

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 9th September, 2025

10.00 am

Council Chamber

AGENDA

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 9 September 2025 at 10.00 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone.

Ask for: **James Willis**
Telephone: **03000 417831**

Membership (17)

Reform (12):	Mr J Defriend, Mr W Chapman, Mr P Chamberlain, Mr B Fryer, Mr J Henderson, Ms Isabella Kemp, Mr R Waters, Mr R Palmer, Mr M Paul, Mr P Thomas, Mr B Porter and Vacancy
Labour (1):	Mr A Brady
Liberal Democrat (2):	Mr M Brice and Mr T Prater
Green (1):	Mr M Hood
Conservative (1):	Mrs S Hudson

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

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

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
To receive apologies for absence and notification of any substitutes present
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 17/07/2025 (Pages 1 - 16)
- 5 Performance Dashboard (Pages 17 - 26)
- 6 Winter Service Policy (Pages 27 - 32)
- 7 25/00062 - Active Travel Funding Grant (ATF5 -Tranche 5) - Capital & Revenue (Pages 33 - 46)
- 8 25/00063 - National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses (NDORS) (Pages 47 - 64)

- 9 25/00064 - Consolidated Active Travel Funding Grant (CATF -Tranche 6) - Capital & Revenue (Pages 65 - 78)
- 10 25/00066 - Internal Drainage Board Expansion (Pages 79 - 92)
- 11 25/00067 - Procurement for the Receipt and Processing of Paper and Card Waste Contract Countywide - CN260429 (Pages 93 - 110)
- 12 Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership Overview (Pages 111 - 114)
- 13 25/00068 - Folkestone and Hythe Waste Transfer Station - Delivery Options Report (Pages 115 - 134)
- 14 25/00075 - Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Pages 135 - 416)
- 15 25/00078 - To extend current DPS framework SS 15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport (Pages 417 - 430)
- 16 25/00079 - To extend current DPS framework SS15124 Home to School Transport (taxi) (Pages 431 - 444)
- 17 25/00080 - Transport for the South East - KCC endorsement of Transport Strategy for the South East (Pages 445 - 586)
- 18 Work Programme (Pages 587 - 588)

Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

That under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 1 September 2025

rt.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 17th July 2025.

PRESENT: Mr J Defriend (Chair), Mr P Thomas (Vice-Chair), Mr A Brady, Mr M Brice Mr W Chapman, Mr B Fryer, Mr J Henderson, Mr M A J Hood, Mrs S Hudson, Ms I Kemp, Mr M Paul, Mrs B Porter, Mr T Prater, Mr R Waters and Mr D Burns (Substitute for Mr Palmer)

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs Rebecca Drake-Hopkins Mr P Osborne (Cabinet Member for Transport) Mr D Wimble (Cabinet Member for Environment)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Jones (Corporate Director for Growth Environment and Transport) Ms H Chughtai (Director of Highways and Transportation), Mr M Smyth (Director of Environment and Waste), Mr P Lightowler (Head of Public Transport), Ms H Shulver (Head of Environment) Mr A Loosemore (Head of Highways) Mr M Wagner (Chief Analyst) Susan Reddick (Head of Resource Management and Circular Economy and Kay Groves (Service Delivery Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Election of Chair (Item 2)

(The Clerk presided over this item)

1. Mr J Defriend had been nominated by the Leader to be the Chair of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.
2. The Committee agreed this nomination and Mr Defriend was declared as Chair of the committee.

RESOLVED that Mr J Defriend be elected Chair of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee

2. Election of Vice-Chair (Item 3)

1. Mrs B Porter proposed, and Mr M Paul seconded that Mr P Thomas be elected Vice-Chair of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.

2. No further nominations were received, therefore the Chairman declared Mr Thomas as Vice-Chair of the committee.

RESOLVED that Mr P Thomas be elected Vice-Chair of the Environment and Transport Committee.

3. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item 4)

Apologies were received from Mr R Palmer for whom Mr D Burns substituted.

4. Declaration of Interest

(Item 5)

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25/02/25

(Item 6)

Mr M Brice queried paragraph 15 *'improved cycle path adjacent to the main road'*

The Clerk noted the query and would investigate, respond, and amend if required.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February were a correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

6. Introduction to Highways and Transport Division

(Item 7)

Mr P Osborne - Cabinet Member for Transport introduced the report. Ms H Chughtai Director of Highways and Transport and Mr S Jones – Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport – were in attendance.

1. Mr P Osborne prefaced the report
2. Ms H Chughtai introduced Members to the comprehensive portfolio of The Highways and Transport Service responsible for managing, operating, upgrading, modifying, and constructing local roads—KCC's most extensive and valuable asset group. In addition to this, the service played a key role in supporting the delivery of essential public transport, particularly bus services and school transport, directly serving a customer base of over 250,000 people.

3. Members asked a number of questions relating to the report
- (a) Officers responded to the questioning on the Bus Service Improvement Plan Funding (BSIP) and where current funding was directed. BSIP funding was linked to the BSIP Plan published in October 2021 and revised in July 2024. The BSIP document available on the KCC website highlighted the areas within which KCC aimed to deliver an improved bus network.
 - (b) The post pandemic off peak market had remained down by 30%, with operating costs having risen by 30-40%. KCC had taken the decision to protect the service after significant service withdrawals had been observed. Basic funding currently supported 62 services to a cost of £5.6 million. Many of the discussed supported bus services would be school related and would encompass private operators.
 - (c) In response to the recent A229 road closures officers raised that a lack of alternative routes had compounded issues. It was suggested that a wider discussion with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport take place outside the Cabinet Committee meeting to address the wider issues.
 - (d) Members queried if the walking and cycling members club would continue to exist. The Cabinet Member noted the request and suggested that an offline meeting occur with his Deputy Cabinet Member to discuss the matter further.
 - (e) Assurances were sought that the Travel Saver Scheme would continue with the new administration. Mr Osborne acknowledged the concern and would look to respond with a comprehensive answer at a later date.

RESOLVED to note the report

7. Introduction to Environment and Circular Economy (Item 7)

Mr D Wimble - Cabinet Member for Environment introduced Mr M Smyth Director of Environment and Waste – were in attendance

1. Mr Wimble introduced the report with a brief overview that encompassed KCC's statutory requirements and included waste management and recycling, flood and coastal risk management, internal drainage, and energy security.
2. Additionally, the stewardship of farmland, green spaces, and countryside parks, was highlighted as vital for both biodiversity and community wellbeing. Heritage and conservation would also be key areas of focus and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, including the Environment Agency, DEFRA, the National Farmers Union, and other government bodies, to ensure a coordinated and effective approach would be sought.

