and Medway need to make adequate provision for appropriate facilities to deal with waste within their respective areas. Whilst it would be impractical for Kent and Medway to achieve absolute self-sufficiency each authority should seek to achieve its equivalent after cross border movements have been taken into consideration.

9.11 In the past, waste management policy has adopted a ten-year horizon for planning ahead. However provision for alternatives to landfilling requires significant levels of capital investment and involves long lead times in planning and development. Waste management provision will be calculated by assessing existing and committed capacity for a specific waste type against projected waste arisings.

Policy WM3: Planning for waste management capacity

The Kent and Medway Waste Local Development Documents will make provision for, and maintain, waste management capacity sufficient for 15 years ahead.

Through their Waste Local Development Documents, Kent and Medway Councils will each make provision for the management of the equivalent of the waste arising in their areas.

9.12 The type of provision to be made for waste facilities will be largely shaped by the need to divert waste away from landfill, to meet national targets for:

- Curtailing the growth in waste arisings;

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- Reducing the quantity of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled;
- Reducing the quantity of industrial and commercial waste landfilled;
- the recovery of municipal waste and for the recycling or composting of household waste prescribed by the National Waste Strategy 2000 and the statutory Best Value Performance Indicators for household waste recycling and composting.

9.13 Targets for recycling and diverting waste from landfill are set out in Chapter 10 on implementation and monitoring.

9.14 Kent and Medway send almost 80% of their household waste to landfill (2001/02) – a level that must be reduced to fulfil statutory obligations and make an appropriate contribution to achieving national targets. Rapidly diminishing landfill space provides a further impetus to identify alternative methods of disposal. In 1999 Kent and Medway had less than 6½ years worth of void space remaining¹⁴. The increased application of sustainable waste management techniques will reduce the County's dependency on landfill. While disposal to land is regarded as a last resort, there will be a continuing need for some to deal with residual wastes.

9.15 Landfilling is likely to continue on minerals extraction sites where this is part of restoration proposals. Kent and Medway's geology dictates that mineral workings are only suitable for filling with inert material such as construction and demolition waste. To reinstate sites with non-inert material would carry a high risk of ground contamination. The availability of inert waste material is however, becoming more scarce due to the success of national initiatives to reduce waste such as the Landfill Tax. Where disposal is justified under the provisions of Policy WM2, such material should be directed to appropriate mineral workings to facilitate their restoration. In some areas the nature of the underlying geology may prohibit the disposal of even inert waste to mineral workings.

9.16 The disposal of non-inert waste to land may also be justified if it is considered to be the BPEO. However, finding suitable landfill sites can prove difficult, due to the need to prevent groundwater pollution. Landraising, a form of disposal that changes existing land profiles - may offer an alternative means of non-inert waste disposal. Landraising can be visually intrusive and therefore requires sensitive treatment but it can offer advantages over landfill as it enables pollution to be more easily managed. Sensitive landraising at existing landfill sites could offset the need for further greenfield sites. Landraising, like landfill, should only be used as a last resort when all other methods of disposal higher up the hierarchy have been exhausted.

¹⁴ Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000: South East (Environment Agency).

Policy WM4 : Waste Disposal to Land

Where disposal of waste to land is proved necessary:

- (i) For inert waste, priority will be given to using suitable mineral workings rather than other land disposal sites where this will facilitate the reinstatement of land to a beneficial after-use and / or secure improvement of the environment;**
- (ii) For non inert waste, subject to Policy WM2, the Councils will consider landraising as an option for land disposal.**

Location of Future Waste Management Facilities

9.17 Kent and Medway presently export over a third of their household waste for landfilling and further provision is needed to facilitate a more sustainable pattern of waste management. Based upon current waste arisings and disposal flows and against the backdrop of the existing and committed network of facilities¹⁵, Policy WM6 sets out a prospective pattern of key new facilities.

9.18 Kent and Medway will seek to maximise opportunities for the location of recycling facilities, particularly where waste can be transported by modes other than road transport. Sites that offer good rail and water access could contribute significantly to the development of sustainable waste management.

