

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4th November, 2020

10.00 am

Online





AGENDA

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, 4th November, 2020, at 10.00
am
Online**

Ask for: **Andrew Tait**

Telephone: **03000 416749**

Membership (13)

- Conservative (10): Mr R A Marsh (Chairman), Mr R A Pascoe (Vice-Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr P C Cooper, Mr H Rayner, Mr C Simkins and Mr J Wright
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mr I S Chittenden
- Labour (1) Mr J Burden
- Independents (1) Mr P M Harman

In response to COVID-19, the Government has legislated to permit remote attendance by Elected Members at formal meetings. This is conditional on other Elected Members and the public being able to hear those participating in the meeting. This meeting of the Cabinet will be streamed live and can be watched via the Media link on the Webpage for this meeting.

Representations by members of the public will only be accepted in writing. The transcript of representations that would normally be made in person will be provided to the Clerk by 12 Noon two days ahead of the meeting and will be read out by the Clerk of the meeting at the appropriate point in the meeting. The maximum length of time allotted to each written representation will be the 5 minutes that it takes the Clerk to read it out.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

A. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes - 16 September 2020 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Site Meetings and Other Meetings

B. GENERAL MATTERS

1. General Matters

C. MINERALS AND WASTE APPLICATIONS

1. Application SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019) - Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor variations to allow: export of shredded wood waste; a 4,600 tpa increase in throughput; and an increase in stockpile heights at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade; MVV Environmental Ridham Ltd (Pages 7 - 28)

D. DEVELOPMENTS TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

No items

E. MATTERS DEALT WITH UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

1. County matter applications (Pages 29 - 34)
2. County Council developments
3. Screening opinions under Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
4. Scoping opinions under Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

F. KCC RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS

1. Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Draft Management Plan - Consultation Response (Pages 35 - 88)
2. Canterbury City Council Issues Consultation Regulation 18 (Pages 89 - 112)
3. Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 (Pages 113 - 120)
4. Egerton Neighbourhood Plan - Regulation 16 (Pages 121 - 132)

G. OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

03000 416814

Tuesday, 27 October 2020

(Please note that the draft conditions and background documents referred to in the accompanying papers may be inspected by arrangement with the Departments responsible for preparing the report.)

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Planning Applications Committee held in the Online on Wednesday, 16 September 2020.

PRESENT: Mr R A Marsh (Chairman), Mr R A Pascoe (Vice-Chairman), Mr M A C Balfour, Mrs R Binks, Mr A Booth, Mr A H T Bowles, Mr J Burden, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr P M Harman, Mr H Rayner, Mr C Simkins and Mr J Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs T Dean, MBE and Mrs S V Hohler

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs S Thompson (Head of Planning Applications Group), Mr J Wooldridge (Principal Planning Officer - Mineral Developments), Mr D Joyner (Transport & Development Manager) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer) Mr Richard Peers from Amey was also present as a Technical Advisor.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**39. Minutes - 2 September 2020**

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2020 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

40. Site Meetings and Other Meetings

(Item A4)

The Head of Planning Applications Group informed the Committee that she was continuing to investigate options to enable Members to inspect the application site at Covers Farm in Westerham.

41. General Matters

(Item B1)

(1) The Head of Planning Applications Group reported that the County Council had adopted the Kent Minerals Sites Plan and modifications to the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (as set out by the Early Partial Review).

(2) The Committee agreed that a training session on the White Paper *Planning for the Future* should be arranged.

42. Application TM/19/2396 (KCC/TM/0211/2019) - Temporary development of an Anaerobic Digestion plant with ancillary gas-to-grid plant and associated infrastructure (part retrospective) at Blaise Farm Quarry, Blaise Quarry Road, Kings Hill, West Malling; Blaise Biogas Ltd

(Item C1)

(1) The Chairman agreed to accept very late representations in objection to the application from Pinsent Masons LLP on behalf of their clients, New Earth Solutions

and its parent company DM Topco Ltd He explained that this was because of advice from Invicta Law that he should do so. Even so, he would not have accepted this advice if the applicants had not been able to provide a “right of reply” response in line with the Committee’s public speaking arrangements. He was very sympathetic to the views of those Members of the Committee who did not agree that these late representations should be heard and would seek to have measures put in place to underline to objectors that it was extremely unlikely that an exception would be made in future.

(2) The Clerk to the Committee then read the representations from Pinsent Masons LLP, followed by those from Mr Giles Moir from CL Planning on behalf of the applicants.

(3) During discussion of this item, the Committee agreed to add an Informative, encouraging the applicant to give consideration to the early management arrangements within the anaerobic digestion facility when HGVs arriving at the site gave rise to odour concerns.

(4) The Committee also agreed that the Chairman would write on its behalf to the Cabinet Member for Environment asking her to draw to the attention of the Waste Disposal and Collection Authorities the need for waste en-route to the Blaise Farm Quarry site to be appropriately mitigated to minimise the risk of odour.

(5) On being put to the vote, the recommendations of the Head of Planning Applications Group were carried unanimously as amended in (3) and (4) above.

(6) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the application be referred to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and that subject to his decision permission be granted to the application subject to conditions, including conditions covering operations ceasing no later than 20 years from the commencement of commercial anaerobic digestion (AD) operations, the removal of the facility and all associated infrastructure within a further 12 months and the restoration of the site to forestry, ecological and amenity after-use within a further 12 months; no more than 75,000 tonnes of waste being imported to the AD facility each year (as proposed); no more than 78 HGV movements (39 in / 39 out) per day on Mondays to Fridays and 38 HGV movements (19 in / 19 out) on Saturdays (as proposed); hours of operation (as currently permitted / proposed but reworded to reflect the fact that the AD and gas to grid operation are technically carried out on a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year basis and that it is the deliveries and exports that are specifically restricted); any remaining construction work taking place during normal working hours; the waste catchment being as currently permitted; only organic waste (and associated packaging) being imported into or deposited, stored or processed at the facility; the removal of permitted development rights in respect of new, extended or altered buildings, plant and machinery; external lighting only being used where necessary and designed and positioned to minimise light spill; no open storage of waste, contaminated materials or finished products outside buildings, tanks and structures permitted for these

purposes; the doors on the AD waste reception building remaining closed at all times except when vehicles or persons are entering and leaving the building or for maintenance purposes; all loaded, open backed vehicles entering or leaving the site being properly enclosed or sheeted; site fencing being maintained and repaired as necessary; the external colour treatment of all plant and buildings as proposed; no public deliveries and sales; records of waste quantities / sources being maintained and made available to KCC on request; records of the dates and times of vehicle movements and their loads being maintained and made available to KCC on request; signs advising all HGV drivers associated with site operations not to travel through the settlements of Offham, Mereworth and West Malling unless they are collecting waste from within those settlements; measures to prevent mud or other materials being deposited on the highway; noise limits (for day to day and temporary operations); a potential contamination / remediation strategy; prior approval and implementation of a sustainable drainage maintenance manual; surface and process water not being discharged onto land outside the lateral extent of the application site; no development taking place on the land within the application site to the north of the AD facility and west of the IVC reception building unless planning permission is secured for some alternative use; and restoration and aftercare (and related issues, including soil handling);

- (b) the applicant be advised by Informative:-
- (i) that detailed controls in respect of emissions (e.g. odour and bioaerosols) are matters for the Environmental Permit;
 - (ii) of the nature and form of the required restoration scheme (as previously);
 - (iii) of the need for the operator of the Anaerobic Digestion plant to maintain a close working relationship with the landowners and other operators at Blaise Farm Quarry to minimise the possibility of any difficulties arising during the operation of the facility and ensure that effective restoration is provided when the site is restored;
 - (iv) of the requirements of the existing S106 Agreement (e.g. the liaison committee, HGV routing arrangements and site restoration);
 - (v) that they are encouraged to implement measures to minimise the impact of reversing alarms; and
 - (vi) that they are encouraged to give consideration to early management arrangements within the anaerobic digestion facility when HGVs arriving at the site give rise to odour concerns;
- (c) the applicant be asked to formally withdraw planning applications TM/19/2397, TM/19/2398 and TM/19/2399 (i.e. the Section 73 applications referred to in paragraph 17 of the report); and

- (d) the Chairman be requested to write on the Committee's behalf to the Cabinet Member for Environment asking her to draw to the attention of the Waste Disposal and Collection Authorities the need for waste en-route to the Blaise Farm Quarry site to be appropriately mitigated to minimise the risk of odour.

43. Application TM/88/1002/RVARA (KCC/TM/0121/2020) - Details pursuant to Conditions 4,7,8,12,17 and 27 of Permission TM/88/1002 relating to 5-year schemes of working restoration and aftercare, prior approval for static replacement processing plant and ancillary mobile plant and ancillary mobile plant and equipment, amended internal road layout, replacement weighbridge and weighbridge office, wheel wash, storage and staff welfare facilities and updated schemes of blasting and blast monitoring at Blaise Farm Quarry, Blaise Quarry Road, Kings Hill, West Malling; Gallagher Aggregates Ltd
(Item C2)

- (1) Mrs T Dean, MBE was present for this item and addressed the Committee as a Local Member.
- (2) On being put to the vote, the recommendations of the Head of Planning Applications Group were carried by 11 vote to 0 with 1 abstention.
- (3) RESOLVED that:-
- (a) approval be given to the application subject to the conditions which are set out below:-
- (i) the details hereby approved shall be implemented as approved unless otherwise agreed beforehand in writing by the County Planning Authority (*Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details*);
- (ii) except for the temporary operations defined in condition (iii) (below), noise generated from operations at the site associated with the approved details shall not exceed 55dB_{L_{Aeq,1hr} (free field)} as measured at any noise sensitive property (*Reason: To ensure minimum disturbance from operations and avoidance of nuisance to the local community*);
- (iii) for temporary operations such as soil and overburden stripping, movement, storage and replacement, the noise level at any noise sensitive property shall not exceed 70dB_{L_{Aeq,1hr} (free field)}. Temporary operations that exceed the normal day to day criterion shall be limited to a total of eight weeks in any twelve month period at any noise sensitive property (*Reason: To ensure minimum disturbance from operations and avoidance of nuisance to the local community*);
- (iv) Ground vibration as a result of blasting operations shall not exceed:-

- a peak particle velocity of 6mm/s in 95% of all blasts when measured over any period of one month as measured at any vibration sensitive location;
 - a peak particle velocity of 12mm/s as measured at any vibration sensitive location; and
 - a peak particle velocity of 15mm/s at the remains of the Chapel of St. Blaise.
(Reason: To ensure minimum disturbance from operations and avoidance of nuisance to the local community); and
- (v) all buildings, containers or structures outside the quarry void in the vicinity of the existing quarry offices shall be removed when no longer required for the effective working of the quarry
(Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans and details);
- (b) the applicants be advised by Informative that:-
- (i) all conditions attached to Permission TM/88/1002 remain in force and must be complied with at all times;
 - (ii) conditions 4, 7 and 8 of Permission TM/88/1002 require schemes of progressive working, restoration and aftercare to be submitted to and approved by the County Planning Authority at intervals of no more than 5 years.
 - (iii) no works should be carried out which would in any way affect the current alignment of Footpath MR286 until such time as the Public Path (Diversion) Order has been confirmed and certified and the diverted route is in place; and
 - (iv) they need to comply with the archaeological requirements of condition 23 of Permission TM/88/1002. In particular, they should ensure that archaeological investigations take place in accordance with a specification agreed with the County Council's archaeological officers[and
- (c) endorsement be given to an officer review and update of the "Guidance on blasting at Ragstone Quarries in Kent" (KCC, May 2004)" as a stand-alone document. This should include links to the KCC website where the blast monitoring results can be viewed together with contact details for Gallagher Aggregates Ltd (GAL) to enable individuals to address concerns directly with the company as necessary.

44. Matters dealt with under delegated powers
(Item E1)

RESOLVED to note matters dealt with under delegated powers since the last meeting relating to:-

- (a) County matter applications;

- (b) County Council developments;
- (c) Screening Opinions under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017; and
- (d) Scoping Opinions under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (None).

SECTION C
MINERALS AND WASTE DISPOSAL

Background Documents - the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and also as might be additionally indicated.

Item C1

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor variations to allow export of shredded wood waste; a 4,600tpa increase in throughput; and an increase in stockpile heights at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 4 November 2020.

Application by MVV Environmental Ridham Ltd for Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor variations to allow:

- 1) The export of shredded wood waste when the facility is not in operation;
 - 2) A variation of Condition 4 of planning permission SW/10/774 to increase the maximum throughput of fuel material by 4,600 tonnes per annum (tpa) from 177,200tpa to 181,800tpa to align the planning permission with the environmental permit for the site (EPR/TP3536CL/S003); and
 - 3) A variation of Conditions 5 and 6 of planning permission SW/12/1132 to increase the height of the stockpiles of wood within the storage yard and bays to a maximum of 7m in height;
- at MVV Environment Ridham, Lord Nelson Road, Ridham Dock, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FQ - SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

Recommendation: Permission be granted, subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mr M. Whiting

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The Ridham Biomass Facility (“the Facility”) is located within the Ridham Dock Industrial area; approximately 2km east of the village of Iwade and 4.4km north of the town centre of Sittingbourne. The dock is currently used to import, export and store a wide range of cargo such as wood, steel, grain, aggregate and concrete products and contains various large-scale buildings. Aside from the dock operations, the area hosts a number of industrial land uses including an aggregate facility (Brett Aggregates), a distribution depot (Morrisons), a building material supplier (Knauf), Kemsley Paper Mill (DS Smith Paper Ltd) and waste management facilities (Countrystyle Recycling Ltd and MVV Environment Ridham (the applicant)). Beyond the industrial areas, the surrounding land is predominantly low-lying grazing, agricultural and marshland.
2. There are two access routes to the dock. The first route is via private roads connecting the Ridham Dock via Lord Nelson Road and Barge Way to Swale Way (the public highway) (“the Swale Way access”). This route connects with the A249 at the Grovehurst Road Junction (B2005) and also allows direct access into Sittingbourne. The private roads were purpose built to facilitate activities associated with the Ridham complex and Barge Way has been upgraded to a suitable standard to accommodate

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

two-way traffic accessing the Knauf factory, as well as vehicles visiting the Docks and associated premises. The second access route forms the original access to Ridham Dock (“the Sheppey Way access”). This route consists of a narrow private road leading out to Old Ferry Road / Sheppey Way and the junction on the A249 south of the Sheppey Crossing. The route includes a 14’6” (4.42m) height restriction where the road passes under Sheppey Way and the railway line.

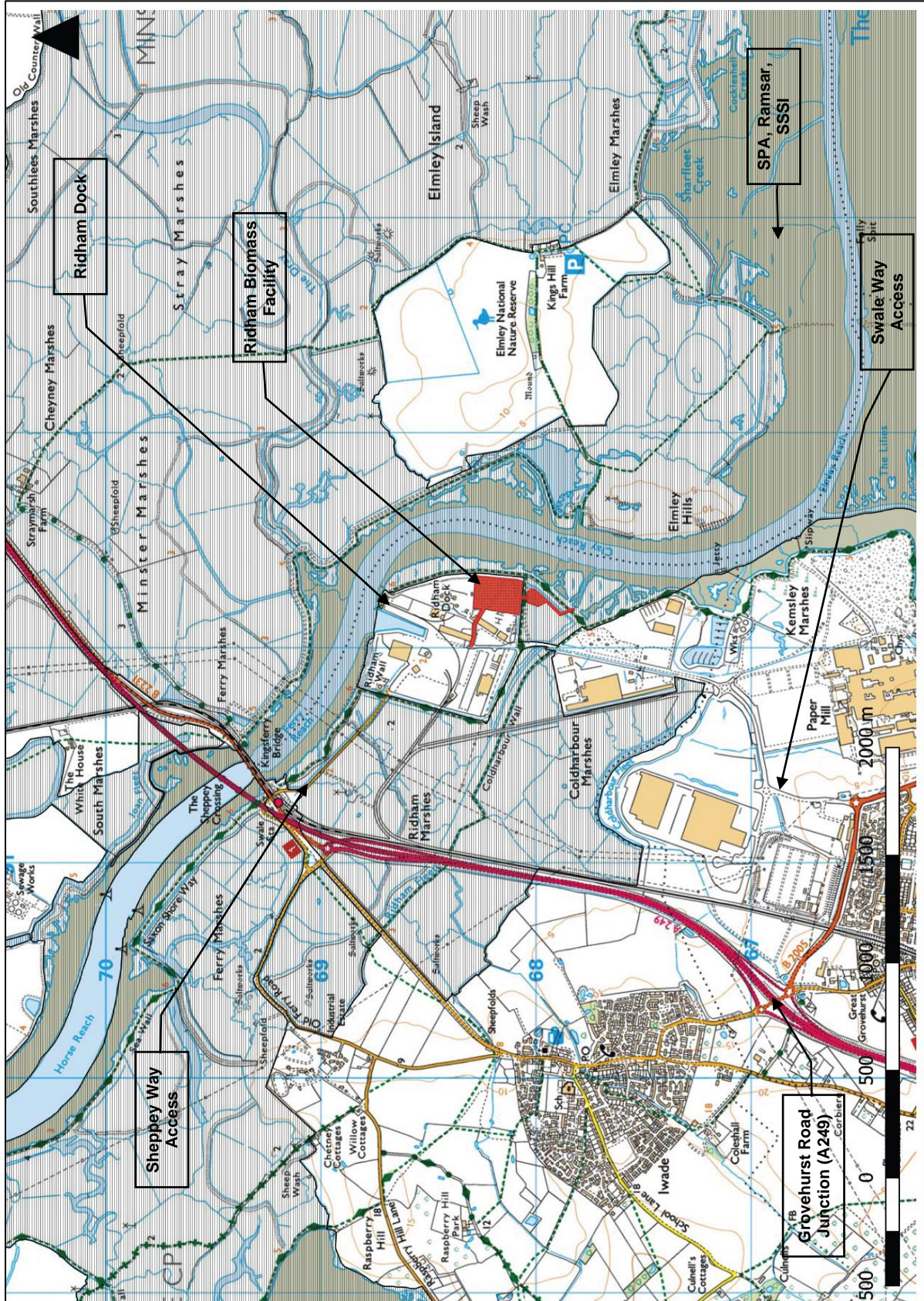
3. The Ridham Biomass Facility was completed in August 2015 and consists of a large plant building with associated chimney (stack) with several other ancillary structures / plant and equipment, including a wood shredding barn and open storage.
4. Land immediately to the south falls within the surrounding Swale Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Ramsar Sites and comprises permanent pasture and areas of intertidal saltmarsh. A permanent surface water attenuation pond which forms part of the surface water drainage system connected to the Biomass Facility is located within the field to the south.
5. Land to the east forms a section of the Ridham Sea Defences and includes a raised embankment and drainage ditches. Public Right of Way (PROW) ZR88 passes along the embankments, this includes the Saxon Shore Way, which continues along the sea wall adjacent to the coastline. Beyond this is the Swale Estuary, which forms a tidal channel and is designated as part of the Swale Estuary Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).
6. Land to the north and west forms part of the built development within Ridham Dock, which includes other minerals and waste operations as well as other industrial and dock related operations. The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan identifies Ridham Dock as a safeguarded wharf, important to the County’s infrastructure.
7. The site is located within a Flood Zone 3a with a ‘High Probability’ of flooding from the sea. This area of the coastline benefits from Environment Agency (EA) maintained flood defences. The southern section of the site also falls within a Coastal Change Management Area (Policy DM23) and an Area of High Landscape Value (Policy DM24), as defined by the Swale Local Plan Proposals Map.

Background / Recent Site History

8. Planning history relevant to this application includes the following permissions and approvals:
 - SW/10/774 - Biomass Combined Heat and Power Plant permitted 28 May 2012, subject to 27 conditions.
 - SW/10/774/R3 - Amended site layout pursuant to condition 3 of planning permission SW/10/774 approved 18 October 2012.
 - SW/10/774/R - Non-material amendment to site layout and elevations approved 22 July 2013.
 - SW/10/774/RA - Non-material amendment to vary the colour of the cladding approved 18 November 2013.
 - SW/12/1132 - Extension to wood storage area and improvements to site access at the approved Ridham Biomass power plant (planning permission SW/10/774) permitted 7 November 2012, subject to 12 conditions.

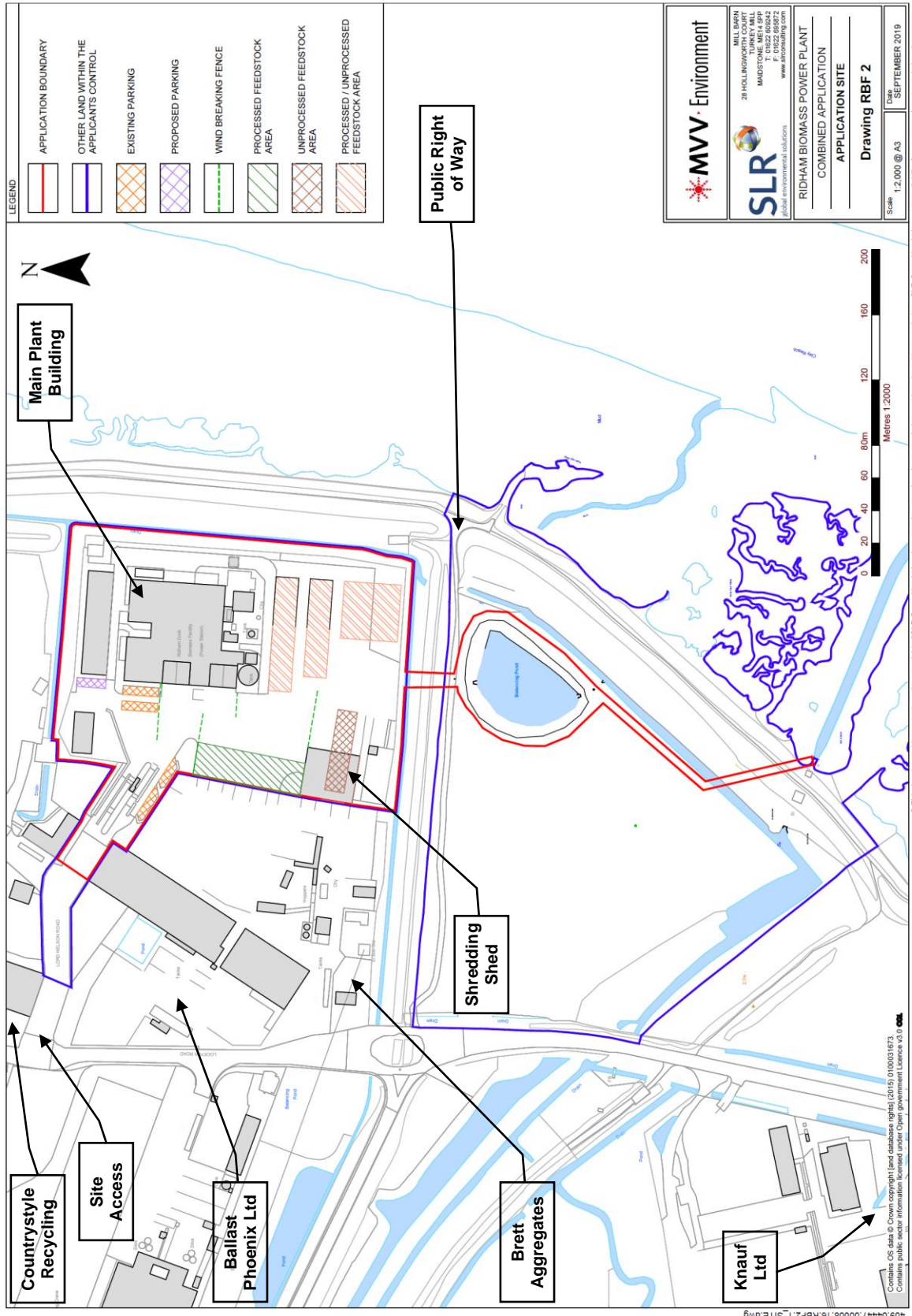
Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

Location Plan (showing the Ridham Biomass Facility and surrounding land uses / road layout)



Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

Site Layout Plan (showing the application boundary and internal site layout)



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Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

Background / Recent Site History (continued)

- SW/14/76 - Revised surface water drainage scheme permitted 16 May 2014.
 - SW/14/99 - Variation of conditions 6 and 9 of planning permission SW/10/774 to allow a revised surface water drainage scheme to serve the Ridham Biomass Facility approved 16 May 2014.
 - SW/15/507191 - Stores building permitted 19 October 2015
 - SW/10/774/RB - Non-material amendment to approved site layout in respect of wind breaking fence, cover over incinerator bottom ash loading area and drainage buffer tank of planning permission SW/10/774 approved 22 March 2017.
 - SW/19/504919 - Construction of a footbridge to provide safe staff access from the Ridham Dock Biomass Facility to the SUDS pond permitted 13 December 2019.
 - SW/19/504918 – Amendments to surface water and process water arrangements to enable discharge to the Swale permitted 25 August 2020
9. Planning permission SW/10/774 granted for the construction of a Biomass Combined Heat and Power Plant on 28 May 2012. The Facility was constructed and became fully operational in August 2015. The Facility uses the energy content of low-grade waste wood such as chipboard, Medium-Density Fibreboard (MDF), plywood and other types of fibre and particle board (classified as grade B and C waste wood) to generate electricity. This type of waste wood material would ordinarily have been disposed of at landfill, as it is difficult to recycle. The permission allows for the importation of wood waste by road and includes facilities to store and shred the wood prior to it being fed directly into the furnace.
10. Based upon a maximum throughput rate of 177,200 tonnes per annum (tpa), the Facility has capacity to generate approximately 25MWe of electrical output, which is used to feed the energy demands of the plant, with the surplus exported into the National Grid. The Facility was designed to allow for the export of heat for industrial uses. The export of heat has been explored and a pipeline potentially linking the Facility to a nearby papermill permitted (under reference SW/16/506935). Unfortunately, this development has never been implemented and the pipeline permission has since fallen away.
11. The base planning permission SW/10/774 allows for the development and operation of the Facility subject to conditions including:
- A maximum throughput of fuel of 177,200tpa.
 - Measures to protect and mitigate protected species.
 - Flood mitigation and resilience measures.
 - Deliveries of wood between 06:00 and 20:00 including at weekends and Bank Holidays.
 - Dust mitigation measures.
 - Archaeological field evaluation works.
 - Bird collision monitoring plan.
 - Reedbed Habitat Compensation Plan.
 - Wood shredding under cover.
 - External lighting controls
 - Noise controls.
 - Parking provision.