3. Mr Smyth expanded upon the report and discussed KCC's vital role in managing, protecting, and enhancing the environment. This would be achieved not only through the wide-ranging legislative duties and responsibilities, but also through KCC's unique ability to bring together partners, businesses, and residents to inspire a meaningful collective action.
4. Members queried aspects of the report:
 - (a) In response to concerns regarding a perceived deviation from the net zero action plan, Mr. Wimble reassured Members that the administration remained committed to implementing best practice policies in pursuit of its environmental objectives.
 - (b) Members asked if the current administration's stance on climate change, its associated detrimental impacts and the possible abandonment of net zero targets. Mr Wimble clarified that the focus would be on reviewing the terminology of 'net zero' rather than altering any best policy practices. Mr Wimble affirmed his belief in climate change as an ongoing process that had occurred for thousands of years.
 - (c) Officers discussed the Environment Plan that addressed the key focus in identifying ways to generate additional income to support the delivery of KCC's green agenda. Green finance had been frequently discussed, and there was growing recognition that many investment firms would be actively seeking opportunities to invest in sustainable initiatives.
 - (d) A pivotal part of KCC's strategy would be to determine how best to access green finance. Opportunities such as the private sector or via public sector funding and possible central government support would be explored. Kent County Council could not deliver this agenda alone. KCC was already managing numerous statutory responsibilities and facing significant budgetary pressures. Securing external funding would be essential as a critical component of KCC's ability to achieve its environmental goals.
 - (e) Members raised concerns about recent changes to planning laws that affected house building and questioned how Kent County Council would work with district and borough councils to ensure that green spaces were preserved. Officers explained the number of statutory consultation processes that were in place to assist.
 - (f) Concerns were raised about the impact of kerbside collections on Kent County Council's costs. Officers informed Members that work had been undertaken closely with district and boroughs partners and had resulted in a collective partnership named the Kent Resource Partnership (KRP) being established. The KRP would conduct a review to explore potential cost savings through the implementation of a systems-based approach to waste management.

- (g) Mr Smyth acknowledged Members' questions regarding the ECE budget and residual waste. He added that, following a review of the monetary figures, he would aim to provide concise responses to any questions that fell outside the scope of the current discussion.
- (h) Members discussed the withdrawal of subsidies from Kent County Council to district councils. Officers explained that from a statutory perspective a County Council that had allowed district and borough councils to retain recyclable materials for their own processing would be required to pay them a 'recycling credit.' In Kent, borough councils collected the recyclable material but had transferred it to the County Council for processing and no statutory payment was required. The County Council would bear the cost of managing the material directly
- (i) Officers explained that there were differing relationships between the county and the borough councils. Under the previous administration the view had been taken that payment arrangements between the county and borough councils would be ending, particularly in light of the evolving legislative landscape.
- (j) Borough councils had been mandated to collect a broad range of materials at the kerbside, including five key recyclables. However, it was highlighted that limited government incentives had hindered efforts to significantly increase actual collection volumes.
- (k) Previously, collection vehicles had reported the collection of materials such as glass, paper, and plastic, although collected loads had been lighter than anticipated. This had technically met obligations however, the aim now would be a more efficient collection process with vehicles loaded in full with recyclables.

RESOLVED to note the report

7. Petition Scheme Debate-Gravesend-Tilbury Ferry Service *(Item 8)*

Mrs Rebecca Drake-Hopkins- (Lead Petitioner), Mr Osborne - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and Mr P Lightowler - Head of Public Transport - were in attendance

1. Mrs Drake-Hopkins presented her opening statement and highlighted the 2,400 responses to the petition for reinstatement of the Gravesend – Tilbury Ferry as an indication of how much this service had meant to the community. Aspects such as better promotion of the service, integration with public transport, and the positioning of the ferry as a tourist attraction could all

help boost usage and revenue were discussed. Discussions on the speed of the ferry service and its environmental impact on the local area were raised.

2. Members debated the conflicting reports regarding the withdrawal of funding and highlighted the lack of match funding from Thurrock Borough Council. It was suggested that Thurrock had been willing to support the initiative. Members stated that differing accounts were publicly available online and would require clarification. Consultation feedback had indicated support for subsidising the ferry, although some statements had suggested that the working group had been exploring a number of subsidy-free options. Members suggested the importance of clarifying whether subsidies were still an option or if only non-subsidised models had been considered.
3. The discussion considered whether capital investment would be necessary to reinstate the service. It was also proposed that a model of a reduced service of the provision could potentially enhance the feasibility of reinstatement. One option suggested would be to explore the viability of an operated service from Monday to Friday, between 7:00am and 6:00pm.
4. Members requested clarification on the circumstances that had led to the suspension of the service. Officers responded that Thurrock Council had formally indicated its intention to withdraw funding. As the contract had neared its conclusion and Kent County Council was unable to meet the full cost independently, the service would subsequently be allowed to lapse.
5. Members discussed that political pressure from stakeholders on the opposite side of the Thames estuary had prompted Thurrock Council to reconsider its position and express a renewed interest in the service. However, Members noted that by that stage, negotiating a new contract was no longer a feasible option.
6. The positive impacts of the working group that was currently in place was highlighted. The involvement of various authorities such as: The Thames Estuary Growth Board and the Port of London Authority added to the debate that there appeared to be genuine cross-estuary support for reinstating the service.
7. The Vice-Chair discussed the involvement of the Thames Estuary Growth Board and queried if the organisation would be prepared to contribute financially. Additionally, clarification on whether the ferries themselves would still be serviceable needed investigation. This vital information had not been captured in the current documentation. It was requested that the Cabinet Member and officers look into this aspect further.
8. Members discussed the user base of the ferry service and the vital role it had played in reducing pressure on the Dartford crossing. The paper also suggested unexplored opportunities to improve revenue with a potential option to engage with the private sector.

9. Mr Brady proposed, and Mr Hood seconded, that the previous decision be revisited and that work towards reinstating the Tilbury Ferry service in 2026 be undertaken. This was agreed unanimously.
10. Officers reflected on the developments that had occurred in 2023. Colleagues from Public Transport and Commissioning at KCC, together with partners in Thurrock, had been collaborating on plans for a replacement operating tender for the Gravesend–Tilbury ferry. Jetstream had previously operated the service.
11. The intention had been to award Jetstream a one-year extension from April 2024 onwards with a view to develop a longer-term tender. In November 2023 Thurrock informed KCC that they would no longer be able to fund the operation of the ferry crossing.
12. Officers suggested that reinstating the service now would come at a higher cost and Thurrock had confirmed that they would still be unable to co fund the initiative.
13. KCC had commissioned a study on behalf of this partnership to explore all options for the ferry service. The study reviewed the business case and examined other ferry models and had considered a range of potential solutions. The findings had been shared with the partnership.
14. Officers raised that any future service would still require a subsidy, and that the cost base would be different. Working with the Thames Estuary Growth Partnership Board to build a new funding model was underway and KCC had committed to contributing no less than the past commitment, in line with the previous administration's authorisation. KCC would also actively seek additional partners to help bridge the funding gap.
15. It was highlighted that a return of the ferry service would not be immediate, but officers remained hopeful. Ongoing developments across the Thames Estuary and on the Tilbury (Thurrock) side may lead to new contributions. Further meetings with the Estuary Board would soon take place and updates would be provided.
16. Officers acknowledged the long-standing efforts of Steve Pay who had supported the ferry service since the early 2000s. KCC had worked hard to keep the service going and it was indicated that officers had been reluctant to end the service. KCC would remain committed to restoring the vital link and had been fully aware of the impact its absence has had on those who rely on it. Mr Lightowler stated that efforts would continue with a future report to be brought to the cabinet committee.
17. The Chair noted that the Cabinet Member supported by officers would be required to respond to the recommendation in writing as per the petition scheme.