9.19 Biological treatment of waste such as composting offers an effective means of achieving recycling targets. Treatment plants usually take in green waste from a variety of sources, compost it, then take it off site for sale as a soil conditioner. Two industrial scale plants already exist in Kent – at Dunbrik near Sevenoaks and at Shelford near Canterbury. In addition there are a handful of small, on-farm, composting facilities located sporadically throughout the county. These smaller facilities tend to retain composted material on-site for use by the host farm. Whilst such facilities reduce the need to transport materials, it is unlikely that they will make a significant contribution to recycling targets. Further, industrial scale composting capacity is likely to be required in North and East Kent to ensure that all parts of the County are adequately served.

9.20 Recycling alone will be unable to deal with Kent and Medway's waste management requirements in the short to medium term due to the period involved in securing the significant investment required and the necessary changes in public attitudes and behaviour.

9.21 National policy regards energy from waste facilities as an essential part of waste management strategy. The new facility under construction at Allington, near Maidstone will have the capacity to accept up to 500,000 tonnes of household and industrial and commercial waste each year and will meet the need arising in Mid and West Kent but for further capacity is needed in East Kent.

¹⁵ See KMSP Background Paper XX/03: Waste Arisings, Disposal and Management Facilities and Future Capacity.

Policy WM5: Provision of strategic waste management facilities

The Kent and Medway Waste Local Development Documents will seek to provide a pattern of waste management facilities over the plan period, to include:

- (i) A strategic recycling facility in North Kent to meet local and regional needs ;
- (ii) An industrial scale composting facility in North Kent and East Kent;
- (iii) A waste reprocessing plant in East Kent providing energy production both for the plant and wider use and incorporating provision for materials recycling; and
- (iv) Further landfill capacity in North Kent to meet the need to dispose of residues to land

They will also determine the need for, and pattern of, small scale waste processing and composting facilities.

Wherever practicable facilities should be located to enable the use of rail and/or water based transport.

Construction Projects

9.22 Construction projects such as new transport schemes and major developments can require significant quantities of aggregate minerals or give rise to significant quantities of surplus spoil, which can have major land use and transportation impacts. When considering such projects, planning authorities will seek to ensure that any resource or disposal requirements are dealt with either on site or adjacent to it. Where this is not possible they will seek to agree the routing of vehicles, which bring material in or out, and the sources and destinations of these materials. Use of the rail network will be promoted wherever possible.

Policy WM6: Construction related spoil

In order to minimise the environmental impact of construction projects which require significant quantities of construction aggregates or give rise to significant amounts of surplus spoil, a scheme for the transport and routing of such materials, together with proposals for the disposal of surplus spoil, will be designed into the project itself.

Minerals

9.23 Minerals make an essential contribution to economic prosperity and provide raw materials for many everyday needs – homes, community buildings, schools, roads, glassware, household goods and much besides. With continuing development and improved transport links, the need for accessible sources of minerals remains strong.

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9.24 Minerals can only be worked where they occur naturally and their extraction can have significant environmental impacts. Kent and Medway are mineral rich areas containing a variety of sands and gravels as well as chalk, ragstone, clays and brickearth. Given the high environmental quality of much of Kent's undeveloped land there is a need to balance the demand for minerals with protection of the distinctive attributes of the environment. Mineral extraction also needs to be reconciled with the amenity of communities lying close to resources.

9.25 More detailed policies are outlined in the existing and emerging Kent and Medway Minerals Local Plans/ Local Development Documents.

Key Issues for Minerals

- *The need to provide minerals for the development industry*
- *The environmental impact of mineral extraction and transportation*
- *Potential loss of wharf facilities*

The Strategy for Minerals is to:

- *Maximise the use of secondary and recycled minerals*
- *Maintain a continuity of supply either locally or through importation for a range of mineral types*
- *Avoid unacceptable environmental impacts*
- *Secure satisfactory restoration*
- *Safeguard minerals reserves and protection of importation facilities*

Supply of Minerals

9.26 Kent and Medway rely upon a range of sources for their minerals, including:

- Locally extracted virgin (primary) materials;
- Imported virgin (primary) materials;
- Virgin (primary) marine dredged material (applicable to sand and gravel only);
- Recycled materials such as road scalplings and planings, construction and demolition waste; and
- Secondary materials – material suitable for use as a substitute primary material and which is usually a by-product of other quarrying, mining or industrial processes, e.g. pulverised fuel ash, blast furnace slag and incinerator residues.