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

12. Members should note that there are no direct controls on the number of HGV movements associated with the site, including vehicles delivering wood waste. The permissions do not allow for the export of waste or shredded wood off site.

Proposal

13. MVV Environment Ridham (MER) are applying for planning permission for the continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant in accordance with the extant planning permissions with three minor variations (set out below). The application site includes the areas covered by the planning permissions set out in the Background / Recent Site History section above. The key permissions in the context of this application being SW/10/774 (the original facility) and SW/12/1132 (for the extension to the wood storage area). The application seeks to consolidate the earlier permissions and approvals set out in above section, excluding SW/19/504919 (for the construction of a footbridge) and SW/19/504918 (for amendments to surface water and process water arrangements), which had not been determined at the time of the application. The three variations to the planning permissions are as follows.

1) The export of shredded wood waste when the Facility is not in operation.

As indicated above, the Facility has permission to import, shred and incinerate wood waste to generate electricity. There are times when the Facility is not able to use all the wood it is contracted to receive, for example when it has a planned or an unplanned outage for maintenance or repair reasons. During a planned outage, the applicant states that it is usually possible to manage deliveries. However, during unplanned outages it is not possible to store all the contracted wood on site for the period of the outage without exceeding the site's capacity. MER are therefore applying for planning permission (and separately for a variation of the site's Environmental Permit) to allow wood to be delivered, shredded and exported to either the suppliers, or to an alternative licensed storage area where it can be held until MER's Facility is back online and is able to use the wood waste received. The proposed export of shredded wood is an emergency provision and would only apply during an outage. The applicant suggests that the following condition is imposed on any permission, to provide KCC with control over this element of the operation.

"During unplanned outages at the Ridham Biomass Facility, up to 2,500 tonnes of shredded wood a week can be exported off site until the Ridham Biomass Facility is operational and able to accept the shredded wood."

The Facility is authorised by its Environmental Permit to burn approximately 3,500 tonnes of wood per week. During an unplanned outage, the applicant anticipates being able to divert up to 1,500 tonnes of the wood to alternative facilities without it needing to come to site. Leaving around 2,000 tonnes per week of wood that would need to be processed and transferred to another storage location when the Facility is offline.

The applicant states that arrangements are in place to allow the storage of up to 2,000 tonnes of wood in the dockyard. Wood can be moved between the dockyard and the Facility without the need for it to move on the public highway. The applicant states that depending on the amount of wood stored on the site and in the dockyard when an

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

unplanned outage occurs, it may be possible to store several weeks deliveries. The need to export shredded wood from the site during an outage using the public highway would not therefore commence until the local storage provisions are exhausted.

The applicant also states that two thirds of the 2,000 tonnes of shredded waste wood could be returned to the suppliers using return loads (back loading) on vehicles delivering unshredded wood to the site. This would leave one third of the shredded waste wood (660 tonnes per week) that would need to be transported in vehicles that would not already be visiting the site.

In accordance with condition 22 of SW/10/774 and condition 4 of SW/12/1132 all shredding of wood would only take place undercover within the designated areas.

2) A variation of Condition 4 of planning permission SW/10/774 to increase the maximum throughput of fuel material by 4,600tpa from 177,200tpa to 181,800tpa to align the planning permission with the environmental permit for the site (Permit Ref: EPR/TP3536CL/S003).

To allow the planning permission to be consistent with the environmental permit, the application seeks permission for an increase in the maximum throughput of fuel through the Facility from 177,200tpa to 181,800tpa. This represents an additional 4,600 tonnes per annum (a 2.6% increase in throughput).

The Facility would continue to operate in line with its Environmental Permit which establishes that the environmental impact of the higher volume of throughput is acceptable. The Permit provides the required safeguards in relation to emissions to air and the environment from this use.

The technical assessments carried out in connection with the Environmental Permit were based on accepting and processing 181,800tpa. The applicant states that the anomaly between the planning permission and the permit arose because of changes to the technology between the planning and permitting stage.

3) A variation of Conditions 5 and 6 of planning permission SW/12/1132 to increase the height of the stockpiles of wood within the storage yard and bays to a maximum of 7m in height.

Condition 5 of planning permission SW/12/1132 restricts the stockpiles of unprocessed wood to 5m high in the open and Condition 6 restricts storage to 4.5m within the storage bays. The application proposes to increase stockpile heights for wood to a maximum of 7m to allow for increased storage capacity on site. The applicant states that:

- The existing push walls and fencing of the storage bays are high enough to contain 7m high stockpiles.
- The 7m stockpiles would be the exception rather than the rule at the site.
- The dust control measures already in place would continue to apply to ensure dust does not become a nuisance. These include an existing dust suppression system (water misters and water cannon), wind fencing (which allows wind to pass through but traps dust particles), a road sweeper, and the dampening of roads, storage areas and stockpiles during dry or windy conditions. Full details are provided in a Dust Management Plan.

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

- A Fire Prevention Plan (FPP) is included setting out the measures in place to prevent, detect, suppress, mitigate and contain fires associated with the acceptance and storage of waste on site.
- All other conditions on planning permission SW/12/1132 would remain unchanged, including hours of delivery for wood and dust control measures.

Additional / revised information received from the applicant during the processing of the application in response to consultee views and representations.

14. MER have confirmed that the Facility needs to store large quantities of wood to maintain operations at Bank holidays and when there are extended outages. Any dust arising from the external wood storage areas would be managed by mobile water sprays and if necessary additional equipment would be hired on a short-term basis. Furthermore, the additional wood stores would be separated from the areas of ecological interest by the boundary fences and there would be space between the stockpiles and the fencing to locate water sprays if necessary. The site is covered by a Dust Management Plan (DMP) and all storage and processing of wood would take place as per the recommendations of the DMP.
15. A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) for the export of Processed Wood was prepared by the applicant in response to comments from Highways England, Kent Highways and Iwade Parish Council. Amongst other matters, the TMP confirms that:
 - Processed wood would not be exported from the site during normal operations only during unplanned outages. MER confirm the Facility has experienced one prolonged unplanned outage in the 5 years of operation. The proposals to export wood is to provide a contingency plan in the event of another prolonged outage and to allow for the Facility to receive and to export a reduced amount of wood in these circumstances.
 - Measures are taken to reduce the quantity of wood delivered to the site during normal planned outages and in short plant breakdowns and outages which would not necessitate the export of processed wood.
 - The amount of wood delivered during an unplanned outage would be reduced and with the plant offline no Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBA) or Air Pollution Control residues (APCr) would be created reducing the traffic flow to potentially less than a quarter (25%) of the normal flow.
 - The preferred routes for export of processed wood from the site are: Sea going Vessel from Ridham Dock; Storage on Ridham Dock; Export to Countrystyle within dock area (all achieved without using the public highway); and Export by road (whenever possible using backloads).
16. MER has agreed to the conditions recommended by Highways England and Kent County Council Highways and Transportation below.

Planning Policy

17. The most relevant Government guidance and development plan policies are summarised below:

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18. **National Planning Policies** – the most relevant National Planning Policies are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the associated National Planning Practice Guidance and the National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW). National policy and guidance are all material planning considerations.
19. **Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (as amended by the Early Partial Review) (September 2020) (Kent MWLP)**– Policies CSM 6 (Safeguarded Wharves and Rail Depots), CSW1 (Sustainable Development), CSW2 (Waste Hierarchy), CSW4 (Strategy for Waste Management Capacity), CSW 7 (Waste Management for Non-hazardous Waste), CSW 8 (Recovery Facilities for Non-hazardous Waste), CSW 16 (Safeguarding of Existing Waste Management Facilities), DM1 (Sustainable design), DM2 (Environmental and landscape sites of international, national and local importance), DM3 (Ecological impact assessment), DM10 (Water environment), DM 11 (Health and Amenity), DM12 (Cumulative impact), Policy DM 13 (Transportation of Minerals and Waste), DM14 (Public rights of way), DM16 (Information required in support of an application) and DM20 (Ancillary Development).
20. **Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan (July 2017) (Swale LP)** – Policies ST1 (Delivering sustainable development in Swale), ST3 (The Swale settlement strategy), CP 1 (Building a strong, competitive economy), CP 2 (Promoting sustainable transport), CP7 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment), DM 6 (Managing transport demand and impact), DM14 (General development criteria), DM21 (Water, flooding and drainage), DM22 (The Coast), DM23 (Coastal Change Management Area), DM24 (Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes) and DM28 (Biodiversity and geological conservation).

Consultations

21. The summary of consultee responses below represents each consultee’s most recent comments, updated following receipt of any additional comments on the further supporting information received from the applicant.
22. **Swale Borough Council** – no comments received.
23. **Swale Borough Council Environmental Health (Swale EH) – no objection**

No objection to the variation to increase the maximum throughput of fuel material to bring this in line with the Environmental Permit and no objection to the increase of stockpiles to a maximum of 7 metres in height.

Swale EH note that the site already adheres to a Dust Management Plan as a condition of SW/12/1132 (condition 9), as well as conditions imposed on an Environmental Permit. The comments note that no new plant or equipment is proposed, there would be no increase in working hours, and that the site would continue to operate in accordance with the noise limits set out in condition 24 of permission SW/12/1132.

Following submission of additional supporting information, Swale EH confirmed that it is satisfied with the response and that Highways has not raised issue with the potential increased HGV movements. It notes that any change in highway movements would be mitigated to some degree by the permission granted to discharge surface water into

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the Swale (replacing the current provisions to tanker this off site). Swale EH confirm that it is satisfied that the increased stockpile height is within current regulations.

24. Iwade Parish Council (Iwade PC) – objects, on the following grounds.

1) On the export of shredded wood waste - objects on the grounds that this would increase the number of HGVs on an already congested road network. Highways England has placed an embargo on development within the A249 area, stating that it only has capacity to take another 60 vehicles. Considers that increases in HGV usage should not be allowed until improvements to the Grovehurst Junction on the A249 are delivered.

2) On the increase in throughput - objects on the grounds that this would increase the number of HGVs on an already congested road network. See above.

3) On the increase stockpile heights - objects on the grounds that despite fire precautions installed by other firms there have been fires resulting from stockpiled wood at Ridham Dock. Notes that large wood stockpiles tend to heat up internally and can do so for days without anyone realising before igniting. The extant planning permission SW/12/1132 sets stockpile heights to 5m, this proposal increases it by a further 2m (i.e. 6.5 feet). The proposed height would exceed EA guidance on storage of wood waste.

25. Natural England (NE) – no comments received.**26. Environment Agency (EA) – no objection at the planning stage.** If planning permission is granted, the relevant changes, including a Fire Prevention Plan, would be assessed as part of an application to vary the site's Environmental Permit. The EA note that planning approval would not automatically mean any permit variation would be approved. The EA's National Permitting Service would consider the evidence submitted by the operator and if it is deemed insufficient the permit variation would be refused.

The EA note that the increase in waste stockpile heights proposed would exceed the maximum 4 metre limit specified in the EA's Fire Prevention Plans Guidance. It confirms that the operator can propose larger stockpiles, however this approach would need to be justified at the permit variation stage. The permit variation would require a breakdown of the changes proposed in terms of how large the stockpiles would be, including volumes, tonnages and dimensions, how long the material would be stored, and what types of temperature monitoring and mitigation measures would be implemented to appropriately manage the additional risk.

27. Highways England (HE) – no objection, subject to conditions as set out below.

HE initially raised a holding objection due to insufficient information on the potential impact of HGV movements on the surrounding road network (including the A249 which forms part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN)). HE's comments drew attention to the potential for the development to contribute to congestion at the Grovehurst Road Junction with the A249.

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Following discussions with the applicant and submission of further supporting information, including a revised Traffic Management Plan, HE recommend that subject to the imposition of the conditions below, it is satisfied that the proposals would not materially affect the safety, reliability and / or operation of the SRN in this location and its vicinity. The recommended conditions would require:

- A maximum limit on exports of shredded wood during an outage of 2,500 tonnes per week until the Facility is operational;
- No HGV movements associated with the export of processed wood occurring during the network peak periods (07:30 to 09:30 and 16:30 to 18:30 daily);
- Records of all vehicle movements to and from the site being kept and reported annually to the Local Planning Authority and Strategic and Local Highway Authorities; and
- the Traffic Management Plan being updated and reviewed annually to ensure it continues to be effective.

It further recommends an informative seeking the applicant to make every endeavour to use the private road to the Sheppey Way and the A249 junction adjacent to the Sheppey Bridge as a primary point of access rather than as a secondary route.

28. **KCC Highways and Transportation (KCC H&T) – no objection, subject to conditions** limiting the export of shredded wood to 2,500 tonnes per week and the implementation of the Traffic Management Plan during unplanned outages.

KCC H&T are satisfied that the measures proposed would adequately mitigate the impact on the local highway network from any unplanned outages that would prevent the site processing the normal wood imports. It appreciates that additional movements would be minimised by the efficient use of the TMP to utilise backloads on vehicles already delivering to the site, diverting imports elsewhere, increasing storage and exporting as much material to Countrystyle or via the port, neither of which would require transportation on the public highway.

In addition, as the plant would not be in operation, no export of Incinerator Bottom Ash or Pollution Control Residues by HGV would have to be undertaken, and the planned completion of a new drainage system to discharge into the estuary would replace the current need for surface and processed water to be transported off site by tanker. The restrictive conditions proposed by Highways England would keep any additional HGV movements associated with the outage off the highway network at the times when capacity issues are experienced. It should be recognised that KCC has also secured Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) to carry out a major improvement scheme at the Grovehurst/A249 junction on Swale Way to address the current congestion and accommodate planned traffic growth to at least 2037. Construction of this scheme is expected to commence in 2022.

29. **KCC's Ecological Advice Service (KCC EAS) – no objection, subject to implementation of the Dust Management Plan.**

KCC EAS recommend that, subject to the Planning Authority being content with the scheme, the measures proposed within the Dust Management Scheme are appropriate to minimise/avoid an increase in dust/particles on the designated sites.

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Subject to the above, the advice recommends that no additional ecology information is required as part of this application.

Local Member

30. The local County Member for Swale West, Mr M. Whiting was notified of the application on 14 April 2020 and following receipt of additional supporting information on 14 July 2020 and 19 August 2020.

Publicity

31. The application was publicised by the posting of a site notice, an advertisement in a local newspaper, and the individual notification of 19 nearby business properties.

Representations

32. No representations were received in response to the above publicity.

Discussion

33. The application proposes the continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations to allow: 1) the export of shredded wood waste when the Facility is not in operation; 2) an increase to the maximum throughput of wood of 4,600tpa (from 177,200 to 181,800tpa) to align with the site's Environmental Permit; and 3) an increase in stockpile heights to a maximum of 7m in height. The application proposes no other changes to the permitted arrangements, or the conditions imposed on the extant permissions.
34. The application is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee as a result of an objection from Iwade Parish Council on the grounds of potential impacts on highway congestion and safety, and concerns about an increased risk of fire. Following negotiation and the submission of further supporting information, no objections are being raised by the technical consultees. See the Consultation and Representations sections above for details of all views received.
35. In considering this proposal, regard must be had to the development plan policies outlined in the Planning Policy section. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, the proposal needs to be considered in the context of the development plan policies, Government guidance and any other material planning considerations.
36. In accordance with government guidance officers have engaged with the applicant and other interested parties to address issues arising during the processing of this planning application to ensure any decision is appropriately informed. This process has included allowing the applicant additional time to attempt to address matters that have arisen, including in relation to highway considerations.
37. In my opinion, the key material planning considerations in this case can be summarised by the following headings:

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- Principle / Need;
- Highways and access;
- Environmental considerations (including noise, dust, air quality);
- Nature conservation;
- Landscape and visual impacts; and
- Water Environment (including Flood Risk).

Principle / Need

38. Policies CSW 1, CSW2 and DM1 of the Kent MWLP require the Council to take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, the National Planning Policy for Waste, and the Waste Management Plan for England. This includes a requirement for proposals for waste management to demonstrate how they will help drive waste up the Waste Hierarchy (Disposal, Other Recovery, Recycle, Re-Use and Prevention). Policy CSW 4 and CSW7 state that waste management capacity in Kent will be sufficient to manage at least the equivalent of the waste arising in Kent plus some residual non-hazardous waste from London. Policy CSW 8 states that facilities using waste as a fuel will only be permitted if they qualify as recovery operations as defined by the Revised Waste Framework Directive and action is taken to secure a market for both the power and heat produced. MER have taken action to market the heat produced by the Facility, including securing planning permission for a pipeline to supply the nearby papermill. This permission was never implemented. However, it demonstrates that significant work was undertaken to attempt to secure a market for the heat produced.
39. Policy CSM 6 of the Kent MWLP safeguards wharves and rail depots requiring that planning permission not be granted for non-minerals development that may unacceptably adversely affect the operation of existing, planned or potential sites, such that their capacity or viability for minerals transportation purposes may be compromised. CSW 16 seeks to safeguard existing waste management facilities. The proposed changes to the existing biomass facility would have no unacceptable adverse impacts on the operation of the port and would support the continued operation of the waste management facility. Policy DM20 provides support for ancillary development within or in close proximity to mineral and waste development provided that: the proposal is necessary to enable the main development to proceed and it has been demonstrated that there are environmental benefits in providing a close link with the existing site that outweigh the environmental impacts.
40. Policy ST1 of Swale LP seeks to deliver sustainable development by supporting a strong competitive economy, meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change and conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment. Policy CP1 adds weight to the support for a strong competitive economy, including safeguarding existing business and employers.
41. This Biomass Facility forms an important resource in meeting the capacity requirement to manage waste arising in Kent. It provides a facility to manage low quality wood through recovery, which would otherwise be sent to landfill or exported to the continent. The proposed variation would result in a small increase in the site's waste recovery capacity. The Facility is considered a long-term sustainable solution that contributes to managing this waste stream which can originate from commercial,

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industrial and domestic sources. Development on site that helps to continue to support this provision would receive general policy support, subject to further consideration of the matters below.

Highways and access

42. Paragraphs 108 - 109 of the NPPF seek development that: promotes sustainable transport modes, taking account of the type of development and its location; ensures safe and suitable access; and ensures that any significant impacts on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be mitigated to an acceptable degree. The NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. Paragraph 7 (and Appendix B) of the NPPW require that development has suitable access to the highway network.
43. Policy DM13 of the Kent MWLP requires that: access to a development is safe and appropriate to the scale and nature of movements associated with the use, such that the impact of traffic generated is not detrimental to road safety; the highway network is able to accommodate the traffic flows; and the associated highway movements do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment or the local community. Policy CP2 and DM6 of the Swale LP requires development that protects and maintains the highway network in terms of traffic flow, capacity and highway safety. Policy DM6 also safeguards usable wharfs or rail facilities and seeks the safe and efficient delivery of goods and supplies.
44. There are two elements of the proposed development that have the potential to increase the number of HGV movements associated with the Facility. The first part of the application proposes a change to the operational arrangements to allow the export of wood from the site. This provision is proposed as an emergency arrangement in the event that there is an unplanned outage (breakdown) in the plant that prevents the use of the waste wood imported. The applicant states that approximately 3,500 tonnes of waste wood is imported per week and that during an unplanned outage up to 1,500 tonnes per week could be diverted to other facilities with the remainder needing to be delivered to site. The application therefore seeks permission to export up to 2,500 tonnes per week of material in these exceptional circumstances. This amount of material allows flexibility to accommodate small fluctuations in the anticipated arrangements. At 20 tonnes per load (HGV) the export of 2,500 tonnes per week would generate 125 loads per week (250 HGV movements, 125 In / 125 Out). The applicant states that 1,840 tonnes of shredded wood would be back hauled on HGVs delivering material (i.e. permitted vehicle movements already on the highway network). This equates to 184 movements (92 In / 92 Out) of the 250 movements per week required. The remaining 660 tonnes each week would require transportation on additional HGVs attending site for that purpose only (66 movements (33 In / 33 Out). If the additional HGVs were to remove the wood during an 8-hour working day over 5 days per week this would equate to less than 2 HGV movements per hour (1 movement in / 1 out).
45. The second part of the application that has the potential to impact on the highway network is the proposed increase in the throughput from 177,200tpa to 181,800tpa (an increase of 4,600tpa or +2.6%). This would equate to approximately 230 additional

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HGV loads per year (460 movements (230 In / 230 Out) per year or approximately 2 movements per day).

46. As indicated above, Ridham dock benefits from two private access roads out the public highway; “the Swale Way access” leading toward Sittingbourne and the Grovehurst Road Junction (B2005) with the A249 and “the Sheppey Way access” the original dock access out toward the Old Ferry Road / Sheppey Way junction with the A249 (south of the Sheppey Crossing). This original route is single lane in places and includes a 14’6” (4.42m) height restriction. Members will note from the planning history above that the base permissions for the biomass facility are not subject to specific limits on daily vehicle numbers, and that the throughput of the Facility provides the effective cap. Any assessment of the current application needs to be set in this context.
47. Iwade Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that it would increase the number of HGVs on an already congested road network. It states that Highways England (HE) has placed an embargo on development within the A249 area. The Parish Council considers that increases in HGV usage should not be allowed until improvements to the Grovehurst Junction on the A249 are delivered. Following receipt of additional supporting information, including a revised Traffic Management Plan, both HE and KCC H&T raise no objections, subject to conditions: limiting the export of wood during an outage to 2,500 tonnes per week; allowing no HGV movements associated with the export of processed wood during the network peak periods (07:30 to 09:30 and 16:30 to 18:30 daily); requiring records of movements to be maintained and reported annually; and requiring the implementation and regular update of the Traffic Management Plan. HE further recommends an informative encouraging the use of the Sheppey Way and the A249 junction adjacent to the Sheppey Bridge where possible. HE advises that subject to the imposition of the conditions, it is satisfied that the proposals would not materially affect the safety, reliability and / or operation of the Strategic Road Network. KCC H&T are also satisfied that the measures proposed would adequately mitigate the impact on the local highway network. It also highlights that KCC has secured Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) to carry out a major improvement scheme at the Grovehurst/A249 Junction on Swale Way to address the current congestion and that construction of this scheme is expected to commence in 2022.
48. The application is accompanied by a Traffic Management Plan which states that during an outage:
 - MER would send as much processed wood into Ridham Dock using private roads where it can be exported by sea or stored on the dock.
 - MER would transfer as much processed wood as possible to Countrystyle (at Ridham), without using the public highways.
 - MER would use backloads with vehicles that have already tipped on site to export processed wood from the site where it is not possible to store wood on adjacent sites.
 - HGVs exporting wood would need to be directed to use the Swale Way Access due to their size as the height restriction on the Sheppey Way Access limit its use.
49. MER further agree to the conditions proposed by HE and Kent H&T that would preclude HGV movements from peak travel times when the congestion associated with the existing road layout at the Grovehurst Road Junction is high. It should be noted

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that the export of wood is only proposed during an unplanned outage. The applicant states that there has only been one such outage in the 5 years of operation. The applicant also indicates that with increased storage on site (also part of the application), alternate storage arrangements within the dock yard area and the diversion of material, only outages that last several weeks would result in wood being exported by road. The movements generated during this period would also be offset by a reduction in HGV traffic that would otherwise visit the site when the Facility is fully operational. The applicant states that this includes HGVs required to remove residual material generated by the operations (i.e. Incinerator Bottom Ash (IBAs), Air Pollution Control Residuals (APCRs), metals, oil and sludge), which will not build up when the Facility is offline. It states that this activity generally results in 13 HGV loads transported off site each week (26 HGV movements – 13 In / 13 Out).