RESOLVED that the Committee recommend that the Cabinet Member revisit the previous decision and that work towards reinstating the Tilbury Ferry service in 2026 be undertaken.

8. Performance Dashboard *(Item 9)*

Mr M Wagner - Chief Analyst was in attendance

1. Mr Wagner presented the Performance Dashboard. The update represented the final report for the 2024/25 financial year and incorporated proposals for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and targets for the current financial year. The cover paper was on pages 45–46 of the report pack, followed by a detailed performance dashboard.
2. In March, performance across the 17 monitored Key Performance Indicators (KPI) were as follows: 13 KPIs had been rated Green, indicating performance was at or above target. 3 KPIs were rated Amber, this indicated they would not meet target but had remained above the floor standard and 1 KPI had been rated Red, which had fallen below the floor standard.
3. Highways service demand which had been measured by new inquiries and ongoing works would close the year below expected levels. This followed after a period of elevated activity that occurred earlier in the year.
4. The volume of waste taken to Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) continued to increase with the amount of total waste (Inc Doorstep collections by district and borough councils) having remained towards the higher end of expectations.
5. Several proposed changes to the reporting KPIs included:
 - (a) Update the target and floor standard for DT01, which measured the percentage of public inquiries for highways maintenance reported online.
 - (b) It was recommended that KPI (HT14) – *Priority inquiries completed within 20 working days or member inquiries* – be removed from the committee's performance monitoring framework. The responsibility for this KPI now lay with the Deputy Chief Executive's Department, which would not be represented at the Environment and Transport committee. As such, continued oversight of this indicator by this committee was no longer appropriate
 - (c) The targeted KPIs for EW2, which had encompassed greenhouse gas emissions from KCC estate services and traded companies, would now reduce emissions in line with the projected reductions across the wider KCC estate.
6. Members asked a range of questions about how future policy changes might impact KPIs. Officers responded that the KPIs and their associated targets had

been developed before the new administration took office. It was acknowledged that any key decisions that could potentially shift the policy direction of the organisation be examined carefully and understood. Officers added that if such decisions were made, there would be a need to return to the committee to clarify any implications for future performance and KPIs.

7. Members highlighted that KPI (WM06) for household waste had continued to increase in tandem with the KPI (WM07) for the amount of waste that had found its way to the incinerator and being converted to energy. Members queried what actions had been taken at a county wide level to address the current increase and additional costs.
8. The need to work collaboratively and focus on the key areas of recycling were further expanded upon. It was discussed that every county, district, and borough council in the country would receive funding this year through the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) process. The major legislative changes that were implemented required companies that produced their own packaging to cover the cost of collection and disposal of their manufactured packaging.
9. The County Council was set to receive approximately £13 million this year. The previous administration had not allocated this funding directly into the budget. Instead, it had been placed into a ring-fenced reserve that would commit £1 million to behaviour change initiatives. One example of the use of funding was the rollout of bin stickers across the county. This had seen a 10–20% increase in the amount of food waste being correctly separated. The behaviour change programme would be working closely with district and borough colleagues and looked to explore further opportunities for action.
10. In response to required clarification raised on KPI (HD1) reported potholes repaired in 28 days (96%) and the definition of a repaired pothole. Mr Loosemore clarified that the report (96%) referred to the potholes that had been repaired within the timeframe of 28 days. Mr Loosemore suggested that a much more detailed analysis on how data was collected, and the operational process be collated and presented to Members at a later date to allow greater clarification on the matter.
11. In response to Members' queries about the removal of KPIs WM02 and WM04 it was confirmed that KCC was under no contractual obligation to supply wood for energy.
12. Mr Loosemore acknowledged Members' observations on the KPI trend of planned maintenance vs reactive maintenance and highlighted that the publication of the forward works program was time sensitive. Mr Loosemore noted that the KPIs did not always encompass a true reflection of the service as a whole and he would look to show in greater detail how the highway service was performing from a broader perspective.
13. Member queried the potential viability of removing the booking system currently employed at waste recycling centres. Mr Wimble noted that he had raised similar

conversations when he had become incumbent to the role of Cabinet Member for environment. The Cabinet Member explained that the booking system had proved to be an efficient way of booking a slot, had prevented any mass attendance and allowed the workflow to move more productively at sites and prevent any harassment to staff due to delays.

14. Further questions were received on KCC's direct investment in waste recycling plants, Officers responded that KCC had contracted out all of its recycling process to a materials two recycling facilities.

RESOLVED to note the performance dashboard

9. 2500050 – Ebbsfleet Development Company (EDC) Highway Landscaping Enhancement
(Item 10)

Mr P Osborne - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport was in attendance.

1. Mr Osborne presented the decision paper on accepting funding from the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) to deliver and enhance the visual appeal and arrival experience for visitors to Ebbsfleet Garden City through landscape improvements at key highway verges and roundabouts.
2. It was highlighted that there was no additional financial burden on Kent County Council (KCC) for the delivery phase and future maintenance costs would be absorbed within existing KCC budgets.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- (i). Approval to enter into a funding agreement with EDC subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance, Corporate & Strategic Services.
- (ii). Approval to progress the detailed design and surveys for the project.
- (iii). Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the schemes.
- (iv). Approval to carry out any additional consultation with stakeholders required for the schemes.
- (v). Approval to enter construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the schemes.

(vi). Approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to progress through to delivery to be undertaken by the Corporate Director of Growth Environment and Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

10. 2500051 – Local Highway Maintenance Support Contracts
(Item 11)

Mr P Osborne - Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport was in attendance.

1. Mr Osborne presented the item that sought approval for the commissioning of a new zero-based contract framework to support pothole repairs, patching, and resurfacing works at a local level, ensuring continuity of service as current contracts expired.
2. These contracts would carry no upfront financial commitment. The council would only pay after the successful delivery of work was completed and would significantly reduce any financial risk. The discussed contracts did not guarantee any volume of work and provided the council with the maximum flexibility to adapt to budgetary pressures and funding uncertainties. The annual expenditure under these contracts was expected to range between £6 million and £14 million.
3. Members questioned the efficiency of the previous subcontracting model in terms of time and budget and proposed the adoption of a more direct approach to the commissioning of contractors that incorporated the new procurements acts goal of embedding additional social value.
4. Officers responded by expanding upon the comprehensive process of assessing contractors. Commissioning colleagues had provided support throughout the entirety of the evaluation and moderation process before any contracts would be awarded. Financial viability and performance capabilities all had to be demonstrated throughout the process and scored accordingly through to the tender process. Only once these phases had been completed and a cost was agreed on a price per quality basis would a contract then be awarded.
5. Members queried if contracts would now place a constraint on a contractor that had subcontracting works. Officers responded that, as part of the procurement process, contractors had been required to indicate in their tender submissions would intend to subcontract any aspects of the work. These aspects would be considered throughout the tender evaluation process.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- (i) **APPROVE** the procurement and contract award of zero value Local Highways Maintenance Support Contracts.

- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to award extensions of the contracts in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contracts as shown at Appendix A.