9.27 To promote a more sustainable use of resources, national policy seeks to reduce the contribution that land-won minerals make to overall supply, and to encourage the use of alternative materials from secondary and recycled sources. New draft national and regional guidelines for aggregates supply indicate a significantly greater share of supply from these latter sources in comparison with previous guidelines (MPG6 – 1994) and a 60% increase by 2011 over their 2001 contribution. This can be encouraged by influencing construction / building specifications and by making positive provision for facilities that treat and process potential sources of recycled and substitute material.

Policy M1 : Sources of Minerals Supply

Subject to environment, transport and other planning considerations, proposals for the provision of minerals through recycling, the use of secondary materials, imports and the development of acceptable local sources of supply will be permitted.

Policy M2 : Use of Secondary / Recycled Materials

Kent County Council and Medway Council will seek to encourage a greater use of recycled and secondary materials through:

- The Councils' own material specifications in setting contracts;
- Encouraging other contractors to examine specifications;
- Permitting recycling proposals at appropriate locations consistent with Waste Local Development Documents

Consideration of Minerals Proposals

9.28 The extraction and supply of minerals has the potential to cause significant environmental harm. Safeguarding environmental and community interests will be achieved through the imposition of appropriate conditions on planning permissions and subsequent site monitoring. Appropriate restoration and aftercare will also be required. Through restoration, mineral development can offer unique opportunities to enhance the environment and contribute to nature conservation and biodiversity objectives.

Policy M3: Assessment Criteria for Minerals Proposals

Proposals for minerals extraction and / or associated plant and buildings and minerals recycling facilities will be permitted only where they do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on agricultural, landscape, conservation, or environmental interests of acknowledged importance or on residential and business communities.

Permission will only be granted if any physical constraints on the land have been properly taken into account and if there are adequate access proposals, measures to minimise harm to the landscape and environment, to protect local communities, to landscape the site, remove plant or buildings after workings have ceased and to restore the land to an appropriate after use, normally as working progresses.

Wherever appropriate a period of aftercare will also be required.

Rail and Wharf Facilities for Minerals Handling

9.29 Due to geological and environmental constraints, approximately two thirds of primary aggregates are supplied via rail and wharf facilities. Approximately two thirds of primary aggregates were supplied in this way in 2001. There are a number of deep water berths along the Thames and Medway suitable for mineral importation. Some are already used for this purpose. Large reserves of marine aggregate have been identified in the Eastern English Channel. The ability to accommodate larger ships means that these facilities are important to the supply of minerals to Kent and Medway and to the wider region, particularly where they have good rail links or where these can be enhanced.

9.30 River frontage has become increasingly attractive for a range of development and suitable sites for wharves have already been lost. Since imported materials will continue to be needed to contribute to Kent and Medway's overall minerals requirement, it is important to protect, and where possible, enhance the area's wharf and rail facilities. As well as maintaining sources of supply this will also maximise the amount of bulk material transported by means other than road. It will be particularly important where good surface access exists or can be provided. The authorities will need to take account of the views of river and port authorities on navigational and conservancy matters.

Policy M4: Marine Wharves and Rail Depots

Existing marine wharves and rail depots that receive and process minerals generally will be protected from development that would inhibit their continued operation or potential expansion. This will be achieved through the identification of buffer zones around such sites in Minerals Local Development Documents.

Proposals for new marine wharves and rail depots, to receive and process imports of minerals, will be permitted on appropriate sites. In assessing whether a site is appropriate, Kent County Council and Medway Council will consider all material planning interests including those relating to agriculture, landscape, conservation, environment, traffic and access.

Mineral Supply

Construction Aggregates

9.31 Construction aggregate is the main type of mineral found and extracted in Kent and Medway. It comprises sand, gravel and rock and is used by the construction industry, for example in concrete, road stone and asphalt, as construction fill and railway ballast. Building sands, concreting sands and gravels and ragstone form the main types of aggregates found in the county.