50. The 460 additional HGV movements per year (230 In / 230 Out) anticipated as a result of the proposed minor increase in the throughput can also be offset against the County Council's recent decision to grant permission for a revised surface and process water drainage system on site (under permission SW/19/504918). The revised drainage scheme allows discharge of surface water runoff and process water from the Facility direct to the Swale, replacing an existing arrangement where this water is captured and transported off site by tankers. Depending on annual rainfall levels, the applicant states that the new permission will remove between 140 and 700 HGV loads per annum that would otherwise have used the local road network. For example, the applicant states that in 2019 443 tankers loads of surface water were exported across the year. The applicant has recently implemented permission SW/19/504918 and is looking to deliver the development as soon as possible to offset the cost of tankering water offsite.
51. Given the above I am content that the net change in the number of HGV movements on the public highway due to the proposed increase in throughput would be minimal. Taking account of the mitigation measures put forward by the applicant in the revised Traffic Management Plan and the recommendations of both HE and KCC H&T the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the highway network either in terms of congestion or highway safety and as such there are no highway grounds to recommend refusal. I am satisfied that any residual impacts on the highway network as a result of the changes proposed could reasonably be mitigated by the conditions recommended by the technical consultees. In summing up it should also be acknowledged again that the proposed impacts for wood exports would only occur in an emergency if there is a breakdown at the Facility for an extended period. I therefore consider that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of Government and Development Plan policies relating to highways and access considerations.

Environmental Considerations (including noise, dust, air quality)

52. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF seeks to prevent development from contributing to unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution and states that development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality. Paragraph 180 states that planning decisions should ensure that development is appropriate for its location considering the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment. Appendix B of the NPPW states that proximity of sensitive receptors,

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including ecological and human receptors, and the extent to which adverse emissions can be controlled using appropriate and well-maintained and managed equipment and vehicles, should form part of the decision process.

53. Policies DM11, DM12 and DM13 of the Kent MWLP seek development that is unlikely to generate unacceptable adverse impacts from noise, dust, vibration, odour, emissions, bioaerosols, illumination, visual intrusion, traffic or exposure to health risks and associated damage to the qualities of life and wellbeing to communities and the environment. Proposals for waste development are also required to ensure that there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the use of other land for other purposes. Policy DM14 of the Swale LP requires development that causes no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas.
54. Iwade Parish Council's objections to the application include concerns about the potential for increased stockpile sizes / heights to increase the risk of fire. The Parish Council states that large wood stockpiles tend to heat up internally, and can do so for days without anyone realising, before igniting. It refers to instances where there have been stockpile fires at other sites within the Ridham Dock area despite fire precautions. The Parish Council notes that the extant planning permission SW/12/1132 sets stockpile heights to 5m and that the current proposal increases this by a further 2m (i.e. 6.5 feet). It also notes that the proposed height would exceed the stockpile height recommended by EA Environmental Permit guidance on fire prevention plans.
55. The EA is raising no objection at the planning stage. It states that if planning permission is granted the development would be assessed as part of an application to vary the site's Environmental Permit, including stockpile sizes and a Fire Prevention Plan. In response to the concerns about the overall stockpile heights, the EA confirm that the operator can propose stockpile heights above the levels stated in the guidance, however this approach would need to be justified at the permit stage. The permit variation would require a breakdown of the maximum dimensions, volume, and tonnages of stockpile materials, how long the material would be stored, and what types of temperature monitoring would be implemented to manage the additional risk.
56. A copy of a Fire Prevention Plan (FPP) is included with the application. It sets out the measures in place to prevent, detect, suppress, mitigate and contain fires associated with the acceptance and storage of waste. Paragraph 183 of the NPPF states that the focus of planning policies and decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively. On this basis I consider that the risk of fire is a technical matter to be covered by the Environmental Permitting regime. The considerations given to the stockpile heights above and below will focus on the material planning considerations, including visual and landscape impacts.
57. As indicated above, the Facility is subject to an existing Environmental Permit issued and monitored by the Environment Agency (Permit Reference EPR /TP3536CL). A Dust Management Plan (DMP) forms part of the environmental management control system that MER operates at Ridham to ensure that the operations meet the legislative requirements and operate to high environmental standards. The DMP is a live document subject to on-going review, with updating as appropriate. The EA

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comments confirm that if planning permission were to be granted the changes proposed would be subject to review under the permitting regime. The above requirements are further amplified by the conditions imposed on the extant permission, which require adherence with a DMP. The measures deployed on site include bays, 3x10 m high dust mitigation fencing allowing for the prevailing winds, static dust misting and integrated dust management / damping systems on the shredding facilities and acceptance areas of the plant, mobile dust mitigation water cannons, alongside good site management and housekeeping measures.

58. As with the proposed export of wood from the site, the proposed flexibility to increase stockpile heights on site is principally to allow for times when the Facility is not operational, or capacity is reduced during public / bank holiday periods. The increased heights would allow the site to temporarily accommodate increased volumes of wood waste. To reflect this arrangement and help to minimise any impacts from increased stockpile heights, I recommend that if permission is granted, a condition is imposed limiting stockpile heights to 7 metres during outages or on Public / Bank Holiday weekends, with the amount of material stored on site reduced over the subsequent 7 working days to a limit of 5 metres at all other times.
59. The proposed changes to the throughput (i.e. 181,800tpa) already has approval under the site's existing Environmental Permit. The Permit process has therefore assessed the potential environmental impacts of emissions from the site receiving up to 181,800tpa, including air quality, and found it to be acceptable. Irrespective of the outcome of this application, the Facility will be required to operate in line with its Environmental Permit, I am therefore content that adequate safeguards in relation to emissions to environment are in place and would be maintained and monitored under the Permit.
60. In terms of potential emissions to air as a result of changes in the number of HGV movements, as set out in the Highways and Access section above, the net change in vehicle numbers as a result of the application would not be significant. This is due to the nature of the changes proposed and recent decisions to improve operations on site, reducing the number of tankers visiting the site in connection with surface and process water management.
61. Considering the potential for an impact due to increased noise, the applicant proposes no new plant or equipment and no increase in working hours. The site would continue to operate in accordance with the noise controls imposed on permissions SW/10/774 and SW/12/1132, which have already been established as acceptable in this location. These conditions could be carried forward if permission is granted and include: deliveries of wood to be restricted to between 06.00 and 20.00 hours; all shredding of wood to take place under cover; and noise from the operations (including fixed and mobile machinery) not exceeding background noise levels by more the 10dB at the nearest noise-sensitive receptor locations. The Site also has a Noise Management Plan in place which would continue to be adhered to if permission is granted. Subject to the above, I am satisfied that there would be no additional noise impacts as a result of the proposed development.
62. The use of a site as a biomass plant and associated operations is already established by the existing permissions. The key question in the context of the current application is whether the changes proposed materially alter the impact of the approved land use.

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Subject to the conditions recommended above, I am content that the proposed development would accord with Government and Development Plan Policies relating to environmental matters. I am further satisfied that the Environmental Permitting regime would continue to cover the control of emissions from site to acceptable levels, with the Environment Agency best placed to assess technical issues such as fire prevention measures which extend beyond land use matters.

Nature Conservation

63. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by (amongst other things) protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status) whilst minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. Policies DM2 and DM3 of the Kent MWLP require minerals and waste developments to ensure no unacceptable adverse impacts on Kent's important biodiversity assets. Policies DM14 and DM28 of the Swale LP require development that conserves, enhances, and extends biodiversity, minimising any adverse impacts and compensating where impacts cannot be mitigated. Policy CP7 of the Swale LP seeks to ensure there is no adverse effect on the integrity of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
64. The original development was subject to thorough scrutiny in terms of the surrounding habitats and potential for protected species. The permission includes a number of mitigation measures, including specific species mitigation measures and the creation and ongoing management of new compensatory habitat in the surrounding area. The proposed development seeks permission for relatively minor operational changes principally to allow for the management and mitigation of an unplanned outage / shut down of the plant and the associated knock on impacts. Effectively emergency provisions. The changes proposed would not significantly alter the development permitted and would arguably allow for the effective management of wood waste in a shutdown such that it does not become problem on site.
65. KCC EAS raise no objection subject to the measures proposed within the Dust Management Scheme being considered appropriate to minimise/avoid an increase in dust/particles reaching the designated sites. As set out above, the application site is subject to an Environmental Permit. I am content that there are mechanisms under the Permit and required by the planning permissions that would continue to ensure that dust is managed and mitigated on site. A suitably worded condition reflecting the earlier requirements could be re-imposed on any planning permission.
66. In terms of the adjacent Swale SPA, SSSI and Ramsar, I am content that the minor amendments proposed to the development would not significantly alter the impact of the Facility on the surrounding ecological designations. The cumulative impact of the Facility as amended would not have the potential to cause significant effects on the above designations or hinder the conservation objectives of The Swale Estuary Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ). As such the development can be screened out in terms of the Habitat Regulations. The existing conditions would remain in place to ensure any impacts on local wildlife or habitats are kept to a minimum. I am content that the amendments to the Facility would accord with the requirements of Government and Development Plan policies in terms of local ecological interests.

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

Landscape and visual impacts

67. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by (amongst other things) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Paragraph 7 of the NPPW states that waste developments should contribute positively to the character and quality of the area in which they are located.
68. Policy DM 1 of the Kent MWLP requires development that protects and enhances the character and quality of the site's setting. Policy DM11 states that waste development will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that it is unlikely to generate unacceptable adverse impacts from illumination and visual intrusion (amongst other matters). Policy DM12 states that permission will be granted for waste development where it does not result in an unacceptable adverse, cumulative impact on the environment.
69. Policies ST1, CP7, DM14 and DM22 of the Swale LP seek development that reflects the positive characteristics and features of the site, locality, and landscape. Policy DM24 identifies land surrounding the Facility (excluding Ridham Docks) as part of an Area of High Landscape Value designated as being of significance to Kent and Swale. It requires development that conserves and enhances the landscape and avoiding, minimising and mitigating of adverse landscape impacts as appropriate and, when significant adverse impacts remain, that the social and or economic benefits of the proposal outweigh any harm.
70. The operational changes to throughput and the export of the wood waste are unlikely to impact on landscape or visual considerations. Increasing the height of the wood stockpiles within the yard and in the storage bays to 7m would have an additional visual impact and would be visible from the surrounding landscape, including several Public Rights of Way. However, given the industrial nature of the site and the surrounding dock within which the stockpiles are located, the visual impact is not considered significant. To set the stockpile heights in context, the main plant building on site is 32m high, the chimney stack extending 90m and the shredding shed 10m. The existing push walls and fencing of the storage bays along the western boundary are high enough to contain 7m high stockpiles.
71. The applicant states that 7m stockpiles would be the exception rather than the rule, used only in specific circumstances, as set out above. The condition recommended above limiting 7m stockpiles to during an outage or Public / Bank Holiday weekends with a 5m limit at all other times would serve to further limit any additional impact over the arrangements already established as acceptable on site. I therefore consider that given the limited temporary nature of the proposed changes over the permitted arrangements, the development would comply with Government and Development Plan Policies in terms of landscape and visual impact subject to the recommended condition.

Water Environment (including Flood Risk)

72. Policy DM 10 of the Kent MWLP requires development that does not result in the deterioration of the physical state, water quality or ecological status of any water resource and does not exacerbate flood risk. Policies DM21 and DM23 of the Swale

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

LP seek to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and where development would increase flood risk elsewhere and protect water quality, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.

73. The application site falls within a Flood Zone 3 with a higher probability of tidal flooding. The area benefits from flood defences, which forms an embankment along the eastern boundary of the application site. The proposed use would be ancillary to the Facility and it is therefore not possible to locate the development outside of the flood risk zone. The proposed waste use is designated by the Environment Agency to be “less vulnerable” to flood risk and therefore acceptable in a high-risk zone. The existing permission establishes this position and includes Flood Evacuation and Flood Resilience Plans for the Facility. The proposed development would not increase flood risk beyond the site boundaries. The Facility includes a permitted surface water drainage scheme that includes measures to safeguard against the potential for polluted runoff. These measures would continue to safeguard ground and surface water in the area.
74. The EA has considered the application and raises no objections. Taking the above into account, I am content that the proposed development would accord with the relevant Government and Development Plan Policies in respect of the water environment (including flood risk).

Conclusion

75. The application proposes the continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor variations to allow the export of shredded wood waste, a 4,600tpa increase in throughput and an increase in stockpile heights from 5m to 7m during an outage or public/bank holiday weekend. If granted the proposed permission would effectively consolidate the relevant controls and conditions from the previous permissions into a single updated consent.
76. The application has attracted objections from Iwade Parish Council on the grounds of potential highway impacts and the potential for an increased risk of fires. There are no objections to the application from the technical consultees, subject to the conditions outlined above and below. This includes the Environment Agency, Highways England and Kent Highways and Transportation.
77. Whilst the application would potentially generate an increase in HGV movements associated with the site, I am content that the increase would be offset by operational changes permitted under the recent permission SW/19/504918 to amend the surface water and process water drainage arrangements and thereby remove the need to tanker this water offsite. Any residual highways impacts would not be at a level that would justify refusing the application and could be further mitigated by the imposition of the conditions recommended by Highways England. The proposals to limit the timing of exports of wood waste to outside peak travel times would ensure that any increase associated with this activity would not add to congestion on the Grovehurst Junction with the A249, thereby addressing Iwade Parish Council’s principle concern.
78. In terms of the concerns raised regarding the risk of fire, this is a matter that relates to the control of operations on site and would be covered in detail under the Environmental Permitting regime. Therefore, in accordance with Government

Continued operation of Ridham Biomass Plant with minor operational variations at MVV Environment Ridham, Ridham Dock, Iwade – SW/20/500833 (KCC/SW/0254/2019)

guidance set out in the NPPF, I recommend that in this instance the control of processes or emissions should be left to the Environmental Permit and the planning decisions should assume that this regime will operate effectively. After considering further technical assessments as part of any permit variation if the EA decide that increased stockpile heights are unacceptable The Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations afford the powers to prevent this operation taking place irrespective of the outcome of this planning application.

79. Further to the above and subject to the conditions set out below, I am content that the application proposed would accord with relevant Government and Development Plan Policies and that there are no material planning consideration that indicate the decision should be made otherwise. I therefore recommend accordingly below.

Recommendation

80. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions covering (amongst other matters) the following:
- The maximum throughput of fuel material through the Biomass Plant shall not exceed 181,800 tonnes per annum;
 - During an outage or on Bank Holiday weekends stockpile heights shall not exceed 7 metres in height, and at all other times stockpiles shall not exceed 5 metres in height. Following an event, the amount of material stored shall be reduced to 5m or less over the subsequent 7 working days;
 - A maximum limit on exports of wood during an outage of 2,500 tonnes per week until the Facility is operational;
 - No HGV movements associated with the export of wood should occur during the network peak period (07:30 to 09:30 and 16:30 to 18:30 daily);
 - Records of all vehicle movements to and from the site will be kept and reported annually;
 - the Traffic Management Plan to be updated and reviewed annually to ensure it continues to be effective; and
 - the re-imposition of conditions previously imposed on permission SW/10/774 and SW/12/1132 (updated where relevant to reflect current practices and any details previously approved pursuant to the permissions).
81. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that an INFORMATIVE be included on any decision notice:
- Encouraging the applicant to make every endeavour to use the private road to the Sheppey Way and the A249 junction adjacent to the Sheppey Bridge as a primary point of access rather than as a secondary route.

Case Officer: Mr James Bickle	Tel. no: 03000 413334
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Background Documents: see section heading

E1 COUNTY MATTER APPLICATIONS AND DETAILS PURSUANT PERMITTED/APPROVED/REFUSED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS - MEMBERS' INFORMATION

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the following matters have been determined by me under delegated powers:-

Background Documents - The deposited documents.

- CA/20/97/R Non-Material Amendment to planning permission CA/20/97 – Amendment to the firetank configuration.
Unit 3, Canterbury Industrial Park, Island Road, Hersden, Canterbury, Kent CT3 4HQ
Decision: Approved
- MA/20/503430 Section 73 application to vary condition 1 of planning permission MA/17/503482 to allow for a further 3 years in which to complete the slope remediation within Phase 1.
Lenham Quarry (Shepherds Farm), Forstal Road, Lenham, Kent, ME17 2JB
Decision: Permitted
- SE/18/293 /R10 Details of external lighting pursuant to Condition 10 of planning permission SE/18/293.
Court Lodge Farm, Stack Road, Horton Kirby, Dartford, Kent DA4 9DU
Decision: Approved
- SE/20/1866 Installation of an alkalinity dosing kiosk.
Edenbridge Wastewater Treatment Works, Skinners Lane, Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 6LW
Decision: Permitted
- SW/19/504918/R3 Details of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) pursuant to Condition 3 of planning permission SW/19/504918.
MVV Environment Ridham, Lord Nelson Road, Ridham Dock, Iwade, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FQ
Decision: Approved
- SW/19/505619 /RVAR Request for approval of details pursuant to conditions 12 (details of lighting) and 13 (details of measures to enhance biodiversity) of planning permission SW/19/505619.
Vacant land at Church Marshes, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 2QE
Decision: Approved
- TW/19/2511/ R22 Details of a Drainage & Verification Report pursuant to Condition 22 of planning permission TW/19/2511.
Omni Recycling Ltd, North Farm Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3EE
Decision: Approved

**E2 COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS AND DETAILS
PURSUANT PERMITTED/APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS
MEMBERS' INFORMATION**

Since the last meeting of the Committee, the following matters have been determined by me under delegated powers:-

Background Documents – The deposited documents.

- CA/19/1633/RVAR Details of a Landscaping Scheme (Condition 4), details of external/security lighting and hours of lighting operation (Condition 23) and details of photovoltaic panels (Condition 24) pursuant to planning permission CA/19/1633.
Former Chaucer Technology College, Spring Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1ST
Decision: Approved
- DO/20/327/R3 & R4 Details of External Materials (Condition 3) and details of the Implementation of an Archaeological Watching Brief (Condition 4) pursuant to planning permission DO/20/327.
Worth Primary School, The Street, Worth, Deal, Kent CT14 0DF
Decision: Approved
- DO/20/677 Refurbishment of the Compass Centre buildings to provide an Early Years and Key Stage One block for 40 special educational needs (ASD) pupils. Erection of external canopy. Replacement of all windows and external doors. Associated car parking, drop-off and pick-up area and landscaping including replace section of boundary fence.
Walmer Science College, Salisbury Road, Walmer, Deal, Kent CT14 7QJ
Decision: Permitted
- DO/20/862 To remove the timber framed mobile classroom building and timber framed lodge behind and construct a traditionally constructed brick / block classroom extension. This is a single storey extension with a flat roof, providing classrooms, toilets and storage, connecting into the corridor in the existing school building to aid internal circulation.
Nonington CEP School, Church Street, Nonington, Dover, Kent CT15 4LB
Decision: Permitted
- GR/18/0148/R7, 9&10 Details of Condition 7 (Roof Plant Equipment), Condition 9 (Post Installation BS4142:2014 Assessment) & Condition 10 (Post Installation Assessment of the Odour Attenuation System) pursuant to planning permission GR/18/0148.
Mayfield Grammar School, Pelham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0JE
Decision: Approved

GR/19/951/R10	<p>Details of a detailed Bat Mitigation Strategy pursuant to Condition 10 of planning permission GR/19/951. St Georges Church Of England School, Meadow Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 7LS Approved: Decision</p>
GR/19/1045/R10& R15	<p>Details of a Sustainable Surface Water Drainage Scheme (Condition 10) and Construction Management Plan (Condition 15) pursuant to planning permission GR/19/1045. Northfleet School For Girls, Hall Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 8AQ Decision: Approved</p>
GR/20/156/R3	<p>Details of External Materials pursuant to Condition 3 of Planning Permission GR/20/156. Mayfield Grammar School, Pelham Road, Gravesend, Kent DA11 0JE Decision: Approved</p>
GR/20/334/R3	<p>Details of a Construction Management Plan pursuant to Condition 3 of planning permission GR/20/334. Gravesend Grammar School, Church Walk, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2PR Decision: Approved</p>
MA/19/503387/R17	<p>Details of an Ecological Enhancement Plan pursuant to condition 17 of planning permission MA/19/503387. The Maplesden Noakes School, Buckland Road, Maidstone, Kent ME16 0TJ Decision: Approved</p>
TH/19/897	<p>The refurbishment of an area used as a car/coach park. Works to include re-surfacing of parking areas, safety barriers, upgrading of existing lighting and signing together with the provision of new ticketing equipment. The Rendezvous, Margate, Kent CT9 1HG Decision: Permitted</p>
TM/18/1924/R8	<p>Details of a School Travel Plan pursuant to Condition 8 of planning permission TM/18/1924. The Judd School, Brook Street, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 2PN Decision: approved</p>
TM/19/2964/R8	<p>Details of off site receptor sites pursuant to condition 8 of planning permission TM/19/2964. Land North of Platinum Way, St Mary's Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 8JE Decision: Approved</p>
TM/19/2964/R12	<p>Details of Ecological Mitigation pursuant to Condition 12 of planning permission TM/19/2964. Land North of Platinum Way, St Mary's Platt, Sevenoaks, Kent TN15 8JE Decision: Approved</p>

- TW/18/2129/R4&8 Details of landscaping and ecological enhancement plan pursuant to conditions 4 & 8 of planning permission TW/18/2129.
St Gregory's Catholic School, Reynolds Lane, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9XL
Decision: Approved
- TW/19/239/R13 Details of External Lighting pursuant to Condition 13 of planning permission TW/19/239.
Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9SH
Decision: Approved
- TW/19/239/R19 Details of a Sustainable Surface Water Drainage Scheme pursuant to Condition 19 of planning permission TW/19/239.
Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9SH
Decision: Approved
- TW/19/239/R22 Details for Construction Management Plan pursuant to Condition 22 of planning permission TW/19/239.
Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9SH
Decision: Approved
- TW/20/2374 Proposed installation of temporary accommodation (two classrooms) and temporary re-positioning of 17 car parking spaces.
Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar School, St Johns Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9XB
Decision: Permitted

E3 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 – SCREENING OPINIONS ADOPTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Background Documents –

- *The deposited documents.*
 - *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.*
 - *The Government’s Online Planning Practice Guidance-Environmental Impact Assessment/Screening Schedule 2 Projects*
- (a) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following screening opinions have been adopted under delegated powers that the proposed development does not constitute EIA development and the development proposal does not need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement:-

KCC/SCR/AS/0208/2020 - Request for a screening opinion to establish whether the proposed S73 application for the variation of conditions 1, 21 and 20 of planning permission AS/97/360/MR13 to extend the date for the completion of extraction of minerals and the removal of all buildings and plant by 10 years until 31 December 2030 and the date for completion of restoration until 31 December 2035 and to amend the reinstatement, aftercare and after-use requirements to increase opportunities for ecological enhancement at Beacon Hill Quarry, Charing requires Environmental Impact Assessment.
Beacon Hill Quarry, Pilgrims Way, Charing, Kent TN27 0DR

KCC/DO/0178/2020 - Creation of two new sections of road as dedicated Bus Rapid Transit route for buses, cyclists and pedestrians only. Section 1 - New road, 1.0km in length, connecting Whitfield Urban Expansion to Tesco roundabout at Honeywood Parkway via new overbridge over A2. Access to bridge will be controlled by bus gates. Section 2 - New road, 1.1km in length, connecting B & Q roundabout on Honeywood Parkway to Dover Road, near Frith Farm, with access to Dover Road controlled by a bus gate. Providing access to future phases of White Cliffs Business Park.
Dover Fastrack - Land to the north of Dover and to the south of Whitfield, Kent

KCC/MA/0181/2020 - Variation of condition 2 of planning permission MA/19/501709 to amend the date for completion of importation and stabilisation works and restoration by a further period of 12 months (i.e. until 25 September 2021).
Chilston Sand Pit, Sandway Road, Sandway, Maidstone, Kent ME17 2LU

KCC/TM/0201/2020 - Section 73 Application to vary conditions 2, 13 & 16 of planning permission TM/15/1636 to enable the quarry to be deepened from 65mAOD to 63mAOD.
Nepicar Sand Quarry, Maidstone Road, Wrotham Heath, Kent, TN15 7SR

KCC/SCR/TW/0202/2020 - Request for a Screening Opinion as to whether the installation of a 2.2km gravity sewer and rising main requires an Environmental Impact Assessment.
Land north of Badsell Road to Church Farm Waste Pumping Station, Paddock Wood, Kent

- (b) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following screening opinions have been adopted under delegated powers that the proposed development does constitute EIA development and the development proposal does need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement:-

None

E4 TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT) REGULATIONS 2017 – SCOPING OPINIONS ADOPTED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

- (b) Since the last meeting of the Committee the following scoping opinions have been adopted under delegated powers.