11. 2500052 – Receipt and Processing of Organic Waste
Contract Countywide
(Item 12)

Mr Wimble- Cabinet Member for Environment presented the item

1. Mr Wimble presented the proposed procurement for the receipt and processing of organic waste across the entire county. The decision represented a significant step in ensuring that the council continued to meet statutory obligations as a waste disposal authority, while also supporting broader environmental objectives.
2. The new contract was scheduled to commence in April 2026 and would consolidate existing arrangements into a county-wide solution and was expected to deliver opportunities for innovation, improved efficiency, and greater value for money.
3. Members were encouraged to note the emphasis on maintaining flexibility in response to forthcoming waste reforms and the financial implications associated with the collection and processing of food and green waste.
4. Members asked if the extension of existing contracts would require further remuneration in light of the recent increase to National Insurance (NI) contributions and also queried on how far the council would be able to deviate costs and any increased risk of litigation.
5. Officers suggested that initial discussions with contractors had indicated that they were willing to adhere to the terms previously agreed. It was also discussed that updated contracts now included clauses that reflected the recent changes to national insurance contributions.
6. Members raised the need to work with districts to prevent green waste and food waste from being combined and driving costs up. In response to a question about whether the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) funding

officers confirmed that this particular funding source could only be used for packaging waste and not organic matter. Members suggested that this funding streams exact use be explained via a paper at a later cabinet committee.

7. In relation to Section 3.2 on page 93, officers were asked to clarify what measures of education were in place help prevent green waste from failing to meet standards without pretreatment. Officers acknowledged the observation and would look to engage with customers within the HWLC sites, encouraging site staff to engage with the public to help reduce contamination.
8. Members asked for clarification that Kent's waste would be going directly to Kent waste centres and that no other county would be accessing these sites to dispose of waste. Officers acknowledged the concern Mr Jones highlighted how the booking system now acted as a control mechanism for access and that cross-border policies that were in place were subject to additional monitoring.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- (i) APPROVE the procurement and contract award of an organic waste contract for an initial 5 years, (plus an extension of up to 5 years) commencing 1st April 2026.
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity.
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract; as shown at Appendix A.

12. 2500053 – Continuation of Household Waste & Recycling Centres and waste Transfer Station Operations, Management and Haulage Contracts in East, Mid and West Kent
(Item 13)

Mr Wimble- Cabinet Member for Environment presented the item, Susan Reddick was also in attendance

1. Mr Wimble outlined the procurement of two contractual arrangements for the management and haulage services required at Kent's household waste and recycling centres, as well as its waste transfer stations. These contracts were currently held by FCC Environmental Limited and Commercial Services Kent Limited. The total budget allocated for these services was £14.6 million.
2. An 18-month extension had been previously agreed with both parties. However, several issues had since emerged and included the ongoing local government review, which had significantly increased the risk profile of the procurement process. As a result, KCC's ability to secure best value through a new procurement process was currently at risk.
3. It was recommended that a further 36-month extension to the existing contracts be approved. This would provide stability during the local government review period and enable the Council to continue delivering services within a known budget envelope over the next five years.
4. Members queried if all household waste recycling centres and waste transfer centres would remain open for the entirety of the contract, additionally querying if any views from the recent DOLGE Cabinet Member appointment had given any insights on the most efficient way of procuring the process and driving actions forward.
5. Mr Wimble confirmed that the number of waste transfer sites would remain unchanged and did not foresee any future closures. Mr Wimble acknowledged the question on the DOLGE Cabinet Member's involvement with contracts. Mr Chamberlain in addition explained that the current DOLGE aims would review the processes applied to contracts to ensure they were as efficient as possible.

RESOLVED to endorse the proposed decision, namely:

That the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agree to:

- (i) APPROVE the continuation of the current Household Waste Recycling Centre and Waste Transfer Station operation, management, and haulage contracts in Mid, East, and West Kent (SC18031 and SC18031/WK), by extending the existing arrangements from 18 months to a total of five years, as permitted under the contract terms. The revised contract period will now expire on 31st October 2030.
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract as shown at Appendix A

13. Work Programme
(Item 14)

.
RESOLVED to note the work programme

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025

Subject: Performance Dashboard

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Performance Dashboard shows performance against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This is the first dashboard for 2025/26 and includes data up to June 2025.

Eleven of the fourteen KPIs achieved target for latest performance and are RAG rated Green. Two KPIs are below target but did achieve the floor standard and are RAG rated Amber. One KPI is below the floor standard and is RAG rated Red.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the Performance Dashboard.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Part of the role of Cabinet Committees is to review the performance of the functions of the Council that fall within the remit of the Committee. To support this role, Performance Dashboards are regularly reported to Cabinet Committees throughout the year, and this is the first report for this Committee for the 2025/26 financial year.

2. Performance Dashboard

- 2.1. The Dashboard provides a progress report on performance against targets for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2025/26. The current Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee Performance Dashboard is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2. The current Dashboard provides results up to the end of June 2025.
- 2.3. KPIs are presented with RAG (Red/Amber/Green) ratings to show progress against targets. Details of how the ratings are generated are outlined in the Guidance Notes, included with the Dashboard in Appendix 1.

- 2.4. Seven of the eight KPIs in Highways & Transportation achieved target for latest month performance and are RAG rated Green. The one KPI which is below its floor standard and RAG rated Red is Faults reported by the public completed in 28 calendar days; this was partly due to a backlog of jobs caused by heavy rain and thunderstorms in May and unsettled weather at the start of June.
- 2.5. Five of the seven indicators for Environment and Circular Economy were above target and are RAG rated Green, the two other KPIs are RAG rated Amber. The first of these is municipal waste recycled or composted which has a challenging target agreed by the Kent Resource Partnership (district councils and KCC); national changes to household recycling from March 2026 are expected to improve rates. The second Amber KPI is greenhouse gas emissions from KCC's estate and operations. Emissions are still decreasing but have not decreased enough to meet target this quarter.

4. Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to NOTE the Performance Dashboard.

5. Contact details

Report Author: Matthew Wagner
Chief Analyst
Chief Executive's Department
03000 416559
Matthew.Wagner@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Simon Jones
Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport
03000 411683
Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk

Environment and Transport Performance Dashboard

Financial Year 2025/26

Results up to June 2025

Page 19

Produced by Kent Analytics

Guidance Notes

Data is provided with monthly frequency except for Waste Management and Greenhouse Gases where indicators are reported with quarterly frequency and as rolling 12-month figures to remove seasonality.

RAG RATINGS

GREEN	Target has been achieved
AMBER	Floor Standard* achieved but Target has not been met
RED	Floor Standard* has not been achieved

*Floor Standards are the minimum performance expected and if not achieved must result in management action

Activity Indicators

Activity Indicators representing demand levels are also included in the report. They are not given a RAG rating. Instead, they are tracked within an expected range represented by Upper and Lower Expectations. The Alert provided for Activity Indicators is whether they are within their expected range or not. Results can either be within their expected range (**Yes**), or **Above** or **Below** their expected range.