9.32 Guidance on the level of provision for construction aggregates is set out in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6 (MPG6 -1994) "*Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England*". This indicates a level of provision for each region which is then apportioned to each mineral planning authority who are required to reflect these requirements in their development plans. The figure for Kent and Medway for sand and gravel is 3.2 million

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tonnes per annum (mtpa). Sand and gravel production has fallen substantially below the regional apportionment. Since the mid 1990s it has been approximately 2.2 mtpa. Authorities are also expected to include policies to maintain a stock of planning permissions (a landbank) for aggregates, for at least 7 years extraction for sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, such as ragstone. In terms of Policy M5 there are no occurrences of ragstone within the Medway area.

9.33 In August 2002, Government published draft revisions to the national and regional aggregates guidelines for 2001- 2016. The revised guidelines for 2001 to 2016 are approximately 24% lower than the forecast for 1992 to 2006 in MPG6 and assume a substantially greater role for secondary and recycled aggregates. A new sub regional apportionment of these revised guidelines is expected in 2003. The current figure of 3.2 mtpa for Kent and Medway may be substantially reduced, most likely to between 2.1 and 2.4 mtpa. This will serve to extend the life of the current 13 year landbank as at 2000 based on the 1994 apportionment. It indicates a reducing impact on the environment from primary aggregate production. Proposals will be assessed in the light of these considerations and the criteria in Policy M3.

Policy M5: Provision for Construction Aggregates

Kent County Council and Medway Council will review and maintain:

(a) A supply of aggregates sufficient to contribute to national, regional and local needs, in accordance with their agreed share of regional aggregates supply.

(b) A landbank of permitted reserves of :

-sand and gravel sufficient for at least 7 years' production at agreed apportionment levels;

- ragstone sufficient for at least 10 years ' supply.

9.34 In terms of crushed rock, a major limestone resource has been identified in East Kent. Favourable consideration will be given to proposals for limestone mining in this area subject to addressing local environmental and highway issues. This would secure a major source of quality hard rock to help meet the community's requirements for construction aggregates in a manner that would be less environmentally damaging compared to other land won workings.

Policy M6: Limestone Extraction in East Kent

Kent County Council will give favourable consideration to limestone mining in East Kent. When assessing the landbank for Kent's land won construction aggregate requirements, no account will be taken of this option until planning permission has been granted.

Other Minerals

9.35 When considering the need to identify or permit additional reserves of non-aggregate minerals, recent levels of national and regional production and the extent of current permitted reserves will be taken into account. The need to secure sufficient mineral reserves to justify substantial new investment in existing and new fixed plant will also be recognised.

- **Silica Sand**

9.36 Silica (or industrial) sand, is an essential raw material for many industrial processes including glass manufacture, production of foundry castings, ceramics, chemicals manufacture and for water filtration purposes. There is national planning policy guidance relating specifically to silica sand (MPG15). It stresses the importance of recognising the scarcity of economically workable silica sand deposits and the high capital cost of investment in the industry. Policy M7 establishes landbank reserves in line with this guidance. There are no occurrences of silica sands in the Medway area. Proposals will be subject to the criteria set out in Policy M3.

Policy M7: Silica Sand

Kent County Council will seek to maintain a landbank of permitted reserves of silica sand sufficient for at least 10 years supply for each production site, or at least 15 years at sites where new capital investment is required

- **Building Stone**

9.37 Some minerals in Kent, particularly local ragstone, are suitable for use as building stone. This type of material is important to enable the repair of local historic buildings and monuments. Workings of this kind are generally small scale. An adequate supply of local building stone should be secured to assist in maintaining the high quality of Kent and Medway's historic environment.

Policy M8: Building Stone

Kent County Council and Medway Council will seek to ensure that there is an adequate supply of building stone available for the repair of local buildings of architectural and historic importance.

- **Brickearth**

9.38 Government emphasises the need to make suitable provision for brickearth, which is used to make stockbricks (often known in Kent as London Stocks).

Policy M9: Brickearth

Proposals for the extraction of brickearth will be permitted which will enable each stockbrick works to be maintained with at least 15 years reserves of brickearth. Proposals for brickearth extraction on the best and most versatile agricultural land must provide for the site to be progressively restored.