Background Documents -

- *The deposited documents.*
- *Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.*
- *The Government's Online Planning Practice Guidance-Environmental Impact Assessment/Preparing an Environmental Statement*

None

SECTION F KCC RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Background Documents - the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

KCC Response to Consultations

Reports to Planning Applications Committee on 4 November 2020.

These reports set out KCC's responses to consultations.

Recommendation: To note the reports

Unrestricted

1. Introduction and Supporting Documents.

The County Council has commented on the following planning matters. A copy of the response is set out in the papers. These planning matters are for the relevant District/Borough or City Council to determine.

F1 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Draft Management Plan – Consultation Response

County Council's response to the Kent Downs AONB Unit on the above.

F2 Canterbury City Council Issues Consultation Regulation 18

County Council's response to Canterbury City Council on the above.

F3 Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16

County Council's response to Maidstone Borough Council on the above.

F4: Egerton Neighbourhood Plan – Regulation 16

County Council's response to Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on the above.

Background documents; As set out in the reports.

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Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
Draft Management Plan

Consultation Questionnaire

The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Unit are seeking your views on the Kent Downs AONB Draft Management Plan 2020 – 2025. Kent County Council (KCC) is hosting this consultation on their behalf.

What information do you need before completing the questionnaire?

We recommend that you read the **Draft Management Plan** (or sections relevant to your interests) and accompanying **Draft Landscape Character Assessment** (or sections relevant to your interests) before filling in this questionnaire. The Environment Report and Sustainability Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment are also available. All consultation material is available on KCC's website kent.gov.uk/kentdownsaonb or in hard copy on request.

We recognise that the AONB Management Plan and accompanying Landscape Character Assessment are broad in the subjects and geography they cover so please do not feel obliged to answer all of the questions. We welcome your response to any or all of the matters they cover.

The Draft Plan was prepared before the Covid-19 pandemic and it will be vital we consider how the Management Plan responds to the crisis. This questionnaire provides an opportunity for you to tell us any key considerations you feel we should take into account.

This questionnaire can be completed on our website. Alternatively, you can fill in this Word version and return it via email to mail@kentdowns.org.uk or by post to Kent Downs AONB Unit, West Barn, Penstock Hall Farm, Canterbury Road, East Brabourne, Ashford, Kent TN25 5LL.

Please ensure your response reaches us by midnight 7th September 2020.

Alternative Formats: If you need this questionnaire or any of the consultation documents in an alternative format, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 421553 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine which is monitored during office hours.

Privacy: Kent County Council collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. Kent County Council respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Section 1 – About You

Q1. Are you responding on behalf of ...?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation.

Select **one** option only.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yourself as an individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yourself in your professional capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A representative of a local community group or residents' association |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A Parish / District / County Councillor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | An educational establishment, such as a school or college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On behalf of a business |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Other |

If 'Other', please specify: On behalf of Kent County Council in an official capacity

Q1a. If you are responding in your professional capacity, please tell us what it is:

Q1b. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (community group, resident association, council, educational establishment, business or any other organisation), please tell us the name of the organisation here:

Kent County Council

Q2. Please tell us the first five characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

ME14 1

Section 2 – Kent Downs AONB Draft Management Plan

The Draft Management Plan is formed of 12 sections. You can provide feedback on all or as many of the sections as you like. If you would rather not provide feedback on any section, just move on to the next set of questions.

1. The Kent Downs AONB [Page 4](#)
2. The Management of the Kent Downs AONB [Page 7](#)
3. Sustainable Development [Page 9](#)
4. Landform and Landscape Character [Page 13](#)
5. Biodiversity [Page 16](#)
6. Farmed Landscape [Page 19](#)
7. Woodlands and Trees [Page 22](#)
8. Historic and Cultural Heritage [Page 25](#)
9. Heritage Coast [Page 28](#)
10. Geology and Natural Resources [Page 31](#)
11. Quality of Life and Vibrant Communities [Page 34](#)
12. Access, Enjoyment and Understanding [Page 37](#)

1. The Kent Downs AONB

A vision is a description of what an organisation would like to achieve or accomplish and is intended to serve as a guide for what action will be taken in the future.

The overarching ten-year vision for the Kent Downs AONB included in the Draft Management Plan 2020-25 is as follows:

“In 2030... the qualities and distinctive features of the Kent Downs AONB, the dramatic south-facing scarp, secluded dry valleys, network of tiny lanes, isolated farmsteads, churches and oasts, orchards, dramatic cliffs, the ancient woodlands and delicate chalk grassland along with the ancient, remote and tranquil qualities, are valued, secured and strengthened.

“The Kent Downs has become a landscape where rapid change supports the AONB’s distinctive features. Responses to development pressures and climate change have enhanced landscape character and what is valued by people about the landscape. The Kent Downs landscape is recognised and valued, enjoyed and cherished and its future conservation and enhancement is a certainty.

“Strong, assertive leadership from the AONB partnership along with positive partnerships with key organisations, local people and land managers act together with wider publics to conserve, enhance, enjoy and promote a nationally and internationally recognised and valued landscape.”

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the vision for the Kent Downs AONB in 2030

See page 3. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q3a. Please provide any comments on the vision here:

The County Council notes that the vision has been altered to a shorter period (ten years) because of the scale and pace of change in Kent, and would like to highlight the need for the adopted AONB Management Plan to be reviewed regularly, within that ten year period, particularly due to the speed at which government policy changes. An example would be the Government’s white paper ‘Planning for the future’ of which preliminary details have emerged only during the consultation period of the AONB Management Plan. The Government’s White Paper gives prominence to areas designated as AONB and the continuing importance of the special requirements to protect the landscape.

The County Council is pleased to have the opportunity to review the draft AONB Management Plan, which now provides reference, and includes commitments, to tackling the UK climate change and ecological emergency, strengthening focus on sustainable, low carbon development.

The County Council welcomed the opportunity to participate in the stakeholder workshops and the engagement throughout the development of this Management Plan. This engagement has

ensured the perceptions of Kent and Medway’s residents on the countryside and landscapes are evidenced within the proposed Management Plan.

The County Council supports the reference to the draft Kent Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment¹, which has now been finalised. All Kent and Medway local authorities have now declared or recognised the UK climate emergency. KCC is involved in a number of new studies, such as our Natural Solutions to Climate Change Study, which will provide further evidence to support and refine the Management Plan’s climate change priorities.

Although the Management Plan’s commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions is welcomed; the County Council would caution the feasibility of achieving this target by 2030. Through the framework of the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy², KCC and its partners have agreed a vision for the county of Kent to reach Net Zero by 2050, which also reflects the UK target and the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change.

The County Council notes there is no explicit commitment within the vision to the opportunity afforded by forthcoming changes in agricultural payments and interventions (Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS)), nor the potential to restore and re-wild on a large-scale to support delivery of ecosystem services and recovery of biodiversity.

Attention is drawn to a small typographical error – ‘*the Kent Downs offer a greatly valued landscape of peace, beauty and space to breathe.*’

The Draft Management Plan identifies special components, characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB.

- Dramatic landform and views; a distinctive landscape character
- Biodiversity-rich habitats
- Farmed landscape
- Woodland and trees
- A rich legacy of historic and cultural heritage
- The Heritage Coasts
- Geology and natural resources
- Tranquillity and remoteness

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified what makes the area distinctive and special to you?

Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

¹ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/environment-waste-and-planning-policies/environmental-policies/kents-changing-climate>

² <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s90435/Item%2012%20-%20Appendix%201%20-%20KM%20Energy%20and%20Low%20Emissions%20Strategy.pdf>

Q4a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council notes there is no reference to ecosystem services, including aquifer protection, soil retention, flood attenuation, air and watercourse quality, carbon sequestration and rehabilitation of marine environment.

The Draft Management Plan also identifies the social and economic components which are key to the future conservation and enhancement of the Kent Down AONB. See page 6.

- Vibrant communities
- Access, enjoyment and understanding

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the key social and economic components?

*Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q5a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council supports a key focus of the Management Plan in ensuring socially, economically and environmentally sustainable communities and settlements.

2. The Management of the Kent Downs AONB

Our vision for the management of the Kent Downs AONB is as follows:

“In 2030... the Kent Downs AONB is widely recognised and greatly valued. It is a landscape cherished and held in the highest esteem by those who visit, live and work there and nearby and by those who influence its future. Residents and visitors know where the AONB is and they understand its character and qualities and support the purposes of its designation. The Kent Downs AONB partnership is acknowledged, supported, funded and equipped to be the main and an influential and effective advocate and champion for the AONB. A diverse range of individuals and organisations are delivering positive action on the ground and are collaboratively engaged in the partnership and management planning. The AONB partnership is engaging and open about the conservation and management of the AONB.”

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for the management of the Kent Downs AONB?

See pages 9 – 18. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q6a. Please provide any comments on our vision for the management of the Kent Downs AONB here:

In respect of future management of the AONB, the Management Plan could include a focus on resilient landscapes, ecological restoration and connectivity. This should address functioning natural ecosystems, with lost habitats and wildlife restored, delivering enhanced ecosystem services for the benefit of local communities and economy, as well as biodiversity and the climate.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for the management of the Kent Downs AONB?

See page 20. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q7a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The aims could also include enabling a resilient landscape, ecological restoration and connectivity – addressing natural ecosystems, lost habitats and wildlife restoration.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for management of the Kent Downs AONB?

See page 20. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q8a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

KCC is committed to working with partners to ensure that the Management Plan achieves a partnership approach to the delivery of a resilient AONB, with restored natural processes, habitats and biodiversity.

3. Sustainable Development

Our vision for sustainable development is as follows:

“In 2030 ... the principles of sustainable development are at the heart of the management of the Kent Downs. Change reinforces and enhances the characteristics, qualities and distinctiveness of the Kent Downs and benefits its communities and economy. While the surrounding urban areas have expanded considerably, innovative management techniques and policy approaches successfully address the pressure and opportunities presented by growth to the landscapes of the AONB.

“The impacts of climate change are being felt but the mitigation and adaptive responses taken are landscape led, effective and carefully chosen to enhance the characteristics, qualities and distinctiveness of the landscape rather than detracting from them. The natural capital and ecosystems service provision of the Kent Downs has been enhanced. Important areas of tranquillity have been identified, protected and expanded and provide ‘oases of calm’.”

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for sustainable development?

See pages 23 – 26. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q9a. Please provide any comments on our vision for sustainable development here:

The Kent Downs has significant influence over drinking water aquifers in terms of recharge and contamination risk, the quality and flow rates of watercourses, quality of coastal marine habitats, soil retention and restoration and air quality, including carbon sequestration. The AONB is also an ideal location to achieve landscape scale restoration, resulting in fully functioning ecosystems. The Kent Downs therefore should have a key role in mitigating and balancing any negative environmental impacts of the significant growth that Kent has (and continues to) experience - this could be included within the vision for sustainable development.

Q10. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right guiding themes for sustainable development?

See pages 26 – 28. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q10a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

A further guiding theme could be the creation of resilient and diverse landscapes. These landscapes will play an important role in developing resilience to extreme weather patterns resulting from climate change, and ecological breakdown . This theme is relevant to Kent communities, economy and health.

Another guiding theme could also be the response to the local and global ecological emergency, encompassing restoration of fully functioning ecosystems and returning lost habitats and species to the landscape.

Q11. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right recurrent themes for sustainable development?

See pages 29 - 31. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q11a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

This could also include ensuring a resilient landscape that delivers a range of ecosystem services; a restoration of fully functioning ecosystems, returning lost habitats and species as appropriate into the landscape.

Q12. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for sustainable development?

See page 31. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q12a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council recommends that the Management Plan should also be explicit about the threats confronting the AONB. Threats could include the overexploitation of groundwater; loss of soils; decline in biodiversity; air and noise pollution from transport infrastructure; unsustainable levels of visitor footfall; pressures such as traffic, fly-tipping, off-road activity and vandalism; habitat fragmentation; new pests and pathogens; unsustainable socio-economic and demographic change within settlements and the trend towards ‘over-tidying’ of the landscape and agricultural change.

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for sustainable development?

See page 32. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q13a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Resilient and diverse landscapes have a role in building resistance to climate change and ecological changes, and given the relevance to Kent’s communities, economy and health, these landscapes should be considered as an aim for sustainable development.

As part of the response to the national and local ecological emergency, there should also be an aim to encompass the restoration of fully functioning ecosystems, returning lost habitats and species to the landscape.

Q14. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for sustainable development?

See pages 33. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q14a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

KCC’s comments to question 13a apply to this question as well.

4. Landform and Landscape Character

The section is informed by the accompanying **Draft Landscape Character Assessment** which details the identifying characteristics of the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB and makes landscape management recommendations on actions, investments and priorities to conserve and enhance the landscape. **See Section 3 of this questionnaire on page 40** to answer the questions on the Landscape Character Assessment.

Our vision for landform and landscape character is as follows:

“In 2030... the rich diversity of landscape character and qualities distinctive to the Kent Downs are protected, enhanced and managed to the highest standards in a co-ordinated and continual programme. The special characteristics and qualities of the Kent Downs AONB are widely recognised, valued and strengthened and landscape character informs land and resource management, nature recovery plans, intended net gain and natural capital investments, responses to climate change and development decisions.”

Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for landform and landscape character

See page 36. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q15a. Please provide any comments on our vision for landform and landscape character here:

The County Council recommends that direct reference should be given to the landscapes that the AONB seeks to protect and restore. In consideration of the restoration of fully functioning ecosystems, this could include a rich mosaic of vegetation-types maintained by large native (or facsimile native) herbivores and predators, habitat connectivity (especially in relation to woodland), recovery of water courses and wetlands and a rehabilitation of coastal marine habitats.

High input and maintenance habitats are unsustainable and potentially environmentally counterproductive, so there should be an emphasis upon the restoration of natural processes.

Q16. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right landscape character types and areas within the Kent Downs AONB?

See pages 36 - 39. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q16a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan should seek to appropriately maintain landscapes that may be damaged by centuries of overgrazing, over extraction and land drainage, habitat fragmentation and deforestation. Consideration should be given to the identification of the optimal landscape and biodiversity outcomes to deliver vital ecosystem services, tourism opportunities and wildlife restoration.

Q17. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for landform and landscape character?

See page 40. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q17a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Key threats should also include the unsustainable level of groundwater abstraction and land drainage, traffic and visitor pressure, loss of soils to erosion, over-tidying of the landscape, over-grazing, unsustainable agricultural change and loss of key habitats and species.

Opportunities should include potential for landscape-scale restoration of fully functioning ecosystems and restoration of lost habitats and wildlife.

Q18. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for landform and landscape character?

See page 41. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q18a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan should seek to deliver a restored and fully functioning landscape, with specific aims on landform and landscape recovery - addressing such areas as a mosaic of woodland, scrub, down land and wetland.

Q19. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for landform and landscape character?

See pages 41. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q19a If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan should also include consideration of surface and ground water and resulting water quality issues. Aquifer recharge and protection alongside restored surface water features should be referenced.

5. Biodiversity

Our vision for biodiversity is as follows:

“By 2030... the distinctive wildlife habitats of the Kent Downs are understood better, enjoyed and celebrated and are in favourable, resilient condition with individual characteristic species flourishing. There is a far-sighted nature recovery plan being implemented for the Kent Downs, which recognises and responds to the substantial changes that will be experienced and is linked to a wider nature recovery network. An approach to intended biodiversity net gain is understood and agreed and is achieving advances in biodiversity and habitats across the Kent Downs. There has been an increase in the extent and quality of key characteristic habitats and abundance of species of the Downs. People, policy and funding regimes recognise, value and support the importance of nature in the Kent Downs.”

Q20. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for biodiversity?

See pages 44 – 47. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q20a. Please provide any comments on our vision for biodiversity here:

The Management Plan should include consideration of how damaged and lost habitats and species are to be restored on a landscape scale.

Specific reference should also be made to restoring lost wildlife and the functions of a healthy ecosystem should be incorporated, including the principles of rewilding (encompassing terrestrial, aquatic and marine habitats).

Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for biodiversity?

See pages 47 - 51. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q21a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

There should also be focus on restoring the natural habitat-types of the AONB, as opposed to maintaining high input and heavily managed landscapes. As the Kent Downs is a managed landscape, there is need to consider how far back the identification of natural habitat types goes, which may be suitable for the area. Restoring lost species and enabling them to shape vegetation regeneration will benefit landscape and biodiversity and deliver increased economic viability and ecosystem services (e.g. Cairngorms Connect and Knepp).

Flood meadows and wet woodland were a historic feature of the Kent Downs, especially on the clay, which have been lost to agriculture, abstraction and land drainage - these habitats could therefore be considered.

Q22. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for biodiversity?

See page 52. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q22a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Woodland is the natural vegetation across the AONB, and its restoration on a landscape scale through enhancing connectivity, utilising natural regeneration and other woodland creation measures, should be emphasised. There is a risk that the creation of woodland will result in the loss of other priority habitats (such as chalk grassland). Habitat creation should therefore be encouraged only in the correct locations.

The section should seek to encourage sustainable grazing behaviours within the AONB.

The Management Plan does not specifically highlight the threat from intensive agricultural practice; just specific issues, such as leaving the EU, reduction in grazing or habitat fragmentation. However, farming practices are and continue to be a threat and there are also opportunities from leaving the EU such as future subsidies for farms being linked to protection of the environment.

In respect of point f - the “need to respond to the repeated failure to meet Biodiversity targets and the opportunity for the Kent Downs AONB to make a significant local contribution to meet future targets”, it is requested that clarity is provided on which targets are being referred to, how much they were missed by and who is responsible for setting, and who for meeting, these targets.

Q23. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for biodiversity?

See page 54. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q23a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

There should also be an aim focused on assessing the feasibility and opportunities around the restoration of naturally functioning ecosystems with lost habitats and wildlife restoration.

Q24. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for biodiversity?

See page 54. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q24a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council’s response to Question 23a also relates to this question.

6. Farmed Landscape

Our vision for farmed landscape is as follows:

“In 2030... the Kent Downs AONB is a place where agriculture takes and is appreciated for a pivotal role in the conservation of natural beauty and landscape qualities and character as well as wider. Sustainable farming is the predominant land-use of the AONB and the heritage of mixed farming is retained in a contemporary context, supports and enhances landscape character, nature and is an increasingly important part of the Kent Downs contribution to achieving net zero carbon emissions. There is a greater public understanding of the roles of farming and more opportunities to gain carefully managed access to farmed landscape and to understand farming systems. Despite the volatile context, a broad range of crops are sustainably produced and are suited to the increasing extremes of climate, local conditions and market forces as well as the landscape. Naturally diverse permanent grasslands are well managed by grazing and orchards, plants and hop gardens retain an important place in the landscape. The flourishing number of vineyards are managed in a way that conserves the characteristics and qualities of the AONB. The high-quality products of the Kent Downs are commercially successful and high environmental quality is a market advantage.”

Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for farmed landscape?

See pages 57 – 61. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q25a. Please provide any comments regarding our vision for farmed landscape here:

KCC considers that others are better placed to comment in detail on the Managements Plan’s vision for farmed landscape. However, KCC welcomes the recognition of the understanding of the roles of farming and notes that this could change further through the passing of the Agricultural Bill and the longer-term implications that this may have on farming practices.

The Agricultural Bill will provide ‘public money for public goods’ where future payments to farmers should move away from the area they own or rent (farm) towards environmental and cultural benefits that the land can provide and society needs (native breeds of livestock, conservation of agricultural crops and steps to improve and protect the quality of the soil, for example). The payments should reward good practice rather than pay farmers not to pollute, and the impetus will be to move away from CAP and towards a more sustainable systems of farming and land management.

This will force a change from traditional farming to regenerative farming as Direct Payments are phased out over the next five or so years. Defra also plans to ‘delink’ Direct Payments from the requirement to farm the land with farmers having a choice on how they use their ‘delinked’ payments to invest in improving the productivity of their farm, diversify their business or retire from farming.

Many farmers will decide they are too old and retire or rent to other farmers who will become more efficient and productive because they will have to be under the new payments structure.

The new Environment Bill will encourage biodiversity and net gain, which will encourage farmers to make best use of marginal land. This could mean the best land being used for top paying crops (fruit and viticulture), with livestock being used to farm or ‘manage’ marginal land (this fits in with the thinking of the AONBs and Wildlife Trusts).

KCC welcomes any initiative that will help the agri-food economy to deliver productivity, jobs and nutritional security, provide a natural environment that is a great place to live, work and visit and create clean sustainable growth – with a vibrant rural economy delivering on net zero. This is in line with the objectives of the National Farmers’ Union (NFU).

Q26. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for farmed landscape?

See page 66. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q26a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Q27. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for farmed landscape?

See page 67. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q27a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

One impact to be aware of is the potential of the smaller farm to disappear and be taken over by a larger enterprise and what this will mean to a changing landscape – e.g. larger fields to accommodate larger, more cost-effective machinery and the effect on changing the landscape character.

Q28. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for farmed landscape?

See page 68. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure

		x			
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Q28a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Q29. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for farmed landscape?

See page 69. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q29a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

One impact to be aware of is the potential of the smaller farm to disappear and be taken over by a larger enterprise and what this will mean to a changing landscape – e.g. larger fields to accommodate larger, more cost-effective machinery and the effect on changing the landscape character.

7. Woodlands and Trees

Our vision for woodlands and trees is as follows:

“In 2030... the characteristic Kent Downs network of woodland and trees is greater in extent and is conserved and enhanced for its landscape, wildlife and historic value. Sustainably managed woodlands and trees are resilient to stressors such as pests, disease, visitor pressure and climate change, they provide inherent mitigation and adaption to that change. Buoyant markets for woodland products support the productive, sustainable management of trees and woodlands; high quality multi-functional management provides well-used places for leisure and recreation, health and wellbeing and are rich in characteristic wildlife.”

Q30. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for woodland and trees?

See pages 72 – 77. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q30a. Please provide any comments on the vision for woodland and trees here:

The County Council welcomes reference to the importance of the AONB on the wellbeing of its residents and the mental health benefits that the AONB can bring. The Management Plan should consider the restoration of lost woodland species, through habitat creation and reintroductions (both plant and animal species).

Q31. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for woodlands and trees?

See page 77. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q31a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The woodland across the AONB has been changed by centuries of human activity. The Management Plan should consider the recovery of more natural woodland types, with diversity enhancing ecosystem services and biodiversity.

Q32. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for woodlands and trees?

See page 78. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q32a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan should make reference to the the fragmentation of woodland habitats across the Kent Downs by intensive land uses such as arable farming and highway infrastructure. Achieving linkage and reconnection of woodland will increase their resilience and enhance landscape quality.

Reference should be made to the fact that woodland is the natural vegetation across part of the Kent Downs and its support for biodiversity. Restoration of natural processes within the AONB woodlands should also be considered.