Key Performance Indicators Summary

Highways & Transportation	Monthly RAG	YTD RAG
HT01 : Reported potholes repaired in 28 calendar days (routine works not programmed)	GREEN	GREEN
HT02 : Faults reported by the public completed in 28 calendar days	RED	AMBER
HT08 : Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours	GREEN	AMBER
HT12 : Streetlights, illuminated signs and bollards repaired in 28 calendar days	GREEN	GREEN
DT01 : Percentage of public enquiries for Highways Maintenance completed online	GREEN	GREEN
DT03 : Percentage of concessionary bus pass applications completed online	GREEN	GREEN
DT04 : Percentage of speed awareness courses booking completed online	GREEN	GREEN

Environment & Circular Economy	RAG
WM01 : Municipal waste recycled and composted	AMBER
WM11 : Municipal waste diverted from landfill	GREEN
WM03 : Waste recycled and composted at HWRCs	GREEN
WM08 : Overall score for mystery shopper assessment of HWRCs	GREEN
WM10 : Customer satisfaction with HWRCs	GREEN
EW2 : Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC estate (excluding schools)	AMBER
EW1 : Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted within 21 days	GREEN

Appendix 1

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Highways & Transportation	Simon Jones	Peter Osborne

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Month RAG	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor	Prev. Yr
HT01	Reported potholes repaired in 28 calendar days	96%	90%	93%	95%	GREEN	92%	GREEN	90%	80%	96%
HT02	Faults reported by the public completed in 28 calendar days	82%	83%	81%	79%	RED	81%	AMBER	90%	80%	88%
HT08	Emergency incidents attended to within 2 hours	99%	99%	95%	98%	GREEN	97%	AMBER	98%	95%	97%
HT12	Streetlights, illuminated signs and bollards repaired within timescale*	94%	96%	91%	92%	GREEN	93%	GREEN	90%	80%	93%
DT01	Percentage of public enquiries for Highways Maintenance completed online	74%	68%	68%	69%	GREEN	68%	GREEN	65%	60%	68%
DT03	Percentage of concessionary bus pass applications completed online	76%	77%	76%	80%	GREEN	78%	GREEN	75%	65%	77%
DT04	Percentage of speed awareness courses bookings completed online	89%	91%	91%	91%	GREEN	91%	GREEN	85%	75%	89%

HT02 – The number of faults completed within 28 days was 3,180 for May and 3,292 for June. Performance for these months was impacted by a backlog of jobs resulting from the heavy rain and thunderstorms in the middle of the month of May coupled with more unsettled weather at the start of June. We continue to hold monthly performance meetings to consider ways to improve performance across all areas.

HT08 – Attendance at emergency incidents within two hours of notifications met the target across April and June, with May missing the target due to heavy rain and thunderstorms mid-month which caused an increase in the number of emergency incidents clustered closely together in time. This brings the YTD value just one percentage point away from the Green RAG rating target. Overall, the term maintenance contractor, has made continued improvements in this KPI and we continue to work together to improve and maintain the required standard.

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Highways & Transportation	Simon Jones	Peter Osborne

Activity Indicators

Ref	Indicator description	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	YTD 25/26	In expected range?	<u>Expected Range</u> Upper Lower	
HT01b	Potholes due to be repaired (arising from routine faults reported)	2,808	2,132	1,486	1,214	4,832	Above	4,800	3,150
HT02b	Routine faults reported by the public due for completion	7,865	5,945	3,933	4,167	14,045	Yes	14,800	11,500
HT06	Number of new enquiries requiring further action (total new faults)	7,941	5,364	5,734	6,925	18,023	Below	24,200	20,300
HT07	Work in Progress (active enquiries/jobs) - end of month snapshot	6,894	6,195	5,734	6,080	N/a	Yes	7,300	5,800
HT08b	Emergency incidents attended	182	136	153	149	438	Yes	600	400
HT13	Street work permit applications and change requests submitted	12,393	11,965	11,811	11,456	35,232	Yes	41,900	34,300

HT01b – The number of potholes due to be repaired remains slightly above the expected YTD range. This was also the case across the previous year as potholes are the highest incoming enquiry service requested through the public reporting tool.

HT06 – Whilst the number of new enquiries has been rising each month so far since the start of the quarter with 18,023 enquiries, this figure is lower than last year's (22,929 which is over 20% more) mainly due to the better weather overall we experienced in Quarter 1 this year.

HT13 – Between April and June 2025, 10,981 permits were issued to KCC (41% of total permits), and 15,996 permits were issued to non-KCC bodies (59%).

Appendix 1

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	David Wimble

Key Performance Indicators - Rolling 12 months except WM08 (Quarterly) and WM10 (Half-yearly)

Ref	Indicator description	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	RAG	Target	Floor
WM01	Municipal waste* recycled and composted	42%	43%	43%	42%	42%	AMBER	50%	42%
WM11	Municipal waste diverted from landfill	99.4%	99.2%	99.2%	99.2%	99.4%	GREEN	99%	95%
WM03	Waste recycled and composted at Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	48%	50%	50%	49%	50%	GREEN	50%	45%
WM08	Overall score for mystery shopper assessment of Household Waste Recycling Centres	98%	97%	98%	97%	97%	GREEN	97%	90%
WM10	Customers satisfied with HWRCs	Jun-24 96%	No Survey	Dec-24 97%	No survey	Jun-25 96%	GREEN	95%	90%

* Municipal waste is collected by Districts, and by KCC via HWRCs.

WM01 – The 50% target for this KPI is within the Kent Joint Municipal Waste Strategy agreed by the Kent Resource Partnership (KCC and district councils). The requirements of simpler recycling come into place in March 2026, and it is anticipated that recycling rates will gradually increase as all Waste Collection Authorities must comply.

WM03 – HWRC recycling rates are meeting target as volumes brought in continue to increase. This includes a continuing increase in inert recyclable materials (e.g. hardcore / DIY waste), with the removal of charges to bring in this waste.

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	David Wimble

Activity Indicators (Rolling 12 months)

Ref	Indicator description	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	In expected range?	<u>Expected Range</u> Upper Lower	
WM05	Waste tonnage collected by District Councils	555,553	560,733	563,125	561,121	555,277	Yes	570,000	550,000
WM06	Waste tonnage collected at HWRCs	107,243	111,341	115,144	116,824	118,553	Yes	125,000	105,000
05+06	Total waste tonnage collected	662,796	672,074	678,269	677,945	673,830	Yes	695,000	655,000
WM12	Household residual (non-recyclable) waste (Kg/HH)	527	528	529	529	526	Yes	530	525
WM13	Reuse at the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	148	151	167	235	246	Yes	450	150

Division	Corporate Director	Cabinet Member
Environment & Circular Economy	Simon Jones	David Wimble

Key Performance Indicator (rolling 12-month total, reported one Quarter in arrears)

Ref	Indicator description	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	RAG	Target	Floor
EW2	Greenhouse Gas emissions from KCC's overall estate and operations (excluding schools) in tonnes	11,477	11,251	10,985	10,323	10,388	10,252	AMBER	10,230	11,253

EW2 – Although greenhouse gas emissions continue to reduce, the target for Quarter 4, 2024/25 has not been met for the first time since reporting began. Sites not covered by KCC's facilities management contract have experienced increased heating oil and gas consumption, partly due to the expansion of Traded Services' building and vehicle portfolio. In contrast, KCC-managed sites continue to show a positive trend in emissions reduction, with only minor increases in heating oil use, waste disposal, and business mileage. Solar farms remain a strong contributor to KCC's emissions reduction efforts.