- **Chalk and Clay**

9.39 Chalk and clay provide raw materials for specialist uses and support industries that are important to the national and local economy. Chalk is used as a construction aggregate and is worked for agricultural purposes such as liming, and for manufacturing, e.g. in the paper industry. It is also used in the cement industry and for other engineering purposes. Clay is extracted for use in the brick and cement industry, for sea defences and other engineering purposes such as lining landfill sites.

Policy M10: Chalk and Clay

Proposals for the extraction of chalk and clay will be permitted which enable:

- a) Kent and Medway's cement industry to be maintained with up to 25 years reserves of chalk and clay;**
- b) Kent and Medway's clay brick industry to be maintained with at least 15 years reserves of clay;**
- c) Reserves of agricultural chalk to be maintained with a 10 year supply; and**
- d) Kent and Medway's engineering, pharmaceutical and whiting manufacturing requirements for chalk and clay to be met.**

- **Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane**

9.40 Government regards the exploration and production of oil, gas and coalbed methane as in the long term national interest. Proposals to appraise a find for oil, gas or coalbed methane workings for commercial production, will be considered on their merits against Policy M3 of this Plan.

Policy M11: Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of oil, natural gas and coalbed methane will be permitted. Permission for any production of on-shore oil, gas and coalbed methane which would require a gathering station, export terminal or distribution network will only be given if there are adequate proposals for:

- a) The screening, landscaping and design of production well sites, gathering stations and export terminals; and**
- b) access and routing for vehicular traffic; and**
- c) avoiding nuisance to any sensitive development in the vicinity; and**
- d) transport of oil, gas and coalbed methane within the plan area(for which there will be a presumption in favour of rail transport and/or underground pipelines**

so far as this is practicable); and

e) the testing or disposal of gas; and

f) the clearance of plant, equipment and buildings and the restoration and aftercare of all areas affected by the production operations at the end of the permitted period.

The siting of gathering stations and export terminals in locations protected by the Structure Plan's countryside and coast policies, or in locations close to substantial built development, will be refused, unless it can be shown that there is no suitable alternative location.

Safeguarding Mineral Resources

9.41 Mineral resources should be protected from sterilisation by other forms of development. MPG1 "General Considerations and the Development Plan System", provides guidance on declaring Mineral Consultation Areas (MCAs) where Minerals Planning Authorities are notified, and have the opportunity to object, if surface development is proposed which would sterilise an economically important deposit. Consideration will be given to the identification of MCAs in the Kent and Medway Minerals Local Development Documents.

Policy M12 : Safeguarding of Mineral Resources

Development proposals which would sterilise the future availability of strategic mineral reserves identified in Minerals Local Plans/Local Development Documents will be refused. Where possible, known sources of secondary and recycled materials will be safeguarded from sterilisation.

Where development is proposed, encouragement will be given to the extraction of the mineral resource or use of secondary and recycled materials prior to, or in conjunction with, development.

Chapter 10: Implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan

Implementation

10.1 The Structure Plan sets out long term strategic planning policy for Kent and Medway. To be successful it needs effective implementation through a wide variety of mechanisms and organisations across the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

10.2 The Plan seeks to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of Kent, principally by guiding the scale, general location and phasing of development. To be most effective, it needs to be carried through efficiently and quickly into Local Development Documents. Although led by the local planning authorities, wider stakeholders, including communities, will play a fundamental part in this process.

10.3 Local Plan/Local Development Documents and decisions upon individual planning applications should be consistent with policies in the Structure Plan. In this way the provisions of the Structure Plan are largely effected through the day to day policy and development control work of District Councils and the Medway Unitary Authority.

10.4 The private sector will play a prime role in implementation, in terms of bringing development forward but also in managing Kent's land resource. Much of what is cherished about the county's countryside is due to the stewardship of the farming community and land-based industries.

10.5 The number and range of different agencies that will play a part in implementing the Structure Plan is reflected in the table IMP2, Measuring Progress at the end of this chapter. The Local Authorities in Kent will work closely with these agencies to achieve the objectives of the plan and overcome potential obstacles.