There are other important habitat types in the Kent Downs (such as grassland) - the support for woodland should not result in the loss of other habitats.

Reference should be made to secondary-woodland, scrub and open mosaic habitats (including brownfield sites). Secondary woodland should be created as part of on going woodland management, not to the loss of other suitable habitats.

Q33. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims that support the sustainable management of woodlands and trees?

See page 79. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q33a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Kent Downs offers a significant opportunity to provide restored areas of wilderness with significant potential for ecotourism and a re-established, more natural sense of place.

Q34. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles that support the sustainable management of woodlands and trees?

See page 80. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q34a. If you have answered 'tend to disagree' or 'strongly disagree', please tell us why here:

8. Historic and Cultural Heritage

Our vision for historic and cultural heritage is as follows:

“In 2034... the rich heritage of historic landscape, buildings, settlements and sites that characterise the Kent Downs’ historic and cultural fabric are maintained in favourable condition and are enhanced to reflect their local character and significance. The environmental performance of historic buildings is enhanced in a way that is sensitive to their character. They are understood and cherished by local people and visitors alike for their intrinsic value and for their important contribution to quality of life and rural economy. Vibrant and exciting artistic and cultural interpretation and celebration of the Kent Downs is supported and strong partnerships for the arts and cultural development in the Downs is in place and delivering extraordinary, contemporary work enjoyed by and inspiring wide and diverse publics.”

Q35. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for historic and cultural heritage?

See page 83. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q35a. Please provide any comments on the vision for historic and cultural heritage here:

The County Council is supportive of this vision, and if achieved, it will deliver a well-conserved and valued heritage in an attractive landscape.

The County Council recommends the following amendment:

“In 2034... the rich heritage of historic landscape, buildings, settlements and sites (alongside their settings) that characterise the Kent Downs”

Q36. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for historic and cultural heritage?

See pages 83 - 89. Select **one** option only.

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q36a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Q37. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for historic and cultural heritage?

See page 89. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q37a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The settings of some of the most important historic sites in the AONB are compromised by surrounding land uses. The County Council recommends the Management Plan includes consideration of appropriate landscape management and protection. This would benefit both historic sites, the wider landscape and tourism/visitor experience. For example, the Medway Megaliths are significantly impinged upon by intensive land uses and development.

Other threats to heritage include:

- The gradual degradation of the landscape and its historic features caused by localised actions of land managers. These might include new or widened accesses, hedgerow damage and vehicle movements.
- Climate change also offers an increasing threat to heritage assets through the drying and waterlogging of archaeological sites and the impact of more severe weather events on both archaeological sites and historic buildings.
- The development and maintenance of infrastructure such as utilities, power generation, roads and railways.
- Change of use of historic buildings through permitted development rights.

Q38. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for historic and cultural heritage?

See page 90. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
			x		

Q38a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council considers the Management Plan should include a greater emphasis on using the historic environment to shape new development and contribute to a distinctive sense of place. This will be achieved not by merely ensuring that heritage is conserved, but by ensuring that the heritage is considered from the earliest stages of project development.

Proposals for new development, village design and Neighbourhood Planning documents should include an appropriate description of the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected including the contribution of their setting. The impact of proposals and plans on the significance of the heritage assets should be sufficiently assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Desk-based assessment, archaeological field evaluation and historic building assessment may be required as appropriate to the case.

The Management Plan could also include the following aims:

- Systems should be put in place to ensure that historic environment information and advice is readily accessible to local communities to help them shape the places in which they live.
- A programme of mapping of cropmarks identified on aerial photographs is to be developed. With the use of GIS packages, transcription could be carried out through a supervised volunteer programme perhaps through the Kent Historic Environment Record.

It should also be recognised that there may be archaeological sites within the AONB that do not relate to the existing landscape. An example is Palaeolithic sites whose landscape of origin was very different from the landscape today. There will be times when the management of the modern landscape conflicts with the needs of such sites and it is important that they are not negatively impacted by modern landscape management needs.

Q39. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for historical and cultural heritage?

See page 90. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
			x		

Q39a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

“HCH2 – A wider understanding of the historic, cultural, scientific and artistic importance of the Kent Downs landscape and its historic character will be supported in part to inform the interpretation and management of the AONB.”

To achieve the wider understanding of the landscape that is sought, it will be necessary to research further its historic origins. One way to achieve this is by appropriately detailed historic landscape characterisation.

The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001)³ is a tool for understanding this historic context and should be used to inform decisions taken regarding the landscape character of the AONB. Ideally, however, this county level study should be both updated and deepened to be more relevant at the district and local level, as has happened recently for the High Weald AONB area and on the Hoo Peninsula. This would allow more effective decision-taking and assist the application of key landscape principles on a case-by-case basis.

The County Council would also ask that the historic aspects of landscape character are fully integrated into considerations of more general character. There should be consideration of the role that the past has played in establishing the modern character and the extent to which historic features survive and need consideration in development control and agricultural practice.

“HCH7 – The protection, conservation, and enhancement of heritage features under threat will be pursued through policies, projects and partnerships”

The County Council recommends the following amendment:

“The protection, conservation, and enhancement of heritage features under threat will be pursued through policies, projects, training and partnerships.”

³ https://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/56210/Kent-Historic-Landscape-Character-volume-1.pdf

9. Heritage Coast

Our vision for the Heritage Coast is as follows:

“In 2030... the special place that the White Cliffs of Dover have in the hearts and minds of millions of people is justified by the reality experienced on the ground. Collaborative effort continues to transform the management of the coasts which meets the needs of the landscape, natural and historic environment and communities, while supporting the sustainable regeneration of the coastal economy including the coastal towns.”

Q40. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for the heritage coast?

See pages 93 – 97. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	X				

Q40a. Please provide any comments on the vision for the heritage coast here:

The County Council recommends reference within the Management Plan to the restoration of coastal/marine habitats and wildlife.

Q41. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for the heritage coast?

See page 97. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	X				

Q41a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Coastal habitats have undergone degradation in terms of landscape and biodiversity. ANOB coastal fringes should be a key focus of future activity to enable the recovery of habitats in these areas to restore their wildness.

Q42. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for the heritage coast?

See page 98. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	X				

Q42a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

No take zones and initiatives to restore lost marine and littoral habitats and species could feature within the Management Plan - initiatives in the South West of the British Isles provide useful lessons for such restoration.

Q43. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for the heritage coast?

See page 99. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	X				

Q43a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council recommends the following aim is included within the Management Plan:

Restoring lost marine and coastal habitats and species and recovering the ‘wildness’ of our Heritage Coast.

Q44. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for the heritage coast?

See page 99. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	X				

Q44a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council recommends the following key principle is included within the Management Plan:

Restoring and protecting marine and coastal habitats and species and the ‘wildness’ of our Heritage Coast.

10. Geology and Natural Resources

Our vision for geology and natural resources is as follows:

“In 2030... great care is taken to conserve and manage the natural resources of the Kent Downs particularly soil, air, ground and river water. New and innovative ways to both reduce resource use and enhance the existing natural capital have been adopted which support landscape character and qualities, the economy and communities. The need to conserve and enhance natural beauty means mineral resource mining occurs away from the AONB, except in exceptional circumstances, and worked out quarry sites have been restored to enhance local landscape character.”

Q45. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for geology and natural resources?

See pages 102 – 105. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
			x		

Q45a. Please provide any comments on the vision for geology and natural resources here:

Minerals and Waste

In respect of the sub-heading ‘geology’ under the ‘Overview’ heading (10.1), the Kent Downs AONB and its setting contain important remaining resources of sharp sand, gravels and building sands. Many of the less constrained sites containing these resources have been exploited or allocated, meaning that pressure to exploit the resources in or in the setting of the Kent Downs is expected to increase. The Kent Minerals and Waste Strategy Local Plan 2013-30 (KMWLP) recognises the importance and sensitivity of the landscapes of the AONB and its setting in its narrative and policies.

This is somewhat limited, as the KMWLP does not preclude mineral exploitation from occurring in the AONB area; Policy DM 2 states:

“National Sites

Designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)(107) have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Regard must be had to the purpose of the designation when exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect land, in an AONB. For the purposes of this policy, such functions include the determination of planning applications and the allocation of sites in a development plan.

Planning permission for major minerals and waste development in a designated AONB will be refused except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that it is in public interest. In relation to other minerals or waste proposals in an AONB, great weight will be given to conserving its landscape and scenic beauty. Proposals outside, but within the setting of an AONB will be considered having regard to the effect on the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB”

The policy is consistent with the approach as set out in the NPPF 2019, mineral and waste development in AONB areas has to be justified as a matter of 'exceptional circumstances' that are in 'the public interest'. Therefore, to reference this national planning policy approach that is reflected in the KMWLP is recommended to strengthen the Management Plan's narrative. However, it should also be understood that mineral and waste development, though run by private/corporate bodies, is effectively development that is accepted as in principle 'in the public interest' (see Section 15, para. 172 page 49/50 of the NPPF 2019). It provides for the necessary mineral materials for other development and maintenance while waste developments are integral to the increased drive for sustainable development and the circular economy. This is as important to AONB areas as it is to the non-designated areas.

The Management Plan should also include reference to economically important land-won mineral deposits are safeguarded by policies of the KMWLP from development that may cause them to become sterilised. Any waste management and mineral processing and handling facilities that are currently operating in the AONB are also safeguarded from direct loss and any development within 250m has to demonstrate that there is compatibility with the unimpeded continued operation of the facility. This safeguarding principle is central to mineral and waste planning, obviously, and the Plan's lack of reference to this is an omission.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The water environment is covered primarily within Chapter 10 Geology and natural resources.

The County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority would recommend that there is a wider recognition of surface water within the natural environment. The AONB area includes sections of several main rivers, but it also includes many ordinary watercourses. References to "water" should not only consider "ground and river water" but the value which is provided to the landscape through Kent's many small streams and ditches.

Within Chapter 10.1, the focus of the natural capital consideration of water is directed at aspects in relation to water supply but no reference is made as to flood control or surface water pollution issues.

Within Chapter 10.2, the water environment focuses on the "dry landscape" of the chalk areas of the AONB but there should still be consideration of other areas, particularly those areas within the river valley areas, e.g. Darent, Medway and Stour catchments.

The proposed principles include GNR5, which propose commitment to the catchment based approach specifically in relation to water supply, ecology and conservation of the landscape. The County Council would strongly recommend that there is commitment to pursuing natural flood management, which would reflect the flood risk threat which is listed in Chapter 10.3.

The County Council would also recommend consideration of the areas which are not considered to be chalk areas in terms of SuDS.

Q46. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right special characteristics and qualities for geology and natural resources?

See page 105 - 106. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q46a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Q47. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for geology and natural resources?

See pages 107 - 108. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q47a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Under the ‘Geology and natural resources’ section (10.5), the Plan has a set of ‘principles’ that encompass natural resources. They are, in relation to waste and minerals, GNR2 and GRN3.

“GNR2 - Careful management and sensitive restoration of existing minerals and waste sites in or affecting the Kent Downs will be pursued”

“GNR3 - A careful approach will be taken to reduce the likely pressure for new minerals sites in or affecting the Kent Downs AONB including ensuring the provision of wharfs to enable alternative sources to be provided.”

Principle GNR2 is a rational approach to reducing the impact of waste and mineral development and the restoration of sites within the AONB.

The Management Plan should be clear that alternative supply facilities are already safeguarded and are being used for their land-won mineral supply.

The Management Plan should recognise that land-won supply, particularly for aggregate forming minerals, is central to the mineral planning system.

The NPPF 2019 makes clear that a seven-year landbank should be maintained of aggregates serving distinct markets (10-year land-banks are required to be maintained for hard rock).

Therefore, mineral supply to maintain these land-banks to meet an identified need into the future has to be identified in mineral plans. Whilst it is recognised that such supply should be identified by mineral deposits outside AONB areas, the national legislation does not preclude it, given the ‘exceptional’ test ‘in the public interest’ discussed above.

It is considered that principle GNR3 could be amended to reflect that mineral planning for future supply has the potential to be a significant matter for the Management Plan in the future, given the finite nature of mineral deposits outside AONB areas. Also, that importation is not a direct alternative to securing a land-won supply, but a ‘consideration’ to be assessed and evaluated by the mineral planning authority.

Q48. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for geology and natural resources?

See page 108. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q48a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

To boost the ambition of Aim 5, the County Council recommends that reference could be made to restoring wilderness and fully functioning ecosystems as opposed to simply green infrastructure.

Q49. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for geology and natural resources?

See page 108. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q49a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The County Council’s question 48a applies to this question too.

11. Quality of Life and Vibrant Communities

Our vision for quality of life and vibrant communities is as follows:

“In 2030... a diversity of people and communities are central to the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of the Kent Downs; they value this special place and feel welcome to enjoy, experience and benefit from the AONB. People and communities have a strong, positive influence over change through being engaged and active participants. Communities’ work and voluntary activity marries social and economic well-being with landscape conservation and enhancement. Individuals and organisations choose to buy goods and services that in themselves benefit the Kent Downs landscape and economy.

“The health and well-being benefits of contact with nature and beauty have become central to the purposes and management of the landscape and the Kent Downs partnership.”

Q50. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for quality of life and vibrant communities?

See pages 111 – 116. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q50a. Please provide any comments on the vision for quality of life and vibrant communities here:

It is recommended that section 11.3 b), which makes reference to superfast broadband, is updated to include a reference to superfast and gigabit capable broadband, so it aligns with current government policy, as well as good mobile broadband services (key for local residents as well as those seeking to enjoy the landscape).

The Management Plan should also seek to emphasise that fully functioning, resilient landscapes support resilient communities and good quality of life. Flood attenuation, ground water recharge and quality, air quality, urban cooling, carbon sequestration and contact with nature all derive from beautiful and biodiverse landscapes.

Reference to NHS link workers should be supplemented with reference to local authority and primary care social prescribers, as well as the vital role of the voluntary and community sector in such efforts.

Q51. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for quality of life and vibrant communities?

See page 116 - 118. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q51a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan recognises the importance of the diversification of the employment base in AONB.

The County Council considers that waste processing and mineral supply may also be part of the area’s diversification of employment base, if sensitively developed.

As Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, the County Council acknowledges that the AONB may hold important mineral resources for historical building restoration using materials of a highly localised nature for specific architectural vernacular purposes. Such activities may present opportunities for local employment. The Management Plan could recognise these possible opportunities for employment diversification.

The County Council also notes the inclusion of an aim for a rural economy where residents and visitors value sustainable local produce and services. Local facilities for food shopping took on an even greater importance during the pandemic, and this offers the potential to encourage more localised shopping habits. The delivery of cohesive communities and of affordable community facilities that help to enable cohesiveness, is crucial.

Social isolation should be explicitly recognised and considered within the Management Plan.

Q52. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for quality of life and vibrant communities?

See page 118. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q52a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Q53. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for quality of life and vibrant communities?

See page 118. *Select one option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q53a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

VC10 – there is a typographical error which makes it difficult to be certain on what the principle being laid out is

VC11 – this principle could be strengthened by setting out an ambition to better bring together and coordinate provision of health and wellbeing ‘assets’ in local settings within the AONB

12. Access, Enjoyment and Understanding

Our vision for access, enjoyment and understanding is as follows:

“In 2030... the Kent Downs AONB is a place of natural beauty with opportunity and access for all people; they feel welcome to participate in quiet recreation for health, relaxation, enjoyment and for cultural and artistic expression.

“Improved management ensures that the Public Rights of Way and much of the highway network is safe, quiet and convenient for walkers, cyclists and horse riders and public transport is an attractive option to reach and enjoy the landscape. Maintenance of the Public Rights of Way and highway network is sympathetic to biodiversity and landscape character.

“The Kent Downs AONB is recognised, valued and celebrated by residents, visitors and by those who simply delight in the fact that it is there.”

Q54. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision for access, enjoyment and understanding?

See pages 121 – 128. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
		x			

Q54a. Please provide any comments on the vision for access, enjoyment and understanding here:

The Management Plan should also make reference to the creation of land bridges which can mitigate the very significant negative impacts on the AONB from major roads.

The vision for a well managed and improved PRow network is supported, but the challenge of funding of this work cannot be ignored. Given the likely pressures on local government resources available in the future, consideration should be given to the means of establishing this vision.

The Management Plan highlights the predicted levels of population growth in Kent and the increasing pressures on outdoor recreation sites e.g. National Trust Langdon Bay site recording 500,000 visits a year. Taking these factors into account, it will be difficult to ensure the PRow network is quiet. Efforts can be made to spread use across the 6900km of PRow in Kent through promotion and investment in existing infrastructure, but the public are still likely to converge on the existing honeypot sites that have attractive vistas or practical on-site amenities.

Promoting the education of the community on respecting the Kent Downs is crucial in preserving its quality and helping to ease any resulting impacts from the pressures from recreation.

In addition to public transport, active travel should also be encouraged as a means of accessing the Kent Downs AONB for the reasons highlighted within the Management Plan.

Q55. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right main issues, opportunities and threats for access, enjoyment and understanding?

See page 128. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
	x				

Q55a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The Management Plan should also make reference to the creation of land bridges which can mitigate the very significant negative impacts on the AONB from major roads.

The points highlighted in this section are generally supported, though consideration should be given to an additional point that focuses on active travel. Specifically, highlighting the need to improve walking and cycling infrastructure opportunities and encourage active travel participation for the reasons given elsewhere in the Management Plan.

Point i is welcomed, as below:

‘Improving the rural road network for its landscape quality and to promote quiet countryside recreation by managing traffic pressures to provide quiet and safe access.’

The County Council as Local Highway Authority considers that this aim could be strengthened. This is because the rural road network provides vital connections between off-road PRoW routes, enabling cyclists and equestrians to access PRoW with higher access rights. However, the increasing frequency and speed of vehicles along these roads (e.g. increased number of delivery drivers) can deter path users due to safety concerns. Improving the safety and security for Non Motorised Users (NMUs) along these roads would help to encourage active travel and outdoor recreation. This can be seen with the recent Covid-19 lockdown, which saw an increase in cyclists along rural lanes when vehicle movements reduced.

Q56. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right aims for access, enjoyment and understanding?

See page 130. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
x					

Q56a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

The consultation survey results (Management Plan - Page 8) showed the PRoW network to be one of the most valued features of the Kent Downs. With this in mind, the management plan should aim to maintain and improve the PRoW network. The proposed aims would appear to support these actions and are therefore welcomed

Q57. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we have identified the right principles for access, enjoyment and understanding?

See page 130. *Select **one** option only.*

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
			x		

Q57a. If you have answered ‘tend to disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, please tell us why here:

Concerns are raised with principle AEU2 as set out below:

“Diversions and stopping up of PRoWs will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that they will not have a detrimental impact on opportunities for access and quiet enjoyment of the AONB landscape and historic character.”

Whilst the good intentions of this principle are recognised, concerns are raised with the implications of this approach. This is because some diversions or extinguishments may be required that deliver great public benefit or enable vital development to proceed, but do not necessarily have a positive impact on existing public access. It also fails to reflect primary legislation, established Government policy or the County Council’s policies. Whilst all proposals stand to be determined on their merits and it is for the AONB Unit to respond as it sees appropriate to any consultations, this policy is unlikely to be given any great weight.

The above said, the majority of changes to the PRoW network are beneficial or neutral in terms of their impact on use and enjoyment.

Section 3 – Draft Landscape Character Assessment

The Draft Landscape Character Assessment (which is made up of 13 individual documents) outlines the identifying characteristics of the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB and makes landscape management recommendations on actions, investments and priorities to conserve and enhance the landscape. These recommendations inform the Draft Management Plan.

Q58. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the landscape management recommendations in the draft Landscape Character Assessment?

Select **one** option in each row.

Chalk Downs	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 1A West Kent Downs						
LCA 1B Mid Kent Downs						
LCA 1C East Kent Downs						

Chalk Scarps and Vales	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 2A Kemsing Scarp and Vale						
LCA 2B Hollingbourne Scarp and Vale						
LCA 2C Postling Scarp and Vale						

Chalk Cliffs and Coast	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 3A White Cliffs Coast						

Select **one** option in each row.

River Valleys	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 4A Darent Valley						
LCA 4B Medway Valley						
LCA 4C Stour Valley						

Greensand	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 5A Sevenoaks Greensand Ridge						
LCA 5B Lympne Greensand Escarpment						

Low Weald	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
LCA 6C Low Weald Eden Valley						

Q58a. Please provide any comments on the landscape management recommendations here: *Please be as specific as is possible in your answers and provide evidence if appropriate.*

It is recognised that these landscape areas do not seek to restore natural processes, as well as lost and degraded habitats, or restore extirpated native species. Landscape character assessments can lock in modified and degraded landscapes where restoration of functioning ecosystems is impossible without significant intervention.

The County Council notes that these Landscape Character Assessment contain inaccuracies in the descriptions of historic environment features in the Medway Valley. For example – “cursus” is probably meant to be “causewayed enclosure”. These are very different sites with different land management implications. The Character Areas should be further reviewed to take account of more accurate historic environment information. The County Council would be happy to assist with this process.

The management recommendations should also be further reviewed. In the Medway Valley one for example ‘Protect historic sites (including non-designated sites) and their settings, taking into account the full range of heritage in this area- from prehistoric burial sites to 19th Century industry’ should be amended to include 20th century heritage, which could include military or industrial remains.

Section 4 – Supporting Assessments

Q59. We have completed an Environment Report and Sustainability Assessment on the Draft Management Plan.

If you have any comments on this assessment, please provide them here:

The Environment Report and Sustainability Assessment is available at

kent.gov.uk/kentdownsaonb or in hard copy on request.

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) for the draft Management Plan.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any proposals would have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion, and carer's responsibilities. The EqIA is available at kent.gov.uk/kentdownsaonb or in hard copy on request.

Q60. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity. Please provide any comments here:

Section 5 – Additional Information

Q61. The Draft Management Plan was prepared before the Covid-19 pandemic. It will be important to consider how the Management Plan should respond to the crisis. Please provide any key considerations you think we should take into account here:

If your comments directly relate to a specific section of the Draft Management Plan, please include the name of the section with your comment.

The Management Plan should be informed by green recovery and BuildingBackBetter principles going forward.

Foot fall and visitor pressure has been unsustainable for many semi-natural sites and evidences the fact that far more land should be restored and made accessible to deal with the impact of a growing population that wants immerse itself in nature.

The reductions in vehicular traffic at the height of the pandemic proved that current orthodoxies on traffic levels and growth can be challenged if appropriate alternative infrastructure is available.

Q62. If you have any examples of landscape enhancement, biodiversity, or access improvement projects in your local area, please provide details here:

If you wish to discuss, please contact mail@kentdowns.org.uk

Boxley Warren Local Nature Reserve, The Larches, Detling and Wilder Blean project all involve elements of restoration of lost biodiversity (native Box, Small-leaved lime and Juniper at Boxley, facsimile lost herbivores at Detling and the Blean).

Q63. How did you find out about this consultation?

Select **all** that apply

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Received an email from Kent County Council |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Received an email from Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Received an email from another organisation or contact |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | From a friend or relative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Social Media (Facebook or Twitter) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kent.gov.uk website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other |

If other, please specify:

Q64. Finally, do you any other comments to make about our Draft Management Plan?

Kent Downs AONB Citizen's Panel and Newsletter

The Kent Downs AONB is considering establishing a Citizen's Panel. Members would be asked for their feedback on a range of issues to help the AONB better understand residents' views and provide the right information to help people enjoy the landscape.

If you are interested in learning more, please visit <https://bit.ly/3cpYPng>

Visit our website KentDowns.org.uk and join our email list via <https://bit.ly/2Lg7Bsb> to stay up to date with news and events in the Kent Downs Areas Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Section 6 - More About You

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We'll use it only to help us make decisions and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.

Q65. Are you.....? Select *one* option only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q66. Is your Gender the same as your birth? Select *one* option only

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q67. Which of these age groups applies to you? Select *one* option only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	0-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>	85 + over
<input type="checkbox"/>	16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	35-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	60-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	75-84	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q68. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?

Select **one** option only.

White English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Asian or Asian British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>		

(Source: 2011 Census)

***Other Ethnic Group - If your ethnic group is not specified on the list, please describe it here**

A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers.

Q69. Are you a Carer? Select **one** option only.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has

a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example), are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q70. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Select **one** option only.