Key Performance Indicators (monthly)

Ref	Indicator description	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	YTD 25/26	YTD RAG	Target	Floor
EW1	Percentage of statutory planning consultee responses submitted within 21 days	97%	94%	90%	89%	90%	90%	GREEN	90%	80%

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport.

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025

Subject: Winter Service Policy for 2025/26

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary: Each year officers review the Council's Winter Service Policy and the operational plan that supports it considering changes in national guidance and lessons learnt from the previous winter. Due to the excellent work undertaken previously, there are no revisions to this year's policy. This report sets out an overview of this year's policy.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and note the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 2025/26 winter season was reasonably mild when compared to previous years. The weather through the season was a mixture between periods of persistent rainfall and isolated cold periods where we had to undertake preventative salting of the network.
- 1.2 The overall winter season was average in terms on the number of salting runs undertaken when compared against previous years. We undertook a total of 57 primary salting shouts, compared with the budgeted 66 runs and used 11,503 tonnes of salt.
- 1.3 Operation Performance Measure 17 (OPM17) across the season for Salting runs completed within the specified timeframe 99%.

2. Financial implications

- 2.1 The allocated budget for winter service for 2025/26 is £4,364,600
The budget is broken down as follows:

Pre-Salting Gritting Operation	1,676,100

Plant & Equipment	2,481,400
Maintenance Of Farmers Ploughs	50,000
Weather Forecasting	21,300
Ice Prediction	37,300
Supply & Maintain Salt Bins	83,200
Supply Of Salt To Districts	10,300
Publicity Campaign	5,000
TOTAL	£4,364,600

3. Winter planning

3.1 Over the 2025 summer period work has been undertaken to further refine and improve the winter service; this focused on:

- Reviewing winter service provision ready for the new HTMC
- Review of snow routes
- Salt bin replacement and filling
- Salt storage at depots – Planning for a salt barn at Faversham depot
- Review of our district plans and existing routes
- Review of local farmers snow plough agreements

Winter route optimisation

3.2 All of our gritting routes are contained within specific climatic domains, they have been grouped to improve the effectiveness of gritting decisions made, by only treating those routes that really need treatment. Previously, routes often crossed between domains, which would lead to treating parts of the network unnecessarily, as we were unable to split the routes, where they crossed domains. Further work has been undertaken to optimise the existing winter routes within the new domains, to further improve efficiencies and changes to the network.

4. Salt bins

4.1 There are over 3,000 salt bins in the county and this stock is considered sufficient to meet the needs of local communities. Like previous years, no new salt bins will be placed this winter. County Members can however utilise their Combined Member Grant to purchase salt bins, subject to meeting our salt bin assessment criteria.

4.2 Once again, following on from last season, all reports received regarding empty and damaged salt bins were actioned. For this coming winter season, we will continue utilising individual reports from the highways team and customer enquiries, to ensure salt bins are full prior to the start of the core winter period. In addition, we will be producing an article for Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) newsletter to ask Parishes to report empty salt bins in their local area, via our online fault reporting tool.

- 4.3 Salt bins will be filled once during the season, however in the event of a snow event they may be refilled, subject to available resources. We will continue to monitor salt bin usage over the coming winter season, to ensure bins are appropriately located on the network.

5. Snow routes

- 5.1 The winter service is focused on keeping open the network of primary routes comprising 1597 miles, (2571 km) which are the main A and B roads and locally important roads in the county. During snow events these remain the focus of our activity. However, it is recognised that other parts of the highway in the county are adversely affected by snow, and this can have a detrimental impact on communities relying on these roads to get to the main roads. Whilst policy, service levels and resources enable us to meet our statutory duty we are mindful that other parts of the road network do experience difficulties. These include hilly areas, exposed roads subject to drifting and other factors. These have been designated snow routes and will be treated, as resources allow, when there is a snow event. These routes have been digitised and loaded into the in- cab Navtrak system. Additionally, we will continue to have the support of our contracted farmers who clear snow from pre-approved areas of the rural network.

6. Winter resilience

- 6.1 We have identified an Operational Winter Period which is October to April and a Core Winter Period which is December to February, and the stocks of salt needed during those periods to effectively treat the network in line with recommended resilience levels. The minimum levels of salt needed to maintain the resilient network (as defined in the Quarmby review 2012) is 16,800 tonnes. We maintain a salt stock of 23,000 tonnes (including 2,000 tonnes of a salt/grit mix which is held in a strategic stockpile at Faversham Highway depot) ensuring the recommended minimum levels are achieved. Arrangements are in place for salt deliveries during the winter to ensure we have the recommended resilience stock levels.

7. Collaboration with neighbouring authorities

- 7.1 Mutual aid arrangements are in place with national highway Area 4 and Medway Council. The annual winter meeting with all southeast highway authorities to finalise arrangements is scheduled for late September 2025.

8. Media and communication

- 8.1 As in previous years a media campaign will be used during the winter season. A series of infographics have been prepared which gives information about the winter service in an engaging manner. These will feature in a range of media, including social media.

- 8.2 The campaign will increase awareness of the service and encourage everyone to be prepared and undertake self-help when possible. This year radio, television and press will be provided with media briefs in advance of the winter season detailing the essentials of the winter service.
- 8.3 Key staff in Highways are working with the press office to prepare statements and press releases for rapid issue at the onset of winter conditions. These will be pre-approved for use during periods of severe conditions when the winter service delivery team will be busy.

9. Winter Service Policy and Plan 2025/26

- 9.1 The Winter Service Policy is presented at Appendix B. Please note, no additions or amendments have been made to the policy for this coming winter season.
- 9.2 The Winter Service Policy is supported by an Operational Plan which has been updated in line with the Policy and discussions have taken place with our Highway Maintenance Service Provider to ensure that our plans are aligned.
- 9.3 The Plan is available for Members to view on request. In addition, district plans have been developed in conjunction with district and borough councils across the county and these will be used together with the Policy to deliver the winter service.

10. Strategic Statement

- 10.1 Winter service is essential to “Framing Kents Future - Infrastructure for Communities - Priority 2”. To ensure residents have access to viable and attractive travel options that allow them to make safe, efficient and more sustainable journeys throughout Kent. It also contributes towards Kent residents having a good quality of life in all weathers, through local district winter plans, the provision of salt bins and the communication strategy that complements the winter service policy.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

- 11.1 An equality impact assessment (EQIA) has been carried out on the Policy.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The Winter Service Policy sets out the Council’s arrangements to deliver a winter service across Kent. There are no revisions that have been made to this year’s policy, due to the excellent progress made over the last few years, to ensure our winter service policy is robust and deliverable.

13. Recommendations

13.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and note the report.