10.6 The Structure Plan is strongly linked to other areas of policy making. It is an important tool in delivering the Community Strategies produced by Local Strategic Partnerships across Kent. The Structure Plan needs to inform and respond to other policy frameworks. The Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway will translate the Structure Plan into rolling five year plans for tackling transport issues. Public sector policy making in areas such as the environment, health, education and community services must be consistent with the Structure Plan given their potential impact on the location and accessibility of services and the demands placed upon the transport network.

10.7 The Structure Plan is part of a wider family of policy and implementation documents, including community strategies, investment programmes, and the plans of Government (including legislation) and private sector agencies.

Diagram Linkages with other strategies

10.8 Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) brought forward in conjunction with this Plan will also have a role to play in implementing its objectives. SPGs will help to articulate the objectives of the plan in more detail. . Specific supplementary guidance supports policies of this Plan relating to archaeological heritage (Policy QL7) , landscape and

countryside character (Policy E2) , biodiversity (Policy E7) and parking standards (Policy TP18) . Other established guidance e.g the Kent Design guide supports the aims and objectives of the Plan's policy approach to design (Policies SP1 and QL1).

Resources

10.9 Since the Structure Plan is a policy not a programming document, it carries no resources with it. It is a strategic planning tool which belongs to the organisations and communities of Kent. The resources involved in its implementation will come from a variety of sources and will be considerable. It will include funding from Government agencies and investment through development by the public and private sector. Some development will be speculative but other projects will also be associated with organisations wanting to locate in Kent.

10.10 Kent needs to play a full part in contributing to economic prosperity of the nation and region but the needs of the area also need to be fully recognised in wider strategies and funding programmes. To manage change effectively and to address economic disparities sufficient resources are required from central Government, its agencies and others. Timely investment in transport and community infrastructure is particularly important. In those parts of the county where property and investment markets are weak, such as the Priority Areas for Regeneration in North and East Kent or where accelerated growth is intended (Ashford) , there will be a particular need for additional funding to deliver the key objectives of the Structure Plan.

10.11 A number of agencies lead on a variety of programmes, which will assist in delivering this Plan. Inevitably, these programmes will change over time. Current examples include the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements SEEDA's Area Investment Frameworks and the Housing Corporation's ADP.

Meeting the costs of new development

10.12 One of the keys to improving well being in Kent will be to ensure that economic or housing development comes forward with the necessary supporting physical and social infrastructure such as schools, transport, health and recreation facilities and open space. Whilst the Structure Plan seeks to make best use of available infrastructure and facilities, the overall strategy will require the funding and provision of additional infrastructure which must be addressed before development can proceed. The local authorities will work with service providers and regeneration agencies to establish the requirements for new community services particularly in areas undergoing major change and renewal.

10.13 The demand for new services cannot necessarily be met within the tightly constrained budgets of local authorities and other agencies. The costs should normally be borne by the development unless there are exceptional circumstances why they cannot be and alternative funding is available. Developers may also be asked to make a contribution to affordable housing, including social and key worker housing, where there is a clearly identified community need (see Chapter 5 Housing Provision).

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10.14 Kent local authorities have established detailed guidelines for the negotiation of development contributions to the cost of community facilities¹⁶. Contributions for education, affordable housing, highways and public transport are the most common. The size and use of contributions must have regard to local priorities and take account of evidence of exceptional costs incurred in developing sites especially where previously developed land is involved. Cost-effective solutions such as shared use of buildings will be encouraged.

Policy IMP 1: Meeting the costs of community and other infrastructure generated by new development;

The local planning authorities will require contributions from developments to meet the costs of providing community, transport and other infrastructure necessary to serve development. Such contributions will be agreed before planning permission is granted and the facilities and/or services will be provided in accordance with an agreed phasing programme.

Monitoring

10.15 The Plan contains the aims, objectives and future vision for land use planning in Kent and Medway. Policies provide the direction for development to help realise that vision. An assessment of the way in which the Vision and Guiding Principles set out in Chapter One is carried into policies is set out in table IMP1, From Vision to Policy. It demonstrates the strong relationship between the objectives of the plan and the policies it contains.