Yes

No

I prefer not to say

Question 70a. If you answered 'Yes' above, please tell us the type of impairment that applies:

*You may have more than one type of impairment, so please tick **all** that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'Other', and give brief details of the impairment you have.*

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Physical impairment

Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)

Longstanding illness or health condition, or epilepsy

Mental health condition

Learning disability

I prefer not to say

Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Q71. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or belief?

Select **one** option only.

Yes

No

I prefer not to say

Q71a. If you answered 'Yes' above, which of the following applies to you? Select **one** option only.

Christian

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Muslim

Sikh

Other

I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

Q72. Are you...? Select **one** option only.

Heterosexual/Straight

Bi/Bisexual

Gay woman/Lesbian

Gay man

Other

I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

Who are we?

Kent County Council collects, uses and is responsible for certain personal information about you. When we do so we are regulated under the General Data Protection Regulation which applies across the European Union (including in the United Kingdom) and we are responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. Our Data Protection Officer is Benjamin Watts.

The personal information we collect and use

Information collected by us

In the course of responding to Consultations published by Kent County Council we collect the following personal information when you provide it to us:

- Postcode
- Email address if you want updates on a consultation
- Feedback on the consultation
- Equalities Data - Ethnicity, Religion, Sexuality, Gender Reassignment, Disability or if you are a Carer
- Cookies – we use three types of cookies when you use our website. For more information about the cookies and how they are used please visit <https://kahootz.deskpro.com/kb/articles/kahootz-cookie-information-ci>

We use cookies to remember who you are and a few of your preferences whilst you use the website.

We do not use cookies to collect personally identifiable information about you, track your behaviour or share information with 3rd parties.

Our cookies do not contain any of your personal information and only take up about one-thousandth of the space of a single image from a typical digital camera.

All of the cookies we set are strictly necessary in order for us to provide the online service to you.

You do not need to submit any equalities information if you do not want to. KCC is committed to the principle that all our customers have the right to equality and fairness in the way they are treated and in the services that they receive. Any information you do give will be used to see if there are any differences in views for different groups of people, and to check if services are being delivered in a fair and reasonable way. No personal information which can identify you, such as your name or address, will be used in producing equality reports. We will follow our Data Protection policies to keep your information secure and confidential. Your equality data will be anonymised before sent to other teams.

How we use your personal information

We use your personal information to inform you of the outcome of the consultation, if you have requested updates.

We may use your postcode to carry out a type of profiling to estimate which one of a number of lifestyle groups you are most likely to fall into. We do this using geodemographic segmentation tools. We do not make any decisions about individual service users based solely on automated processing, including profiling.

How long your personal data will be kept

We will hold your personal information for up to 6 years following the closure of a consultation.

Reasons we can collect and use your personal information

We rely on *'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest'*

And *'processing is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject.'*

The provision of contact details, including name, address or email address is required from you to enable us to respond to your feedback on consultations.

We rely on *processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest* as the lawful basis on which we collect and use your special category data for the purpose of equalities monitoring.

Further, the processing is necessary for the purposes of identifying or keeping under review the existence or absence of equality of opportunity or treatment between groups of people with the view to enabling such equality to be promoted or maintained.

You can read KCC's Equality Policy on our website <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/corporate-policies/equality-and-diversity>

Who we share your personal information with

Kent County Council are hosting this consultation on behalf of the Kent Downs AONB Unit services. We may share your personal data and feedback with the Kent Down AONB Unit who may need to respond to your feedback. In some cases that may include your name and contact details if provided.

We will share personal information with law enforcement or other authorities if required by applicable law.

We use a system to log your feedback, which is provided by a third-party supplier.

Your Rights

Under the GDPR you have a number of rights which you can access free of charge which allow you to:

- Know what we are doing with your information and why we are doing it
- Ask to see what information we hold about you
- Ask us to correct any mistakes in the information we hold about you
- Object to direct marketing
- Make a complaint to the Information Commissioners Office

Depending on our reason for using your information you may also be entitled to:

- Ask us to delete information we hold about you
- Have your information transferred electronically to yourself or to another organisation
- Object to decisions being made that significantly affect you
- Object to how we are using your information
- Stop us using your information in certain ways

We will always seek to comply with your request however we may be required to hold or use your information to comply with legal duties. Please note: your request may delay or prevent us delivering a service to you.

For further information about your rights, including the circumstances in which they apply, see the guidance from the UK Information Commissioners Office (ICO) on individuals' rights under the General Data Protection Regulation.

If you would like to exercise a right, please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team at data.protection@kent.gov.uk.

Keeping your personal information secure

We have appropriate security measures in place to prevent personal information from being accidentally lost or used or accessed in an unauthorised way. We limit access to your personal information to those who have a genuine business need to know it. Those processing your information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

We also have procedures in place to deal with any suspected data security breach. We will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected data security breach where we are legally required to do so.

Who to Contact

Please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team at data.protection@kent.gov.uk to exercise any of your rights, or if you have a complaint about why your information has been collected, how it has been used or how long we have kept it for.

You can contact our Data Protection Officer, Benjamin Watts, at dpo@kent.gov.uk. Or write to Data Protection Officer, Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ.

The General Data Protection Regulation also gives you right to lodge a complaint with a supervisory authority. The supervisory authority in the UK is the Information Commissioner who may be contacted at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns> or telephone 03031 231113.

For further information visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/about-the-website/privacy-statement>

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Canterbury City Council - Our future district 2040**We want to hear what you think...**

We want to hear your views about the issues for the district from now to 2040.

The first three questions are for you to **tell us what you think is important** for the future of the district.

The rest of the questionnaire is for you to **tell us more about what you think** on each of the five topic areas:

- ***Housing and new communities***
- ***Local economy and employment***
- ***Movement and transportation***
- ***Town centres and local facilities***
- ***Historic and natural environment***

You can answer as many or as few questions as you wish.

Our future district

What are the good things about the local area where you live and what could be improved? (1000 words)

What main changes would you like to see in the district over the next 20 years? (1000 words)

The County Council would like to promote and support the need for continued commitment to the delivery of truly sustainable growth, with a focus on delivering communities that are resilient to the challenges presented by climate change. KCC recognises that with the pressure of growth in a changing environment, this will require changes in the way that new communities are planned, delivered and sustained.

The County Council considers that the most successful sustainable communities are achieved when appropriate infrastructure to serve the community is delivered, where necessary, ahead of housing growth. The County Council encourages the importance of the Local Plan review process to put infrastructure first – a place-making approach that will ensure that planned residential and commercial growth will bring with it new connectivity, opportunities for local people and deliver high quality and sustainable developments that enhance the distinctive Kent environment and to create the places people want to live. This infrastructure first approach is embedded in the Kent and Medway Infrastructure Proposition, a deal with Government for new infrastructure investment that will enable housing delivery, which is focussed on building the right homes in the right places and providing the public services, transport infrastructure, jobs and homes that residents will need now and in the future.

Community, health and education, cultural, digital and waste infrastructure should be delivered in a timely manner to support communities, with sustainable transport infrastructure supporting a significant modal shift. Growth should also support net-zero carbon targets, seeking to deliver net biodiversity gain and providing outdoor recreational opportunities to support the health and wellbeing of communities and the environment.

Communication between key stakeholders, including the County Council will help achieve this ambition to deliver sustainable growth in the Canterbury District.

The County Council puts forward the following areas as examples (but by no means an exclusive list) of the areas of change that it would like to work closely with Canterbury City Council on as its Local Plan review progresses, in order to deliver sustainable growth across the district over the next twenty years:

- Greater emphasis on climate change, ensuring the district is resilient to the challenges presented by climate change for environmentally sustainable growth throughout the district.
- A shift towards sustainable modes of transport, with good levels of transport infrastructure providing opportunities to travel sustainably - resulting in a reduction in congestion within the main conurbations in the District. During the Plan period, KCC anticipates a rapid transformation in vehicle use towards electric, alternatively fuelled and autonomous vehicles and increasing use of shared/on demand vehicles which must be considered when designing growth in the district.
- A proactive response to the challenges arising following the COVID-19 pandemic, with consideration of a sustainable recovery in the district. Focus should be on locking in short/long term positive impacts; both socially and economically.
- Greater emphasis on an infrastructure first approach to development, with consideration of all types of necessary infrastructure to support development. Infrastructure multifunctionality where appropriate (e.g. SuDS). Funding and deliverability (and phasing of each) must also be identified.
- A net-zero approach to development. The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy sets out how the County Council, in partnership with Canterbury City Council, Government and other councils in Kent and Medway, will respond to the UK climate emergency and drive clean, resilient economic recovery across the county. The Strategy sets targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the county to net-zero by 2050, eliminate poor air quality and fuel poverty and deliver a clean, affordable and secure energy supply. Achieving net-zero ambition will require momentous effort and action by all sectors and across all areas of life. The new Local Plan must ensure the buildings and infrastructure constructed today are fit for a zero-carbon future; supporting good quality sustainable and climate resilient design and promoting low carbon travel, transport and digital connectivity. It is recommended that Canterbury adopts the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy to support our shared vision of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050.
- Low emissions and greener development should also be focused on wider issues for a well-rounded approach. Consideration should be given to the design of new homes as well as the sustainable development of employment spaces. Furthermore, consideration should be given to alternative heating options. There is expected to be a transformation in how energy is generated and supplied in the years ahead. Gas heating supplied to new homes will be banned from 2025 and national energy generating infrastructure will continue to move away from large fossil-fuelled power stations, towards a greater use of smaller, community scale low/zero carbon power generation. The Local Plan presents an opportunity to support

the shift to low carbon energy infrastructure, which could include options such as district heating schemes, hydrogen grids and decentralised heat and energy centres supplied by locally produced renewable energy sources

The County Council considers that sustainable communities are delivered successfully when supporting infrastructure is delivered, where necessary, ahead of housing growth. Taking an infrastructure first approach is key to ensuring that this is achieved. As a key infrastructure provider, the County Council would welcome continued engagement, following this consultation, with the City Council and other relevant government departments and agencies, in the production of its Local Plan review, to ensure that an infrastructure first approach is taken to considering the Local Plan strategy right through to the delivery of schemes and to ensure that the necessary infrastructure to support development is adequately funded and delivered in a timely manner so the ambition of sustainable development is realised during the lifetime of the Plan.

What are the climate change challenges for our district and how might these be addressed? (1000 words)

Climate change will present new and significant challenges for the Canterbury district. Environmental impacts, such as rising sea levels, could lead to greater chances of flooding and extreme weather could result in overheating in homes issues resulting from colder temperatures.

By addressing the challenges presented by climate change, the Local Plan can help to ensure the resilience of new development within the district and will ensure long term sustainable growth.

As part of this, it is suggested that Canterbury City Council sets principles for developers to address these challenges – including the installation of energy efficiency measures and improvements the fabric of housing and non-domestic buildings to help adapt to climate changes. Natural flood defences that can double as attractive public green space should also be considered and promoted with developers. The City Council should also explore if these could be delivered as part of section 106 agreements or CIL projects.

The location of development should also be a consideration in how growth might address the challenges from climate change. This should include the accessibility of the site to necessary infrastructure, as well as the environmental suitability of a site – including flood risk. The County Council would recommend that development should not take place, in so far as possible, in areas which have an increased flood risk, due to the inherent challenges and likely impact on these areas resulting from climate change.

Changes in the local climate (as well as social changes resulting from the pandemic) may result in additional tourism in the Canterbury district. Local infrastructure will need to be in place to support this.

Housing and new communities

Our article [Housing and new communities - making places for people](#) introduces some of the housing issues we think will need to be addressed over the next 20 years in the new District Plan, but we want to hear from you.

What are the issues for housing and creating new communities over the next 20 years? (You can identify up to five issues for housing and new communities.) Would you like to tell us about an issue for housing and creating new communities?

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Taking a sustainable approach to growth in the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

Sustainable Business and Communities

Growth in the Canterbury district should support net-zero carbon targets, whilst delivering resilient and robust communities that are able to adapt to the challenges arriving from climate change.

The Local Plan should encourage high quality growth that embraces future proofed and resilient technology that can address issues and impacts of climate change - including the use of district heating systems in new developments. The County Council recommends consideration of how heat pumps and other emerging technologies, that can achieve additional environmental benefits, could be designed into growth and development in the future, and incorporated into Local Plan policy.

The County Council works closely with Canterbury City Council and other partners in delivering on the Kent Environment Strategy themes and priorities. The Kent Environment Strategy seeks to support economic growth, whilst protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment and creating and sustaining communities that are vibrant, healthy and resilient. The County Council recommends that the Local Plan should have consideration of these themes and priorities.

It is also recommended that the Local Plan ensures that a natural capital approach is taken to development and growth. This will ensure that development will contribute to the long term sustainability of the environment through (for example) the creation of new green areas, pocket parks or allotments into existing communities. This approach can significantly increase the health and wellbeing of residents in existing areas and can ensure the benefits of green space are not only limited to new development.

The County Council would be keen to work with Canterbury City Council to ensure that sustainable development principles are embedded in all discussions around growth and Local Plan policies with developers and other partners, in the delivery of growth in Canterbury.

The County Council would also welcome discussions on the potential input that developer contributions could have in supporting renewable energy provision and carbon emission reductions.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS)

The consultation document has identified the role and importance of the water environment in development of new communities, drawing particular attention to flood risk and water supply.

Recognition and consideration of the total water cycle (from when rainfall falls, where it flows across the land surface and its collection for water supply) should be an integral part of planning for growth across the district. This includes the adoption of integrated water management infrastructure. Measures such as controlling surface water flows, managing extreme events, improving water quality in some development areas and water conservation measures should be considered in tackling some of the major climate change challenges that will be faced across the district.

The integration of water within open spaces needs to be fully considered and promoted, alongside the need to balance water supply and demand. The Local Plan should promote specific design decisions, such as green roofs and bio-attenuation, for small scale developments and strategic growth. Consideration will need to be given to examine how larger spaces can be designed to integrate and maximise the role of surface water management, water quality, biodiversity and amenity.

Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve is a key environmental feature of the city, county and country, providing high quality habitat for a range of species and an important and highly regarded green space for residents. It is currently in an unfavourable condition due to poor water quality in the River Stour, largely due to discharges from sewage treatment works. Any further development in the catchment will prevent the site from recovering from this unfavourable condition, unless they achieve nutrient neutrality. It is understood that this issue is complex and it is unfortunate that it is putting development under pressure, however, KCC also recognises that it presents an opportunity to deliver sustainable growth that can support the recovery of this important site, as well as improve water quality generally in the River Stour, and deliver green and sustainable infrastructure that provides multiple benefits, including habitats and amenity space and water recycling. KCC would support Canterbury City Council to encourage developers to utilise green solutions to this problem to deliver these wider benefits. KCC would recommend adopting a policy in the Local Plan to ensure that any development undertakes an appropriate assessment that ensures it is delivering nutrient neutrality, and that the policy promotes multiple benefits in delivering any measures to achieve nutrient neutrality.

Heritage Conservation

The historic environment has a significant role to play in the conservation of resources required for development, and also in energy efficiency. It can play a central role in the delivery of sustainable development and should be protected and enhanced, as necessary. Old buildings can sometimes be more energy efficient than newer ones and, of course, have

an advantage in having already been built. Thus, it may take fewer overall resources to adapt an old building than to demolish it and build a completely new one. Historic England has produced guidance ('Climate Change and the Historic Environment', 2008¹) that reviews the threats to the historic environment posed by climate change (more recent guidance can also be found in 'Climate Change Adaptation Report' (Historic England, 2016)²). The guidance demonstrates that historic structures, settlements and landscapes can in fact be more resilient in the face of climate change, and more energy efficient than more modern structures and settlements. This has also been updated in the HE report 'There's no Place Like Old Homes: re-use and Recycle to Reduce Carbon' (Historic England 2019).

Minerals and Waste

Housing and communities should be delivered in sustainable locations – which includes having consideration of the impact of development close to and/or coincident with safeguarded land-won minerals, safeguarded minerals, waste management and transportation facilities. The Local Plan should consider, on a strategic scale, how to conserve finite mineral resources for future generations and ensure permitted facilities are not lost or their lawful operation compromised. The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, would welcome further discussions with Canterbury City Council as options for development are progressed. This should potentially include discussions with third parties (such as mineral and waste operators) to assess the nature and extent of the land-won mineral resources and any affected facility's continued operational requirements.

Public Health and Prevention

Sustainable growth must also address health and wellbeing for new and existing communities. This can be achieved not only considering healthcare and leisure facility provision, but also by consideration of the wider determinants of health, such as access to green space, air quality and economic opportunity, and planning them into growth accordingly.

Growth should seek to improve health and wellbeing of the district's residents and visitors, particularly through the wider determinants of health and ensure that the dispersal of new settlements / major extensions do not widen health inequalities between local communities. It should allow access to green and blue spaces for leisure – which would have positive effects on mental and physical health by providing opportunities for physical activity.

In addition, sustainable growth must seek to improve air quality through all means, including engineering solutions, reduction in emissions from vehicles and buildings as well as access to cleaner forms of transport, including electric vehicles.

¹ <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/73%20Climate%20Change%20and%20the%20Historic%20Environment%202008.pdf>

² <https://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=15500>

Q. Issue 2 (1500 words)

An infrastructure first approach to development will help to ensure that facilities to support sustainable development are an integral part of growth, delivered to a high standard in a timely manner to support communities.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

Provision and Delivery of County Council Community Services

Growth should be planned with infrastructure that is adequately funded and delivered to a high standard. All development options should ensure that education, health and community, cultural, digital and waste facilities are delivered in accessible locations, supporting both existing and new communities. An infrastructure first approach is key to ensuring that communities are sustainable, with all the necessary facilities delivered for the residents.

In respect of education provision, there is a requirement for a secondary school site to the north of the district (8-10ha) to meet the needs of the populations in Whitstable and Canterbury and to reduce travel and congestion in Canterbury central. It is also worth noting that thought should be given to the location of student housing and the number of dwellings, given the potential to undermine school rolls. Where development does not meet the full cost of new/expanded education provision, this has an impact on the KCC capital budget and ability to bring infrastructure forward in a timely manner.

The County Council would welcome engagement with Canterbury City Council to discuss how best the Local Plan can incorporate an infrastructure first approach to ensure that developments are catered for with all the necessary services and facilities at the right time and to ensure that the infrastructure required to support growth will be funded and phased to ensure it is delivered as needed.

The County Council would request that a policy is included in the Local Plan that requires all new builds to have gigabit-capable broadband connections (in line with current Government policy) – similar to the fibre-to-the-premise policy (EMP6) developed by Ashford Borough Council in its Adopted Local Plan to 2030.

Waste Management

KCC, as Waste Management Authority, would emphasise the need for Waste Management to be considered as necessary infrastructure to support development. Recognition of the impact that new development has on existing waste facilities is key to ensuring a sustainable service for all is maintained.

Whilst KCC has currently secured waste transfer station capacity for the short term, an increase in demand for this service over the lifetime of the Local Plan period, up to 2040, is likely to require investment in infrastructure. Demand on the Household Waste Recycling Service in East Kent is already high, with projects identified at several sites to help increase capacity. A need for a Materials Recycling Facility to process dry recyclate has also been

identified. KCC is currently compiling a Developer Contribution Guide, which looks to request financial contributions for these essential waste infrastructure projects.

Sports and Recreation

The County Council would also like to see the delivery of infrastructure to support opportunities for sport and physical activity. The infrastructure should be accessible via sustainable transport infrastructure.

Culture

The district's heritage, including the City of Canterbury, provides a strong narrative and a starting point for the cultural offer within the district. The Marlowe Theatre for example adds cultural value through its continued growth and diversification.

Culture contributes to placemaking by creating attractive, culturally vibrant and authentic places. It can build community bonds and cohesion, support individual health, wellbeing and resilience and foster civic identity and encourage stewardship. The night time economy is also a main driver of tourism that can deliver a rich quality of life to residents when delivered considerately. Cultural infrastructure must therefore be in place to support growth, offering opportunities for cultural tourism and the night time economy.

Cultural infrastructure can be delivered as multifunctional spaces that offer opportunities for community services and affordable creative work spaces alongside cultural offerings. The cultural sector also provides local employment opportunities, with the role of high and further education facilities developing skills in the cultural and creative industries. The Local Plan must therefore consider the delivery of necessary cultural infrastructure to support sustainable development in the district.

Q. Issue 3 (1500 words)

To ensure that a diverse and adaptable range of housing types and typologies is provided to meet the evolving needs of the local community.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The County Council, as infrastructure provider, considers that all housing typologies should be delivered with accessible and sustainable connectivity to local services. Local amenities should in place to develop inclusive and resilient communities that can seamlessly integrate with and benefit existing communities in the Canterbury district.

The County Council recommends that the Local Plan has consideration of the KCC Adult Social Health Care and Health 'Your life, your wellbeing – A vision and strategy for adult social care 2018-2021'³. Housing choices in the district should support independence, be accessible and include 'extra care housing' that is flexible and responsive to the changing needs of individuals.

³ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/adult-social-care-policies/your-life-your-wellbeing>

To ensure that existing and new communities are diverse and inclusive, a variety of affordable housing typologies should be delivered, supporting residents with differing economic needs, as well as a range of housing types and sizes offered to support diversity within the housing stock.

Q. Issue 4 (1500 words)

Delivering growth that is of a high standard of design.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

New development should be of high quality design – ensuring that it integrates new and existing communities seamlessly, incorporates the character of the local area, the historic environment and provides multifunctional infrastructure to deliver sustainable growth. It should be developed and secure approval of local communities and factor in consideration of community safety.

The Kent Design Guide⁴, and Secured by Design guidance should be considered in the preparation of the Local Plan to help achieve this. Central Government guidance, including Approved Document M: “Access to and use of buildings” should also be taken account of when considering design, as well as the wide ranging emerging guidance and policy context on the matter of design.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) identified in June 2019 Guidance ‘Housing for older and disabled people’, that the need to provide housing for older and disabled people is critical. Accessible and adaptable housing enables people to live more independently and safely. It provides safe and convenient homes with suitable circulation space and suitable bathroom and kitchens. In consideration of the County Council’s statutory responsibilities around Social Care, KCC requests these dwellings are built to Building Reg Part M4(2) standard to ensure they remain accessible throughout the lifetime of the occupants to meet any changes in the occupants’ requirements. Well-designed housing can have long term benefits, including the meeting of market demand in an area that has a lack of supply, but also health and wellbeing opportunities for residents.

High quality design should also be accessible, taking into account the varying needs of the evolving community. The County Council would recommend that this should include consideration of dementia friendly design within the Local Plan. Small design changes to housing and infrastructure can help someone living with dementia to be more independent by providing a home and environment that is clearly defined, easy to navigate, and feels safe.

High quality design should seek to deliver energy efficient homes. KCC would encourage the adoption of high levels of building sustainability that go beyond current Building Regulation requirements; with the setting of more stringent energy and water standards to help achieve the net-zero carbon ambitions of Canterbury and more widely across Kent. Whilst the Future

⁴ <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide>

Homes Standard is expected to improve the energy efficiency of new homes in 2025, it will not achieve net-zero. Other planning authorities have already successfully incorporated net-zero policies into their Local Plans (Reading for instance), with many other authorities stipulating energy efficiency targets higher than those set out in the Future Homes Standard. Such a policy will be essential to achieve shared net-zero commitments.

The latest UK climate projections indicate that Canterbury will be increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts, so it is important that the Local Plan considers future climate risks - not just the weather extremes currently experienced. Detailed information and evidence on the future risks for Kent are included in KCC's recently published Climate Change Risk and Impact Assessment.

To ensure homes are warm in winter and cool in summer, homes should be designed to minimise the need for mechanical regulation of internal temperatures. For instance, this could be achieved by increasing natural shading on buildings and at street scene level.

In respect of environmentally sustainable development, the County Council would draw the City Council's attention the Kent Design Guide and the Kent Environment Strategy. These documents provide valuable resources as well as suggestions for design details, such as solar panels, to be included within new developments to boost sustainability credentials - as well as overarching principles regarding the delivery of sustainable growth across the County.

Local economy and employment

Our article [Local economy and employment - supporting new jobs and growth](#) introduces some of the employment issues we think will need to be addressed over the next 20 years in the new District Plan, but we want to hear from you.

What issues need to be addressed for our local economy and employment over the next 20 years? (*You can identify up to five issues for our local economy and employment.*) Would you like to tell us about an issue for our local economy and employment?