14. Background documents

14.1 Well Managed Highways 2016; NWSRG Best Practice Guidance - Planning Section

15. Contact details

Report Author:

Name: **Richard Emmett**
Title: **Senior Highway Manager**
Tel No: **03000 418181**
Email: richard.emmett@kent.gov.uk

Head of Service:

Name: **Andrew Loosemore**
Title: **Head of Highways**
Email: andrew.loosemore@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 9 September 2025

Subject: Active Travel Funding Grant (ATF5 – Tranche 5) – Capital and Revenue

Key decision: 25/00062

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Active Travel Fund - Tranche 5 and the strategic approach to how Officers intend to deliver schemes.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give approval to accept the Active Travel Fund Grant (ATF5) and take the projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery as listed below:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Active Travel Fund (ATF5) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.
5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions including but not limited to entering into

contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1.0 Background

1.1 Active Travel England (ATE - an Executive Agency for The Department for Transport) have awarded Kent County Council £1,886,065 (£1,671,054m Capital and £215,011 Revenue), under Tranche 5 of the Active Travel Fund, for the development or construction of active travel schemes across the County.

1.2 This is a directly awarded annual grant based on the population size of Kent and our self-assessment capability rating. The capability ratings are a key indicator of standards of active travel delivery across the country. They form part of future funding decisions, allowing Government to target funding and support. Local Authorities are rated from 0 to 4 on their capability to make schemes that support the Governments Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

The ratings focus primarily on 3 areas:

- Local Leadership
- Network Planning
- Delivery record

1.3 Kent were successful in moving up from Level 1 to Level 2 in the 2024 rating review. The five capability rating levels can be broadly characterised as follows:

- Level 0: Little local leadership or support and limited record of delivery
- Level 1: Some local leadership and support with developing plans and isolated interventions
- Level 2: Visible local leadership and support, with emerging network
- Level 3: Strong local leadership and support, substantial network in place with increasing modal share
- Level 4: Dense network in place with a high proportion of trips made by walking, wheeling and cycling. Very supportive leadership and policies to further improve transport choice.

1.4 To enable us to access the grant funding, KCC were required to submit an indicative list of schemes to Active Travel England for assurance and review before 31 March 2025 deadline. The list was produced initially by requesting all districts and boroughs to provide their priority list and then assessing these schemes to confirm local support and designs generally in line with the Local Transport Notes (LTN) which summarise the latest and most important ideas about traffic management issues and provide guidance for local authorities. LTN 1/20 provides guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure.

1.5 There is an internal Member Cycling and Walking Group which meets monthly to discuss and guide officers on potential schemes to promote. This list was shared with the members of the group and officers' approach was endorsed at the 11 March 2025 meeting.

- 1.6 Table 1 below sets out the list of named schemes, their district or borough location, the type of scheme it is (development or construction) and the estimated costs:

Scheme name	District/Borough	Scheme type (development, construction, change control or maintenance)	Allocated Cost (£)	Capital	Revenue
Faversham East West Walking Route	Swale	Construction	70000	62020	7980
Hermitage Lane Maidstone Puffin Crossing	Maidstone	Construction	421065	373064	48001
West Malling 20mph Extension	Tonbridge & Malling	Construction	70000	62020	7980
Kingsmead Road Canterbury Zebra Crossing	Canterbury	Construction	120000	106320	13680
Littlebourne 20mph Zone	Canterbury	Construction	25000	22150	2850
Hartsdown Road Margate Zebra crossing	Thanet	Construction	100000	88600	11400
CON-CA-Island Road Sturry Zebra Crossing	Canterbury	Construction	75000	66450	8550
Hall Rd Toucan Crossing	Gravesham	Construction	73378	65013	8365
Hever Court Rd Toucan Crossing	Gravesham	Construction	66622	59027	7595
Otford Sevenoaks Cycle Route	Sevenoaks	Development	45000	39870	5130
London Rd Stone Cycle Route	Dartford	Development	100000	88600	11400
Langton to Rusthall Cycle Route	Tunbridge Wells	Development	80000	70880	9120
Faversham North-South Route Junction Improvements	Swale	Development	50000	44300	5700
Great Chart to Chilmington Footway	Ashford	Development	50000	44300	5700
Sturry Road cycle phase within existing signals	Canterbury	Development	10000	8860	1140
Dover Priory to town centre cycle route	Dover	Development	25000	22150	2850
Gravesend Road, A226, Shorne - junction upgrade	Gravesham	Development	100000	88600	11400
Hythe to St Marys Cinque Ports Cycle Route	Folkestone & Hythe	Development	75000	66450	8550
Shorncliffe Road Cycle Route	Folkestone & Hythe	Development	30000	26580	3420
High Street, Tonbridge Cycle Route	Tonbridge & Malling	Maintenance	150000	132900	17100
Colonel Stephens Greenway Resurfacing	Ashford	Maintenance	150000	132900	17100
		Total	1886065	1671054	215011

Table 1 – list of named schemes

2.0 Governance

- 2.1 The schemes are located within most of the districts and boroughs and is consistent with 'Infrastructure First' principles by accelerating the delivery of key transport infrastructure and enhancing leverage of external infrastructure investment within the districts and boroughs from central government. The schemes will also contribute towards providing viable and attractive travel options that focus on both road and active travel modes. This supports the Framing Kent's Future – our Council Strategy 2022-2026.
- 2.2 The schemes will be solely funded by the Active Travel Grant and therefore supports Securing Kent's Future – 2022-2026. No funding is required from the Council's feasibility reserve. All costs are covered by the Grant – see 3.1.
- 2.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cross-Party working group that we have established provide an oversight and guidance for officers to investigate and prioritise schemes identified by districts and boroughs via their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and via KCC's Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP).
- 2.4 In order to progress schemes as quickly and efficiently as possible, officers undertake the following governance for each scheme:

1. KCC Officers develop schemes or plans with the districts and boroughs and assists them in producing their LCWIPs where applicable.
2. Consultations take place with the local communities and stakeholder groups prior to any progression of detailed designs and construction.
3. The KCC Cycling and Walking Member Group are kept up to date along with local KCC Members where schemes are within their elected ward boundaries.
4. Results of consultations and officer recommendations are reported to the local Joint Transportation Boards.
5. Joint Transport Board recommendations are agreed by the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of the schemes will be fully covered by the grants awarded to KCC. These grants make allowance for the staff costs and design fees associated with the scheme delivery in addition to the construction costs and any legal costs associated. When necessary, a change control procedure allows KCC to manage costs within the funding envelope with no additional KCC funds required from base budgets.
- 3.2 There are no revenue implications to KCC, the schemes' costs are scalable to suit the budgets available and Change Control with the DfT via Active Travel England can take place to adjust projects within the overall programme.
- 3.3 The detailed costings for construction schemes will be revisited as the projects progress through the various design stages and will be using the Highway Term Maintenance Contract (evidencing best value). The costings include an element to cover risk and contingency and use of the existing procured contracts reduces any cost uncertainty to ensure it is affordable within the funding envelope.
- 3.4 The Council must commit to spend the grant funding on the specific named schemes following scheme assurance with ATE by the end of the funding period, 31 March 2026 and construction schemes to be completed by 31 March 2027. The assurance process requires best Value for Money evidence for construction and maintenance schemes but not for development schemes and maximises outcomes. Each scheme is assessed on its own merits rather than its location within the county and includes assessing key benefits from active travel including improved health and lower workplace absenteeism from physical activity; environmental and congestion benefits from reduced car miles; and journey quality benefits from safer and more pleasant travel.
- 3.5 The grant funding is specifically allocated to named active travel related schemes that have gone through the assurance process and cannot be allocated to other budget headings. There is a change control process which allows for movement of funds between named active travel schemes only.