10.16 Any system for reaching judgements on the effectiveness of plans needs, like the plans themselves, to be straightforward. Several questions need to be addressed.

- **What to monitor?** Local planning authorities are required to keep under review certain factors in their area, including population dynamics (the size, composition and distribution of population), physical and economic characteristics and the communications, transport system and traffic conditions of the area. Progress towards the main targets of the Structure Plan will need to be measured.
- **How to monitor?** Assessing local plan and Local Development Document proposals analysing planning decisions and the implementation of development. Undertaking surveys to identify change. Establishing base data against which to assess the level of change. Monitoring needs to link policies and plan targets.
- **What to do with the data?** Bulletins and monitoring papers will be published. These need to be informative and feed into the decision making process so that informed decisions about policy reviews and development plans in general can be made. Evaluation needs to inform plan reviews.
- **Who might also be interested in monitoring?** Bodies such as District Planning Authorities will be interested for the preparation of Local Development Documents and Local Strategic Partnerships for the preparation and review of community strategies.

¹⁶ Kent Planning Officers' Group: Good Practice Guide on Development Contributions :1999 and Addendum 2001

The success of Structure Plan policies is also important in monitoring the progress of regional planning guidance (RPG9) and other regional strategies.

10.17 Regular monitoring of the Plan will ensure that local authorities in Kent and others will be able to respond appropriately to prevailing economic, social and environmental circumstances.

Approach to Monitoring

10.18 Table IMP2 Measuring Progress¹⁷ outlines the proposals for monitoring the plan. Within each of the four themes set out in Chapter One it establishes:

- **Issues of Strategic Importance for Monitoring**

Matters which go to the heart of this plan but for which no specific performance indicators or targets have been identified. This may be due to difficulties of measurement or data collection, or perhaps it is a large and complex subject area. Monitoring these issues will be fundamental to measuring the success of the Structure Plan. For instance on the supply and occupation of employment land and the health of local labour and property markets.

- **Indicators and Headline Targets**

These indicators have been selected to focus principally on the land use planning issues upon which the Structure Plan has significant influence, although a number of wider contextual indicators have been identified. For these latter, the Structure Plan is just one of many influencing factors.

- **Key Delivery Agencies**

Responsible for 'championing' that element of the Plan¹⁸.

10.19 The performance indicators outlined in Table IMP2 were chosen as being both practical and measurable. The headline targets selected have been drawn either directly from policies in the plan or from other established policy documents (for instance community or regional strategies) which mirror policy aims within the Structure Plan. In due course a more detailed technical paper will be produced to amplify these targets further.

10.20 Regular reviews of progress towards achieving the headline targets will be produced (annually or every two years), supplemented with more detailed reports on particular themes where these are considered necessary. These reports will be of value in drawing up local development documents, as well as for emerging sub-regional planning policies and other strategies or policy documents.

¹⁷ To be inserted

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Table Imp 1: From Vision to Policy

This table tracks the evolution of the themes and principles contained within Chapter One into the specific policies developed within succeeding chapters.

Theme / Principle	Supported by Plan Policies
Nurturing Kent and Medway's Environment & Resources	
Protecting the countryside, minimising greenfield development and making the most of opportunities for the re-use of previously developed land especially within existing towns and other substantial communities.	SP1, SS3, SS7, SS9, HP3,HP4, HP6 FP2, E1-7,QL4
Anticipating and reducing the impact of future climate change including stronger protection and management of areas of potential flood risk, reducing demand for energy and moving towards renewable energy sources.	SP1, E12, E13, E14, E21, E22
Protecting and enhancing the land, air and water environments. Ensuring that development does not create unacceptable levels of pollution and that development proposals sensitive to pollution are protected from its effects.	SP1, E15, E16, E17, E18, E19, TP23,
Protecting high quality agricultural land.	FP8
Conserving and enhancing Kent's natural habitats and biodiversity	SP1, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10
Promoting sensitive and comprehensive approaches to the assessment and protection of the countryside, that reflect its character and biodiversity as well as its natural beauty.	E2, E3,E4,E7
Conserving and enhancing Kent's historic environment.	SP1, QL6, QL7, QL8, QL9, QL10
Prudent use and management of water and other natural resources, including safeguarding of viable mineral reserves from sterilisation.	SP1, E18,E19, M12
Reducing disposable waste to a minimum and disposing of it so as to achieve maximum benefits from recycling and reducing its potential for environmental pollution.	WM1-6
Using wisely the natural environment to provide leisure, recreational, cultural and educational opportunities for local communities.	QL14-17, E9
Fostering Prosperity and Well Being	
Increasing economic opportunity and reducing economic disparities within Kent,	SS1-2, NK1-NK3, EK1, EK2, EK3,