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Supporting the low carbon sector and promoting sustainable businesses within the area.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The economic recovery from COVID-19 presents an opportunity to provide support to the low carbon sector and boost energy efficiency measures. The Local Plan should seek to continue to identify ways to boost support for this sector, with consideration of the current skills gap, to ensure economic and employment benefits during and beyond the COVID-19 recovery.

Q. Issue 2 (1500 words)

Ensuring that planning for growth builds in adaptability in response in seen and unforeseen challenges (including, for instance, climate change and pandemics), to continue to support economic prosperity across the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

It is widely acknowledged that, as a result of COVID-19, there are likely to be changes in future working patterns and this will need to be considered alongside changing demands for employment space. The impact of COVID-19, both in the long and short term, should be considered within the Local Plan. Although the long-term impacts are unclear, there may be a shift in the demand for office spaces, instead potentially replaced with demand for shared workspaces and meeting spaces for Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), with further demands from entrepreneurs. Shared workspaces and accessible employment locations have the added benefit of reducing the level of commuting out of the local area. The Local Plan should be adaptable to accommodate these changing trends in work patterns, as the long-term influence of COVID-19 becomes apparent.

Given the recent requirement to work from home where possible, the County Council recommends a renewed consideration of the design of homes, ensuring that they allow for safe and reasonable home working areas. Ensuring that suitable spaces for home working are designed in to new development will have positive benefits by boosting the resilience of this area of the local workforce and their ability to continue working.

To deliver resilient economic growth, there must be consideration of the current availability of local employment and the skills of the current workforce. The importance of opportunities within the public sector, such as with Highways England, NHS and church related employment must be acknowledged. Further training and opportunities to boost the skills of the workforce will also resultingly boost its resilience.

Agriculture, horticulture and viticulture

The County Council notes that there may be a change to the landscape as viticulture grows and more land is given over from arable and pasture to vines – this is a growing sector and could lead the need to develop new skills and new businesses like contract wineries. Many of the bigger producers are at production capacity and sometimes find it difficult to process wine for smaller vineyards who find it uneconomical to invest in their own processing equipment for the amount of wine they produce. Contract wineries (like Defined Wines in Bridge) can do this for these smaller producers, but even Defined Wines is now reaching capacity.

The landscape changes could have a distinct impact on the appeal of rural tourism - from the current traditional countryside landscape, to one that becomes more synonymous with acres of vines. This is not necessarily a negative impact, as wine tourism generates employment and tourism opportunities, but the Local Plan will need to consider and adapt to this possible change. It needs to be managed by looking at the impact, opportunities and threats to rural tourism. It is expected that viticulture may overtake fruit as the primary production in twenty years.

Farmers are expected to continue to have to diversify and adapt to current challenges resulting from the pandemic and climate change – either into tourism or the development of local produce. COVID-19 has shown the importance and resilience of local producers who have been forced to switch from supplying commercial customers to local people, as residents began sourcing local produce more during the pandemic. There is an expected growth in retailing, wholesaling, manufacturing and catering, which farmers can look to benefit more of this supply chain activity. The Local Plan should reflect the need for the agricultural economy to adapt and diversify through development of redundant farm buildings, erection of new buildings in rural areas and the possible aesthetic and transport implications this may have on local areas.

The Local Plan should also explore how renewable energy forms can be incorporated to allow this industry to adapt to the challenges presented by climate change, whilst managing conflicts between the use of land for growing food and generating sustainable forms of energy. The County Council would also draw attention to the Kent Environment Strategy, which includes targets for the delivery of energy through renewable sources; the need for careful management of land to balance conflicting demands from food production, quality of water supply and energy; and the delivery of appropriate energy infrastructure.

To adapt to the changing needs of the agricultural industry, farming needs to become more productive and the new Agriculture Bill may help with this. Farmers will need to adapt to embrace new technology and more efficient ways of farming. There is a need to develop

skills in the agricultural industry to fully benefit from the new technology – the Local Plan should seek to support this.

In terms of horticulture in particular, but also relevant for all agriculture, there will be issues around water resources in the future, with further pressure likely from the increase in house building. The Local Plan should ensure full consideration of the impact of housing growth on water resources to ensure there is no negative impact on the agricultural industries; whilst also supporting the industry to deliver any appropriate water conservation measures.

The role of farmers is changing and the Local Plan should accommodate this change and support farmers in delivering and increasing productivity, jobs and nutritional security and develop a vibrant rural economy delivering on Net Zero.

Q. Issue 3 (1500 words)

Increasing the resource efficiency of the local economy to boost the sustainability credentials of employers within Canterbury.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan should be shaped to encourage the development of a circular economy to reduce waste from industry across the district. Energy efficiency measures of non-domestic buildings should also be incorporated.

The County Council acknowledges that the public sector, including schools, hospitals and local Government are amongst the largest employers in the district and must also seek to boost their sustainability principles and reduce emissions. Conditions which are placed on employers to improve the sustainability of their businesses must be applied fairly across the district.

Q. Issue 4 (1500 words)

Ensuring that employment allocations are planned in highly accessible areas, with opportunities for active travel, supported by adequate sustainable transport infrastructure.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan should seek to allocate employment sites that reflect future needs of employers, ensuring the promotion of a modal shift towards sustainable transport modes. The Local Plan should make reference to the KCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan⁵ (ROWIP), which includes an aim for Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to contribute towards robust infrastructure that both that enables development, and encourages economic growth – leading to regeneration and the attraction of new businesses into an area.

⁵ https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/90491/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf

Businesses, schools, health services and leisure industries all need the support of sustainable transport infrastructure. The County Council, as Local Highway Authority, would welcome further engagement with Canterbury City Council to ensure opportunities for sustainable transport are delivered alongside economic and employment growth. Furthermore, KCC would draw attention to the design details and measures considered within the Kent Design Guide as guidance in the delivery of mitigation on this issue.

Q. Issue 5 (1500 words)

Ensuring that digital infrastructure is planned to support broadband connectivity to boost employment opportunities across the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan should include for appropriate planning of digital infrastructure to support broadband connectivity, to further boost employment opportunities within Canterbury.

The Government's Future Telecom Infrastructure Review states that all new homes and developments should be provisioned with full-fibre broadband connections (i.e. fibre-to-the-premise). These connections should also offer business tenants and residents a choice of broadband services that they can subscribe to. Provision should also be made for multiple broadband infrastructure providers to maximise the choice of broadband services.

It is important that digital infrastructure, including broadband and mobile connectivity, is designed and planned for at an early stage, with consideration included within the Local Plan.

It should be noted that most broadband infrastructure providers require between nine to twelve months' notice to install connections so that they are available for use once the build is completed. Broadband infrastructure providers will often provide full-fibre connections free of charge as long as sufficient notice is given to avoid the need for more expensive and disruptive retrofitting.

Given the importance highlighted by COVID-19, new communities must have excellent digital connectivity as well as suitable and safe spaces to allow for home working where possible.

Movement and transportation

Our article [Movement and transportation - how we get around](#) introduces some of the movement issues we think will need to be addressed over the next 20 years in the new District Plan, but we want to hear from you.

What issues need to be addressed for movement and transportation over the next 20 years? *(You can identify up to five issues for movement and transportation)* Would you like to tell us about an issue for movement and transportation?

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Traffic congestion within Canterbury.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan must address the issue of traffic congestion and its related negative impacts upon air quality and health for the population within Canterbury, as further growth in the district will exacerbate this issue. Congestion on the ring road is a key concern of the County Council as the Local Highway Authority. It will be challenging to overcome through engineering solutions to gain increased road capacity to accommodate more vehicles. In line with the latest government directives, the County Council would welcome engagement with the district council to consider ways of achieving accelerated and higher volumes of modal shift and more radical solutions to encourage active travel to the city centre and outlying commercial/retail areas.

Active Travel can only be achieved by prioritising safe and pleasant environments for pedestrians and cyclists on segregated routes into the city centre.

Public transport is likely to become a key form of transport following COVID-19 recovery. Key strategic corridors and facilities should be provided for buses in order that the journey by bus offers the incentives of both time and economic saving over the private car. Increased use of rail should also be developed as a sustainable way to travel across the district and wider area. The Local Plan will need to include consideration on how to boost the accessibility of rail stations, both within the City and the wider area. Measures could include parking facilities with adequate electric vehicle charging and secure cycle storage. The County Council would welcome engagement on this.

The County Council, as Local Highway Authority, considers that the longer term aspiration should be for a transportation system that supports an active and healthy community and provides a significant improvement to air quality through encouraging modal shift within Canterbury. This could include incentives to promote sustainable transport options, including through incorporating safety improvements and the provision of facilities such as secure cycle parking, EV charging and the further expansion of the popular and commercially successful inner city traffic free zones.

Q. Issue 2 (1500 words)

The Local Plan must ensure adequate sustainable transport infrastructure for existing and new communities, with a shift towards sustainable transport modes, both within Canterbury city centre and the main conurbations within the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan must ensure that adequate sustainable transport infrastructure is made available to support existing communities and visitors, and that of any new developments and communities in the district – encouraging a shift towards sustainable transport modes.

The County Council would welcome engagement with Canterbury City Council regarding the delivery of sustainable transport infrastructure to support growth. The Local Plan should include the integration of cycle storage and EV chargers (including for ebikes) at workplaces and local facilities to make sustainable journeys more feasible, whilst further capitalising on the increase in active travel and modal shift to walking and cycling. The PRoW network is a key contributor to getting people out of their cars to take on more active travel for everyday journeys and recreation and leisure. An improved network can provide high quality routes to connect rural villages to towns and new communities to existing communities.

PRoW also provide opportunities to reduce short car journeys for work. The Local Plan should reflect partnership with KCC on projects such as quiet rural lanes linking to PRoW network. The rural road network provides vital connections between off-road PRoW routes, enabling cyclists and equestrians to access PRoW with higher access rights. However, the increasing frequency and speed of vehicles along these roads (e.g. increased number of delivery drivers) can deter non motorised users due to safety concerns. The Local Plan should aim to create improved cycle routes into City Centre and improve public safety for all non motorised users (NMUs).

Q. Issue 3 (1500 words)

Providing connectivity within existing and new communities to allow for sustainable movement across the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

Canterbury is ideally placed for active travel. Growth must ensure a good network of footpaths/cycle paths to allow for ease of movement between places of employment, home and local services, reducing reliance on cars. The County Council would welcome investment in the PRoW network, which covers over 600km in Canterbury district, across the City centre and wider area to create active travel links throughout the district.

High quality green spaces should also be accessible through green corridors, designed into new developments from the outset.

There should be a requirement for developments to masterplan active travel routes to new school/community provision to provide this as the infrastructure is delivered.

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Strategic highway connections to the Kent and Canterbury Hospital.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The issues surrounding the ageing buildings of the Kent and Canterbury Hospital have been longstanding and reached a point of national debate. The interrelation between the three main hospitals of the East Kent Trust, the William Harvey, the Kent and Canterbury and the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother creates significant emergency and other vehicular traffic along the A28 corridor. Appointment-related and emergency traffic results in significant movements through the congested central Canterbury ring road, causing stress to vulnerable members of the community. The County Council would request consideration for Local Plan options to include a more strategically located hospital site to the south east of the City that could be accessed both sustainably from the City and directly off the A2 and/or an improved and more strategic A28. This should facilitate rapid emergency transit between the East Kent Trust hospitals and significantly reduce hospital bound traffic from having to use the central ring road.

Town centres and local facilities

Our article [Town centres and local facilities - at the heart of our communities](#) introduces some of the town centres and local facilities issues we think will need to be addressed over the next 20 years in the new District Plan, but we want to hear from you.

What issues need to be addressed for our town centres and local facilities over the next 20 years? (*You can identify up to five issues for our town centres and local facilities*). Would you like to tell us about an issue for town centres and local facilities?

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Ensuring that adequate and adaptable local facilities are available, supporting existing and new communities across the Canterbury district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The County Council, as an infrastructure provider, would welcome early engagement with Canterbury City Council on infrastructure matters to ensure adequate infrastructure is planned for, funded and delivered in a timely manner – and that an infrastructure first approach is taken in delivering local facilities. The County Council would ideally like to see developers provide all appropriate infrastructure within new developments, in accessible locations.

The County Council recognises that there has been an evolving shift in the role of town and city centres, which has been further affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It will be important for local facilities to be developed to generate activity in town centres, whilst also responding to any potential long term decline or changes in retail. Alongside other stakeholders, the County Council would welcome engagement with the City Council on the planning of a reimagined town centre that is sustainable, adaptable and resilient, through the Local Plan.

Historic and natural environment

Our article [Historic and natural environment - Our heritage, landscapes and biodiversity](#) introduces some of the historic and natural environment issues we think will need to be addressed over the next 20 years in the new District Plan, but we want to hear from you.

What issues need to be addressed for our historic and natural environment over the next 20 years? (*You can identify up to five issues for the historic and natural environment.*) Would you like to tell us about an issue for our historic and natural environment?

Q. Issue 1 (1500 words)

Addressing the need to protect and enhance the local natural environment and biodiversity within the district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The Local Plan must ensure that development does not result in the isolation of habitats, in particular (but not limited to) existing locally, nationally and internationally protected sites. The Local Plan should aim to increase connectivity between habitats within Canterbury and Kent. In the preparation for the evidence base of the Local Plan, there is need for an understanding as to where habitat creation and management is being carried out across the district to enable further works to enhance it.

The Local Plan needs to ensure that ecological mitigation and enhancements that are secured as part of a planning application will be retained and enhanced in the long term.

The Local Plan must also consider the pressure of recreational activity on local biodiversity. An increase in growth, and resulting tourists and residents, will increase the number of people accessing nature areas and open space. There is need therefore to ensure that the natural environment will be managed appropriately to minimise the damage and impact from recreation. The Local Plan should also ensure that habitats and open spaces are managed appropriately to balance benefits for biodiversity, wildlife and people.

New and existing communities must have accessible connectivity to the wealth of natural assets in Canterbury. The Local Plan should reflect this need by promoting an improved PRoW network that allows for access to the natural environment and green spaces within the district.

Q. Issue 2 (1500 words)

Ensuring the appropriate consideration of the historic landscapes within the Canterbury district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

The historic landscape of Canterbury is an asset for the district. The landscape that is visible today is the result of many centuries of evolution and the pattern of roads, tracks, field

boundaries and hedgerows that gives the modern landscape its character is firmly rooted in the past. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001)⁶ is a tool for understanding this historic context and should be used to inform decisions taken regarding the landscape character of Canterbury. Ideally, however, this county level study should be both updated and deepened to be more relevant at the district and local level, as has happened recently in Tunbridge Wells and on the Hoo Peninsula. This will allow more effective decision-taking and assist the application of key landscape principles on a case-by-case basis. KCC would also encourage the city council to ensure that the historic aspects of landscape character are fully integrated into considerations of more general character within the Local Plan. This is in consideration of the role that the past has played in establishing the modern character and the extent to which historic features survive and need consideration in development control and agricultural practice.

Q. Issue 3 (1500 words)

Ensuring the appropriate consideration of the Canterbury district's design and character.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

Growth allocations in the Local Plan must take account of any existing historic character of area surrounding proposed development sites. This is crucial to ensuring high quality developments are properly integrated into the existing towns and villages. The Local Plan should require that development is largely sympathetic to any existing structures and in character with other buildings. Development should be in scale with the surroundings and in character with any existing traditional and historic buildings on the site. Where possible, materials used within development should be appropriate to the existing character, and where available, by using locally sourced and traditional materials.

Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) may have both direct and indirect impacts on the historic environment. Direct impacts could include damage to known heritage assets – for example if a historic drainage ditch is widened and deepened as part of SuDS works. Alternatively, they may directly impact on unknown assets such as when SuDS works damage buried archaeological remains. Indirect impacts are when the ground conditions are changed by SuDS works, thereby impacting on heritage assets. For example, using an area for water storage, or improving an area's drainage can change the moisture level in the local environment. Archaeological remains are highly vulnerable to changing moisture levels which can accelerate the decay of organic remains and alter the chemical constituency of the soils. Historic buildings are often more vulnerable than modern buildings to flood damage to their foundations.

When SuDS are planned it is important that the potential impact on the historic environment is fully considered and any unavoidable damage is mitigated. This is best secured by early consideration of the local historic environment following consultation with the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) and by taking relevant expert advice. KCC has recently produced guidance for SUDS and the historic environment. It provides information about the potential impact of SuDS on the historic environment, the range of mitigation measures

⁶ https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/56210/Kent-Historic-Landscape-Character-volume-1.pdf

available and how developers should proceed if their schemes are believed likely to impact on heritage assets.

Q. Issue 4 (1500 words)

Taking account of the impact of rural development on heritage assets in the Canterbury district.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

It should be noted that much of Kent has historically had a dispersed settlement pattern. Development between villages and hamlets and among farm buildings would in many places be consistent with the historic character of those areas. Historic England, KCC and Kent Downs AONB have published guidance on historic farmsteads in Kent that considers how rural development proposals can be assessed for whether they are consistent with existing character. The Kent Farmsteads Guidance⁷ has been endorsed by the County Council and it is recommended that Canterbury City Council considers adopting the guidance as Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), as part of the Local Plan process. KCC would be happy to engage on this matter further.

Canterbury's historic parks and gardens will have an important role to play in the future life of the district. Historic parks are not only important as visually attractive heritage assets but also contribute to leisure, health and well-being. To ensure this historic resource fulfils its potential, there is a need to ensure a sound evidence base. At present the main information resource for the local (as opposed to Registered) historic parks and gardens of Canterbury is the 1996 Compendium of Historic Parks and Gardens (KCC and the Kent Gardens Trust (KGT)). The Compendium needs reviewing in order to ensure that it is brought up to date and that the significance of the district's gardens is properly assessed. It can then be used to manage and enhance this asset within Canterbury. KCC has recently been working on a number of such reviews with the KGT and would be happy to discuss an update for Canterbury with the City Council.

Q. Issue 5 (1500 words)

Ensuring consideration of the archaeology with Canterbury.

Q. What do you think should be done to address this issue? (1500 words)

Within the historic core of Canterbury, in particular, and the district more widely, are extensive and important archaeological remains. Canterbury district includes some of the oldest archaeological remains in Kent in the form of Palaeolithic flints finds from the Fordwich area. There are also extensive prehistoric sites that can still be observed in the form of cropmarks on the Downs, many being protected as Scheduled Monuments.

⁷ <https://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/historic-farmsteads/1165-part-5-kfg-design-guidance-2014/file.html>

Canterbury itself has iron age origins and is of international fame as a Roman town. The city, together with several of the smaller urban centres, still contains numerous medieval buildings (including the outstanding Christ Church Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey and St Martin's church collectively recognised as a World Heritage Site) and medieval road patterns and, in addition, survivals of the post-medieval, industrial and more recent past. Away from the city, the Roman fort at Reculver and the extensive coastal heritage, including remains from the Second World War along the north Kent coast, all contribute to the district's remarkable and valuable heritage. As such, the archaeological assets of the district are diverse and widespread, offering much to assist with regeneration and growth.

The Local Plan should contain a policy specifically on archaeology that commits the Canterbury City Council to promoting the enjoyment of Canterbury's archaeological resource through the protection and enhancement of archaeological sites, monuments and historic landscape features. Policy should also seek to encourage and develop educational, recreational and tourism potential through research, public access, management and interpretation.

Where possible developers should seek to use Canterbury's archaeological assets to shape their development proposals, provide interest and character and protect the assets.

The framework for the management and enjoyment of Canterbury's archaeological heritage is the Canterbury Heritage Strategy.

Development proposals affecting heritage assets with an archaeological interest should be accompanied by a desk-based assessment and, if appropriate, by archaeological fieldwork, that:

- Characterises the nature, extent and condition of the archaeological deposits in the development area;
- Assesses the significance of the deposits and the contribution made by their setting;
- Describes and assesses the impact of the development proposals on the archaeological deposits, their significance, and their setting; and
- Describes how the archaeological deposits will be protected during development.

Where this is not possible, the assessment should clearly justify why this is not possible and should describe the proposals for mitigating any impacts

Development proposals leading to substantial harm to the archaeological interest of designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Protected Military Remains or heritage assets of comparable significance should normally be refused.

Where development proposals affect non-designated heritage assets with an archaeological interest, Canterbury City Council should expect the archaeological remains to be preserved in-situ. Where this is not possible clear justification will be required. Where the justification is accepted a programme of archaeological excavation and recording will be likely to be required. The fieldwork will be appropriate to the significance of the archaeological deposits and must be carried out by an appropriately qualified contractor following a written

specification agreed by Canterbury City Council. The programme will include all phases of desk-based and fieldwork, post-excavation analysis, publication of the results and deposition of the site archive in an appropriate repository.

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BY EMAIL ONLY

28 September 2019

Dear Anna

Re: Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Development Plan - Regulation 16 Consultation

Thank you for consulting Kent County Council (KCC) on the Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

The County Council has reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan and for ease of reference, has provided comments structured under the chapter headings and policies used within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Section 3.0 Background to the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 A Brief History

The County Council is pleased to see that the history of the Parish includes archaeological aspects of Boughton Monchelsea's past. There are however further aspects which KCC recommends are also referenced, as detailed below.

The Parish has considerable potential for the discovery of Palaeolithic archaeological remains. Pleistocene mammalian remains have been found in loam-filled fissures in the Lower Greensand (Hythe Beds) at the quarries. These include bovid, red deer, horse, hyena, mammoth and woolly rhinoceros. Mesolithic flints have been found at Furfield Quarry and Neolithic axes and knives have been found in the Parish.

It was during the iron age that the area began to be used more intensively. The Iron Age enclosure at Quarry Wood Camp had extensive outlying remains including earthworks that

still exist along the lane. An iron age ditch, possibly part of a wider earthwork complex, has been found at Roman Way. There are possible iron age features at Pested Bars Road, a late iron age occupation site at Furfield Quarry and at Amber Green Cottage, and there have been numerous discoveries of iron age coins from across the Parish. The area was well used during the period, partly perhaps due to a fork in the Roman road in the Four Wents area, but also probably due to the presence of Ragstone quarries. In addition to the bath-house mentioned in the text, there was a walled cemetery at Lockham Wood, a building at Roman Way and occupation at Furfield Quarry and Pested Bars Road.

There is less evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity in the area, but features have been found in the Pested Bars Road area. Medieval activity would have focused on the village of Boughton Monchelsea and there are numerous medieval buildings, mostly farmhouses, in and around the village which also includes St. Peter's Church.

3.2 Why do we need a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

Current challenges

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan discusses the need to maintain the Parish's rural character and plan settlement growth carefully. There are now a number of tools to help with this. KCC has worked with English Heritage (now Historic England) and the Kent Downs and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Teams to prepare guidance on how historic farmsteads in Kent can be assessed for their suitability for new development or change of use¹. Where such development is permitted, it is important that it is in keeping with the existing character in terms of size, layout, routeways, massing and materials and that any archaeological remains associated with former phases of use are treated appropriately in the development control process.

3.4 The relationship between the draft Neighbourhood Plan and Maidstone and national planning policies

Public Rights of Way and Access Service

KCC recommends that reference to the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is included within the Neighbourhood Plan. This will enable successful partnership working to continue and deliver improvements to the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network in Boughton Monchelsea. Joint delivery of the strategic plan will ensure significant benefits and its omission could result in significant loss of access to additional funding opportunities.

Section 4.0 About our Parish

4.4 Designated and non-designated heritage assets in the parish

The text states that Appendix 3 contains a list of non-designated heritage assets in the Parish and that these have been identified by the local community. However, all of the items are architectural features and buildings and it does not include any archaeological sites or

¹ <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/buildings/farmsteads-and-hamlets.html>

historic landscape features, which are also eligible to be considered as heritage assets. No list of non-designated heritage assets can ever be truly comprehensive, as new assets are being identified all the time, but if the appendix is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, it should state that it only comprises architectural assets and other heritage assets can be found on the Kent Historic Environment Record². The County Council would support this policy with the proposed modifications.

4.5 Parish Landscape Character and Landscape Assessment

Boughton Monchelsea is an historic landscape that contains many surviving historic features, such as the patterns of tracks, lanes and hedgerows that give character to the Parish. When considering the impact of either development or intensive agriculture on the countryside, it is important to understand the historic development of the landscape so that its essential character can be conserved. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent. Where it is to be applied locally, further study is needed to refine its conclusions, but it remains an essential tool for understanding Boughton Monchelsea's landscape. To be fully effective in local planning and development management, the Historic Landscape Characterisation should be backed up by more detailed case-by-case analysis at a parish level, to add greater detail through secondary sources. This would make a good volunteer project for the Parish Council and KCC would be happy to discuss this further.