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through commitment to regeneration and improved economic performance in North Kent, the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield.	CC3, FP1,FP3,
Pursuing targeted economic development, including support for high value added activities and skills development, business clusters and knowledge based industries to boost the competitiveness of the Kent economy and existing businesses.	FP1, FP3, FP4
Pursuing employment led growth and change, especially within the areas in North and East Kent requiring regeneration.	SS1, FP1, FP3, FP4,
Supporting indigenous growth of enterprise and employment.	FP3 FP4, FP5
Providing for sustainable growth in the economically successful parts of Kent, whilst addressing the pockets of deprivation which occur within them.	SS1, WK1, WK2, WK3, WK4, CC2
Sustaining and improving the economic health and vitality of Kent's rural communities and diversifying the rural economy.	SS5, SS6, FP5, FP6, FP7,
Capitalising on the role of Thames Gateway as a national and regional priority for economic growth, regeneration and infrastructure investment. This Plan recognises the pivotal role of the main urban areas of north Kent and Medway to this.	SS1, SS2, SS3, NK1, NK2, NK3, FP1 FP3,FP4,HP1
Promoting Ashford as a regional growth point whilst ensuring that wider benefits accrue to the economy of East Kent in particular.	SS1, SS2, CC1,FP1,FP3,HP1
Promoting sustainable tourism to capitalise on Kent and Medway's assets.	EK1, FP9-12
Securing Quality , Investment and Infrastructure in Regeneration and Development	
Supporting the regeneration and renaissance of our principal urban areas, including neighbourhood renewal, redevelopment and improvement in key inner urban locations.	SS1, SS2, FP13, FP14, FP15, FP18 HP3,HP5,HP7,HP8,QL1,QL3,QL4,QL5 ,QL12, IMP1
Securing balanced and timely provision of housing, jobs, infrastructure and community services. Supporting existing and enhanced services and infrastructure through development.	SP1, SS2, HP1, QL11,QL12,IMP1
Promoting and investing in efficient transport that provides for future needs, addresses congestion, avoids unacceptable environmental damage and makes best use of existing road and rail infrastructure.	SP1, TP1-25
Adopting innovative and high quality design to use land, water, energy and other resources more efficiently and to provide for changing lifestyles and preferences.	SP1, QL1, QL3, QL4, QL5, QL11, QL12, QL13
Encouraging a sense of place, local distinctiveness and the provision of safe, secure and attractive communities and working environments.	
Maintaining the character and separation of settlements through maintenance of the Green Belt and strategic gaps.	SS7, SS8, SS9, QL1, QL2
Enhancing choice, opportunity and accessibility	
Ensuring that planning policies and practice in Kent and Medway promote social	All

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independence and take into account the needs of all sections of the community.	
Providing sufficient housing of a suitable range, quality and diversity for people in Kent and Medway.	SP1, HP1, HP7,HP8,HP9,HP10,
Concentrating development at the principal urban areas that are the major focal points for employment, public services and transport facilities.	SS2, SS3 , FP14-17
Promoting more mixed use developments to a pattern and density that makes efficient use of land, increases accessibility, reduces travel needs and is planned to meet social, cultural and economic needs.	SS4, FP14, QL5
Ensuring that decisions on development and transport achieve good accessibility to services and jobs and a choice of means of transport for people and goods.	SP1, SS2 SS5, TP1, TP6-9
Ensuring that physical access to transport and community services and buildings whether public or private, new or existing, is improved for the benefit of all whilst recognising the value of heritage buildings.	SP1, TP1,TP6