Section 5.0 Policies and Proposals

Highways and Transportation

The County Council, as Local Highway Authority, has no additional comments to raise further to those previously set out within the KCC response to the Regulation 14 consultation dated 7 June 2019.

Waste Management

The County Council, as Waste Disposal Authority, has a statutory responsibility under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for the handling and final disposal/treatment of all waste collected from residential properties within the administrative boundary of Kent.

The County Council requests that consideration is given within the Neighbourhood Plan to the pressure that additional housing will place upon waste infrastructure for the handling and disposal/treatment of waste. Delivery of new homes within the Boughton Monchelsea Parish will place significant demand upon KCC Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) facilities in the area. It will also increase demand for recycling facilities that deal with kerbside collected waste, known as Material Recycling Facilities (MRFs), for which there is a national shortage.

The County Council requests reference to the need for development contributions towards new waste infrastructure in the wider area, from new housing developments within the

² www.kent.gov.uk/HER

Parish. KCC acknowledges that there are currently no waste management facilities within the Boughton Monchelsea Parish. These types of facilities are strategic in nature, serving a wide area, typically at district level. The Maidstone HWRC at Tovil, which serves the residents of Boughton Monchelsea Parish, is at operational capacity and hence any increase in waste tonnages in the future, as a result of development, would require mitigation.

KCC has recently submitted two projects for inclusion in Maidstone Borough Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, both of which are required to increase waste capacity at the Maidstone HWRC as a direct consequence of planned residential development in parishes such as Boughton Monchelsea. The County Council also has a larger strategic project to secure processing capacity at MRF for all recycling collected at the kerbside by the Waste Collection Authority.

Sustainable Business and Communities

The County Council welcomes the focus given to climate change and the environment throughout the Neighbourhood Plan.

Emergency Planning and Resilience

All policies within the Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan should take into account of declarations and commitments regarding climate and ecological emergencies made by Maidstone Borough Council and KCC.

5.1 Parish – Wide Policies (PWP)

Waste Management

The County Council requests that waste is referenced within this section as a parish-wide policy; and that the need for expansion of the Maidstone HWRC in the short term and relocation in the longer term is also acknowledged. Parishes such as Boughton Monchelsea will find accessing these facilities more difficult in the future as demand from new development across the borough increases, and capacity issues will mean queues to use the facility will increase unless identified projects are supported. Similarly, additional capacity at Material Recycling Facilities will be required. The County Council will request developer contributions from new housing developments in order to support the delivery of additional capacity required as a result of growth. The County Council proposes adding new policies and supporting to set out the following:

- That the construction of new dwellings will create a requirement for additional capacity at household waste recycling centre (HWRC) facilities and Material Recycling Facilities (MRF) to serve the Parish.
- That the Neighbourhood Plan supports additional investment in HWRC capacity through the expansion of the existing Maidstone HWRC in the short term and in the long term supports its relocation to allow further required increase in capacity over the life of the Local Plan.

- That contributions from housing developments are made towards a strategic project to secure processing capacity at an MRF for kerbside collected recycling.

PWP 5 - Improving landscape and amenity access between South Maidstone and Boughton Monchelsea

The County Council notes the inclusion of the wording 'Public Rights of Way' (PRoW) as an example of suitable recreational use. The inclusion of a specific PRoW reference within this policy text is welcomed and supported as it will help enable KCC to continue delivering PRoW network improvements across the Parish.

PWP 11 - Protecting woodland areas and planting native tree and hedge species

The County Council is supportive of planting trees / hedgerows but would recommend that the location of planting is considered to ensure it is in suitable locations. For example, wildflower meadow planting may conflict with tree planting.

PWP 12 - Biodiversity in New Development

The County Council is generally supportive of this policy although would recommend reference is given to the forthcoming Environment Bill and net biodiversity gain requirement.

The County Council would also recommend that this policy makes reference to the need for ecological surveys to be submitted as part of any planning application. Ecological surveys will identify the most appropriate enhancements and highlight if tree planting is appropriate.

Map 11 (Page 40) – Amenity & Access Improvements

It is presumed that the 'proposed footpaths/bridleways/cycleways' on this map are aspirational routes which have been requested by the public during the consultation process for this Neighbourhood Plan. KCC would be keen to understand any details of additional suggestions for improvements to the PRoW network put forward by the Parish Council or local residents.

PWP 6 - Sustainable connections

This policy is supported by the County Council, as it would ensure that new developments provide opportunities for walking and cycling, which would encourage active lifestyles. However, it is requested that additional text is inserted into the policy wording, stipulating that applicants for new developments engage with KCC, as the Local Highway Authority, to develop sustainable transport links and contribute towards PRoW network enhancements to achieve this objective.

PWP 15 - Planning obligations and Community Infrastructure Levy

The increased population, as a consequence of future development, will undoubtedly add to the pressure on, and importance of, the surrounding PRoW network. It is critical therefore that some general wording is included within this policy to support future requests for

funding, to ensure that these highly regarded links are not degraded as a result of new growth.

New development provides opportunities to secure investment in the PRow network, which could enhance opportunities for active travel and outdoor recreation across the Parish. Developer contributions could be used to upgrade existing routes or create new path links that address existing network fragmentation issues. KCC would welcome future engagement with the Parish Council to consider local aspirations for access improvements, which could be delivered through development contributions.

5.2 Health and Wellbeing Policies (HWB)

HWB - Supporting local community facilities

The County Council notes the inclusion of additional criteria, requesting that proposals provide '*adequate access and parking, and in the case of new facilities, are located so as to be accessible by public transport if possible*'. Whilst this additional criterion is welcomed, additional wording should be included within the text that specifically focuses on sustainable transport connections to the community facilities. Developers should be expected to provide, or contribute towards, the creation of high quality walking and cycling routes, to encourage active travel within the Parish.

5.3 Rural Housing Policies (RH)

Minerals and Waste

The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, recognises that some of the proposed sites are entirely within the built-up urban boundary of Maidstone and are thus exempt from any land-won mineral safeguarding considerations.

The following are outside the defined urban boundary and are coincident with the safeguarded Hythe Formation (Ragstone) in the Maidstone Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA).

1. Langley Park, Sutton Road
2. Boughton Mount, Boughton Lane
3. Leywood Farm, Green Lane
4. Junction of Church Street and Heath Road

The Neighbourhood Plan does not include a Minerals Assessment for the above sites within its evidence base. It is noted however that the Inspector examining the 2017 Maidstone Local Plan expressly removed the safeguarding effect of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Policy CSM 5: Land-won Mineral Safeguarding for both the Sandgate Beds and the Hythe Formation (Ragstone). Therefore, these sites are also exempt from mineral safeguarding considerations.

RH 6 - Design of new housing development / RH 8. New dwellings in open countryside

There should be a requirement for applicants to show recorded PRoW on their development plans. Where PRoW would be directly affected by development proposals, plans should clarify intentions for accommodating, diverting or enhancing paths.

The policy should state that new developments provide sustainable transport choices, with walking and cycling routes available that provide realistic alternatives to short distance car journeys. New development should provide for a rich movement network and choice of routes that incorporate active frontages.

Appendix 5 – Boughton Monchelsea Masterplan – Landscape Enhancement Proposals

Several projects within the appendix are focused on improvements to the PRoW network, including the creation of new routes, enhanced user accessibility and higher quality signage. KCC would welcome engagement with the Parish Council to consider the delivery of these projects and potential sources of funding for the works.

KCC would welcome continued engagement as the Neighbourhood Plan progresses. If you require any further information or clarification on any matters raised above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Barbara Cooper
Corporate Director – Growth, Environment and Transport

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Jane Carr
Chair,
Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group



BY EMAIL ONLY

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30 September 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2040 Pre-submission Draft March 2020

Thank you for consulting Kent County Council (KCC) on the pre-submission draft of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The County Council has reviewed the Neighbourhood Plan and sets out its comments below in the order of consultation document.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

How does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan fit into the planning system?

The County Council, as Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, would request the consideration of the adopted Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (KMWLP) within this Neighbourhood Plan.

There are three safeguarded land-won mineral deposits in the parish, as demonstrated in an extract from the Ashford Borough-Mineral Safeguarding Areas Proposals Map of the adopted KMWLP (appendix 1). These are the Hythe Formation-Limestone (Ragstone) (blue), the Sub-Alluvial River Terrace Deposits (yellow) and the Paulina Limestone (in the Clarke Hill Farm/Coldharbour Farm area).

KCC can confirm that there are no safeguarded waste facilities within the Parish.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment

The County Council notes the consultation document states that consideration is being given as to whether there is a need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be compiled. If required, KCC requests that the SEA takes account of waste policy and the promotion of sustainable waste management solutions (this has been included in SEAs for neighbouring parishes of Charing and Lenham).

The Neighbourhood Plan itself does not make reference to waste and the increased demand on waste infrastructure resulting from new developments. The County Council requests that this is captured within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Waste management facilities are strategic in nature, serving a wide area, typically at district level. The County Council notes that there are currently no waste management facilities within the Egerton Parish. However, the combined Ashford Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre, which serves the residents of Egerton Parish, is at operational capacity. Any increase in waste tonnages in the future, as a result of development, would require mitigation. Although only a relatively small number of new homes are being proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan, KCC requests that it should acknowledge that developer contributions towards new waste infrastructure in the wider area will need to be provided by new developments within the Egerton Parish.

Chapter 2 – Preparing the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan

‘ACRK’ should be referred to as the ARCK – Action with Rural Communities in Kent.

Chapter 3 – Egerton now

Egerton Parish now

Paragraph 3.11

It is requested that this text is revised to specify that the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) in the parish are mostly Public Footpaths, with two byways open to all traffic. It is worth noting that there are no bridleways. This is an area which should be addressed, going forward, in order to provide improved rights of access for equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians. The text should also clarify that KCC has a statutory duty to ensure the PRoW network is recorded, protected and maintained in partnership with the parish’s Footpaths Group.

Paragraph 3.18

The Neighbourhood Plan emphasises the “*importance of working from home*” and the “*paucity of public transport*”. The County Council would welcome text to be included to set out how the PRow network provides important access and connectivity and, with improvement, it can offer a viable alternative to car journeys for both leisure and employment purposes.

Local Infrastructure

Paragraph 3.25

The PRow network is a vital component of the highways network, providing significant opportunities for active travel. The PRow network should therefore be specifically referenced in this paragraph. This will enable KCC to deliver network improvements, which can provide sustainable transport choices and support growth in the parish.

Local Infrastructure – Strengths

KCC requests that “*Footpaths*” is replaced by “*Public Rights of Way network*”.

Local Infrastructure – Opportunities

The County Council advises the rewording of “*Footpath to top of Village*”, to include specific reference to Public Footpath AW68. The inclusion of opportunities to improve the PRow network will enable the parish to meet the likely future public need in contributing towards more sustainable development; delivering active travel options; providing opportunities for leisure and open-air recreation for all community user groups.

The County Council recommends that this section should also seek to encourage the uptake of more sustainable heating systems, to support those not on the gas grid and to reduce emissions. The Neighbourhood Plan should also consider measures for improving water efficiency to take pressure off the sewerage system.

Chapter 4 – Vision and Key Objectives

Protect

Paragraph 4.3

The County Council requests specific inclusion of the PRow network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) within this paragraph. The ROWIP can help contribute towards robust active travel infrastructure that enables residential and

economic development. The Neighbourhood Plan should make specific reference to PRow and the opportunities offered to health and well-being, tourism, sustainable transport and access to the environment.

Paragraph 4.4

This section of the Neighbourhood Plan discusses the need to maintain the parish's rural character and plan growth carefully. There are now a number of tools to help with this. KCC worked with English Heritage (now Historic England), and the Kent Downs and High Weald AONB teams to prepare guidance on how historic farmsteads in Kent can be assessed for their suitability for new development or change of use¹. The County Council recommends consideration of this guidance. Where development is permitted, it is important that it is in keeping with the existing character in terms of size, layout, routeways, massing and materials and that any archaeological remains associated with former phases of use are treated appropriately in the development control process.

The County Council notes that this paragraph refers to the *“amenity value of footpaths and bridleways”*. This requires amendment as there are no recorded Public Bridleways within the parish. The County Council recommends the following amendment - *the value of the PRow network as a valuable resource that provides significant opportunities for both outdoor recreation and active travel.*

Paragraph 4.5

The County Council recommends reference is given to the PRow network and how it can contribute to the sustainability of village life, reflecting the extent to which the network meets the likely future public need in contributing towards more sustainable development; delivering active travel options; providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open-air recreation for all community user groups.

Paragraph 4.6

The County Council recommends reference is given to the PRow network as necessary infrastructure required to support development. The Neighbourhood Plan should make specific reference to PRow and the opportunities offered for sustainable transport and access to the environment

¹ <http://www.highweald.org/look-after/buildings/farmsteads-and-hamlets.html>

Chapter 5 – Protecting and conserving Egerton’s individual character and environment

Biodiversity

The County Council notes that habitats have only been considered from a landscape perspective and that wider species are present within the parish. The County Council recommends specific consideration of the natural environment and the benefits that biodiversity brings to a community through a dedicated section on the natural environment and ecology of the Parish.

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises the value added to the rural character of the parish by “grass verges, springs, streams and ponds, woodland, orchards and hedgerows” and that the removal of natural habits could change the amenity and natural environment of the area. It is of particular note that the Plan recognises the importance of the local ditch system and their maintenance.

Policies P1 and P2 do not reference the water environment. It is recommended that one of the policies should mention retention and protection of the local drainage network and the need for implementation of a sustainable drainage approach to serve any new development, so that the local drainage system is protected in relation to capacity reduction or water quality impacts.

Paragraph 5.4

Egerton is a historic landscape that contains many surviving historic features, such as the patterns of tracks, lanes and hedgerows that give character to the parish. When considering the impact of either development or intensive agriculture on the countryside it is important to understand the historic development of the landscape so that its essential character can be conserved. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent. Where it is to be applied locally, further study is needed to refine its conclusions, but it remains an essential tool for understanding Egerton’s landscape. To be fully effective in local planning and development control, the Historic Landscape Characterisation should be backed up by more detailed case-by-case analysis at a parish level, to add greater detail through secondary sources. This would make a good volunteer project for the parish council and KCC would be happy to discuss this further.

Paragraph 5.21-5

KCC supports designation of green spaces throughout the parish. The provision of high quality open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation is supported. The Neighbourhood Plan should aim to improve opportunities to access this resource and good public transport and active travel links should be made available, so that the public are not dependent on private vehicle use for visiting these sites. The County Council recommends that the three sites identified in Policy P3 should all have Rights of Way connections and these should be formally identified and referenced.

Policy P5 – Non-designated Heritage Assets

This policy mentions the “sunken bridleway from Hazelden Farm”. It is requested that immediate engagement is made with KCC in order to clarify this route and its legally recorded status.

Heritage

Paragraph 184 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that *“heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance”*

The government has explicitly confirmed that heritage assets include archaeological sites². Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan must ensure that archaeological assets are properly considered.

At present, the Neighbourhood Plan considers the designated heritage assets (though omits the scheduled monument of Coldbridge Farm, a small part of which is in Egerton) and built heritage of Egerton but does not consider either the wider archaeological heritage, or the historic landscape in which the parish is located, in enough detail.

The Neighbourhood Plan does identify the scheduled round barrow, but there is also a series of rectilinear cropmarks, 1 km north of Egerton to the south of Field Farm, and these may also be prehistoric in date. There have been no palaeolithic discoveries in the parish, but a late mesolithic 'Thames Pick' was found at Kingsland Farm in 1966, a polished Neolithic adze was found in 1968 near Stonebridge Green and numerous iron age coins have been found across the parish.

² (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/has-archaeology/>)

A Roman road also crosses the south of the parish, running from Frith Wood in a north-westerly direction and crossing Bedlam Lane either at Newhouse Farm or Pond House before intersecting Egerton's western border either north-west or south-west of Clark Hill Farm. Clarifying this route would make an interesting community project but it does suggest there is potential for Roman road-side discoveries in the south of the parish. In confirmation of this, a 2nd century AD cremation burial was found in 1961 to the west of Potters Forstal c. 800 m north of the proposed route of the Roman road. Romano-British pottery sherds were found including part of a Samian dish with most of the glaze missing, and a coarse globular jar of gritty grey ware. The jar contained calcined bones. A small quantity of bloomery slag was also found during a later search of an area subject to ploughing.

There are also a number of heritage assets dating to the post-medieval and modern periods. A possible moated manor site has been suggested for Wanden, although there is little information about this. The remains of Egerton Smock Mill also still exist at New Stone Farm. Finally, more than 50 historic farmsteads in Egerton are listed on the Kent Historic Environment Record. These are important in their own right but could also contain medieval cores.

From the modern era, the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER) lists three Second World War pillboxes in and around Egerton village. It is unknown if these were ever actually constructed and if so, whether they still exist. If they do, they constitute important survivals from a critically important time in the village's past. A Hawker Hurricane also crashed at Weeks Farm and, although previously excavated, it remains a designated site under the Protection of Military Remains Act (1986).

There is therefore a range of heritage assets that the Neighbourhood Plan does not currently review or consider. Policy P5 is sufficient for the needs of the Neighbourhood Plan, but the preamble should be amended to acknowledge the wider range of heritage assets described above and should also note that there will also be assets as yet unknown and awaiting discovery.

Chapter 6 – Ensuring a sustainable future for Egerton

Footpaths, Byways, Roads and Transport

Paragraph 6.23-6.25

Rural lanes provide useful connections for Non-Motorised Users (NMUs) travelling between off-road PRoW. The potential for additional vehicle traffic along these country lanes is therefore a concern, as increased movements could introduce safety concerns for NMUs and potentially deter public use of the PRoW network. KCC

request that potential developers submit traffic impact studies which identify any negative impacts on NMUs and any proposed subsequent contributions towards appropriate mitigation measures.

Paragraph 6.25

The County Council should be referred to as the Local Highway Authority (rather than Kent Highway Services). It is recommended that the Parish Council should set up its own Highway Improvement Plan for any requests, including the request for a speed reduction to 40mph on the approach from Charing Heath.

Policy S4 Footpaths & Byways

The County Council recommends this section should read “*Public Rights of Way*” and should consider the aims of the KCC ROWIP. The ROWIP seeks to improve and upgrade the PRoW network where it links with amenities, public transport nodes and places of work/education in order to increase the attractiveness of active travel as an alternative to driving. Developer contributions could be used to upgrade existing routes or create new path links that address existing network fragmentation issues highlighted by the public.

Paragraph 6.26

Any speed limit reduction on Mundy Bois Road, Bedlam Lane and New Road should be included in the Parish Council’s Highway Improvement Plan.

The Parish Council is advised to work in partnership with KCC, as Local Highway Authority to improve cycling routes and encourage cycling use to reduce short car journeys.

Paragraph 6.27

The County Council recommends that the legal status of the PRoW network within the parish is clarified. Specific mention should be made to the necessity to improve the PRoW network to enable safe and attractive walking and cycling connections and links from new developments to community facilities. An increased population will undoubtedly add to the pressure upon, and importance of, the surrounding PRoW network. The PRoW network plays a significant role in helping deliver health and wellbeing benefits to a wide variety of community groups. Reference should again be made to ensure maintenance and improvements are carried out to KCC PRoW standards.

Paragraph 6.28

KCC welcomes the specific aim to improve Public Footpath AW68 but requests the following sentence is included:

“Public Footpath AW68 is identified for particular improvement to provide a safe and attractive route for pedestrians into the village centre facilities (school, shops, church etc.) from such outlying areas as Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill”.

Community Aspiration

KCC supports this aim and suggests it is also mentioned that any developer would be expected to contribute to the improvements to provide significant Active Travel connectivity; the PRoW network must be included in the landscape planning of the parish infrastructure as a whole.

Chapter 7 – Development to meet current and future need

Key Aims for development 2020-2040

Paragraph 7.1

The County Council requests consideration of the Kent Design Guide (due for re-publication 2020/21). This is designed to aid decision-making and promote good design in public path and countryside access management. The guide applies to both urban and rural locations and is intended to complement and where appropriate, draw together relevant technical and design information - providing useful guidance and principles for the delivery of sustainable development.

Paragraph 7.2

For all new developments, there will need to be engagement with KCC regarding the impact on the PRoW network. This would allow the County Council to review proposals for access improvements and consider appropriate developer contributions for PRoW network enhancements, ensuring there are sustainable transport choices available that provide realistic alternatives to short distance car journeys. This should guarantee that the PRoW network is considered at an early stage of the design process and successfully incorporated into future developments.

Policy D1 – Development Principles

The County Council requests the inclusion of the KCC ROWIP and Kent Design Guide. The County Council also recommends a point regarding the provision of high quality open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation should be a

priority. There is an established body of evidence demonstrating that physical exercise in open green space can have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing. Good public transport and active travel links with open spaces should be made available, so that the public is not dependent on private vehicle use.

Local Needs/ Affordable Housing

Egerton NP Policy D4 – Land at Gale Field, Egerton Forstal

As Minerals and Waste Planning Authority, the County Council notes that this site does not have any land-won mineral safeguarding considerations.

The County Council as Local Highway Authority recommends that any new access onto Crockenhill Road will need to provide suitable visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 43 metres based on the 30mph speed limit.

KCC recommends that the proposals should also seek to improve the public footpath (AW 368) that runs in a northerly direction up to Rock Hill Road through surfacing improvements to provide a safer route to the main village centre and primary school. Further discussions are recommended on any proposed improvements. The map and drawing should also label and reference Public Footpath AW68 correctly to ensure identification and inclusion in any future application

Point 2 should be reworded to state -

“Public Footpath AW68 has been identified as a significant off road walking route connecting the village and parish centre. Developers would be required to provide appropriate improvement in partnership with KCC”.

The ROWIP should be specifically mentioned in the above to aid decision-making and promote good design in both PRow and countryside access management. The County Council is keen to provide advice and guidance to landowners, planning authorities and developers. It is therefore requested that the KCC PRow and Access Service is directly involved in future discussions regarding projects that will affect the PRow network both directly and with a wider countryside impact. KCC can then advise on the design and delivery of these projects, ensuring that new routes successfully integrate with the existing PRow network.

Egerton NP Policy D5 – Orchard Nurseries, Egerton

There should be a map included here to show the location within the parish and as there are PRow in the Orchard Nurseries environment, KCC requests immediate contact from the Parish Council to ensure inclusion of these to avoid missed opportunities for Active Travel improvement/funding.

The County Council notes the occurrence of the safeguarded Hythe Formation-Limestone on this site and the need for assessment of the current economic value of these minerals. The Neighbourhood Plan makes no reference to the existence of these minerals or to Policy CSM 5: Land-won Mineral Safeguarding of the KMWLP.

Policy CSM 5 is intended to prevent economic mineral resources from being sterilised by permanent development. In order to address this, a Minerals Assessment of this site should be part of the Neighbourhood Plan's evidence to support this proposed development. An Assessment may be able to include an argument to invoke an exemption from the presumption to safeguard, as set out in Policy DM 7: Safeguarding Mineral Resources of the KMWLP.

Brownfield Sites and Small Scale Development

Policy D6 – Reuse of redundant farm buildings

This policy should ensure that new developments incorporate good sustainable transport connections within the community with high quality active travel infrastructure available - linking local amenities together, whilst enabling development and encouraging economic growth.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change Impacts

The County Council is supportive of this section of the Neighbourhood Plan.

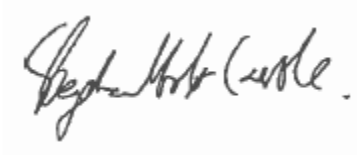
Maps

A copy of the Definitive Map for the Parish should be included in this section. The Parish Council should hold a copy, but if not, KCC will be able to provide this. Its inclusion would highlight the opportunities for improvement, as detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The County Council will continue to work with the Parish Council on the formulation and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan and welcomes further engagement as the Plan progresses.

If you require any further information or clarification on any matter in this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephanie Holt-Castle". The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed within a light grey rectangular border.

Stephanie Holt-Castle

Interim Director – Environment, Planning and Enforcement

Enc.

Appendix 1: Ashford Borough-Mineral Safeguarding Areas Proposals Map