4.0 Programme

- 4.1 Development schemes must be completed by 31 March 2026 and construction schemes by 31 March 2027 however there is the ability to request from Active Travel England changes to the programme via a change control process.

- 4.2 It is anticipated that construction will be undertaken using the Highway Term Maintenance Contract mainly but there is also the opportunity to use the Drainage Framework or via competitive tender procedures.

5.0 Options considered but discarded

- 5.1 Not to accept the direct grant. KCC would not be able to fund active travel projects that are shown to have health, environmental, accessibility, community and economic benefits for Kent residents.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council is expected to have the necessary governance and assurance arrangements in place and that all legal and other statutory obligations and consents will be adhered to, which may include, but not solely, state aid/subsidy control, equalities duties, procurement, health and safety and fraud.

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be provided as each scheme is developed and will show that there will be positive impacts for all users. There may be some temporary negative impacts during the construction, and this will be explored further.

8.0 Other Corporate Implications

- 8.1 There are no other corporate implications identified in taking this decision.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 Active Travel England (ATE - an Executive Agency for The Department for Transport) have awarded Kent County Council £1,886,065 (£1,671,054m Capital and £215,011 Revenue), under Tranche 5 of the Active Travel Fund, for the development or construction of active travel schemes across the County.
- 9.2 To enable us to access the grant funding, KCC were required to submit an indicative list of schemes to Active Travel England for assurance and review before 31 March 2025 deadline. The grants fully cover all scheme costs.
- 9.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cross-Party Working Group provide governance oversight and guidance for officers to investigate and prioritise schemes identified by districts and boroughs via their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and via KCC's Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP)

10.0 Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give

approval to accept the Active Travel Fund Grant (ATF5) and take the projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery as listed below:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Active Travel Fund (ATF5) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.
5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

11.0 Appendices

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- EQIA

12.0 Contact Details

Report Authors: Jamie Watson/Nikola Floodgate

Job title: Senior Programme Manager (Active Travel) and Road Safety & Active Travel Group Manager

- Phone number: 03000 416239.
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Lead Director: Haroona Chughtai
- Job title: Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 412479.
- E-mail: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

Corporate Director: Simon Jones

- Job title: Corporate Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET

- Phone number: 03000 411683.
- E-mail: Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

DECISION NO:

25/00062

For publication**Key decision: YES**

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Active Travel Funding Grant (ATF5 – Tranche 5) – Capital and Revenue

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Active Travel Fund (ATF5) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the ATF5 projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.
5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision. .

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent County Council has been awarded a Capital and Revenue Grant totalling £1,886,065 by Active Travel England to develop and construct active travel schemes across the county. This funding is based on Kent's population size and its capability rating in delivering active travel projects, which influences future government funding. A key decision is required to seek approval to accept the Capital & Revenue Grant because it is over the £1m threshold

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

No formal consultations have been undertaken at this stage due to the stage of the process of accepting the grant we are at. Notwithstanding this, as each scheme develops, local consultations will take place. Should there appear to be a lack of support for any proposed scheme then a recommendation will be made to the local Joint Transportation Boards and a decision made by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation as to whether it progresses or not.

A Cycling and Walking Member Group is in place to guide KCC officers on prospective schemes, policies and best practice procedures.

Local Members will be consulted as schemes develop within their constituencies

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee

at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not to accept the direct grant. KCC would not be able to fund active travel projects that are shown to have health, environmental, accessibility, community and economic benefits for Kent residents.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Active Travel Funding Grant Tranche 5

Responsible Officer

Jamie Watson - GT TRA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqlA must be completed within the EqlA App)

Tim Read - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Highways & Transportation

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroon Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

The Active Travel Funding Grant is, to date an annual grant awarded by Active Travel England to Local Highway Authorities with the aim to increase the number of local journeys being walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030 and to do that the grant will help make active travel a part of everyday life.

The Active Travel Fund supports the development and/or construction of inclusive walking, wheeling and cycling schemes such as improved road crossings and junctions, dropped kerbs to facilitate easier access, provision of segregated, partially segregated or shared routes. It also funds cycle training via Bikeability to thousands of Children and Adults. To date, four rounds of active travel funding have been distributed to authorities across England.

The funding package also provides guidance to help ensure that local residents and businesses are heard when designing and delivering transport changes.

An aim is to improve public health by providing alternatives to vehicular use which reduces the amount of sick days taken, easing pressure on the NHS and helping people live healthier lives.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
No
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
Schemes will be developed and consulted on with the following groups along with all the statutory groups: Districts and Boroughs Elected members of KCC KCC internal departments Emergency Services Public Transport Local residents & Businesses Utilities if affected Local Access Forums such as Kent Association for the Blind Guide Dogs for the Blind Age UK Local Schools and Colleges Active Travel England National Highways
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
The indicative programme of highway improvements is designed to be as inclusive as possible and ensure access for all. The individual schemes will have further specific EqIA's and will identify any positive or negative impacts on protected groups. The aim of the highway improvement schemes, behaviour change programmes and training is to provide a safe environment for all users and help improve health.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9th September 2025

Subject: National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses Continuation

Key decision: 25/00063

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Summary: This paper seeks approval to continue to operate the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses (NDORS) in partnership with Kent Police to 31 March 2030.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give approval to continue to operate NDORS in partnership with Kent Police to 31 March 2030 in line with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as shown at Appendix A.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The previous Key Decision (Decision - 17/00139 - Memorandum of Understanding for The Kent Police Driver Diversionary Partnership) has expired and therefore it is necessary to update the governance in place.
- 1.2 This proposal is for the continuation of the service, as it is currently operational and serving an increasing number of clients. The service was praised by UK Road Offender Education (UKROEd), the governing body of course providers, in the Annual Provider Review 2025.
- 1.3 The Executive is asked to make this Key Decision to approve the continuation of our service and to delegate all the detailed arrangements to the Director of Highways & Transportation for the period of the MOU providing the circumstances remain unchanged.
- 1.4 This service is self-funding, and the income also fully covers the costs of all related corporate overheads ensuring it does not cause a revenue burden on the Division. It operates fully in line with the Crime Commissioners Bill [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022].

1.5 The primary focus of the service is to re-educate low-end driving offenders, to reduce road casualties, through delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses.

1.6 Kent Police wish to retain KCC's services for the continued delivery of this training. It is proposed that these services are continued to be provided by KCC until 31 March 2030.

2.0 Financial Implications

2.1 Course fees are regulated by UKROEd/ NDORS the governing body. Part of the services provided includes the booking and scheduling of Clients, administering payments and delivering the training. All these costs are covered by the ticket cost contribution we receive from Kent Police. Payments received are allocated in accordance with regulation set by UKROEd/NDORS.

2.2 The provision of this service by KCC is self-funded with no detrimental effect on base budgets or medium-term financial plans. The scheme fully funds the cost of all staff associated with its delivery and an allowance for corporate overheads. Trainers are all contracted on a self-employed basis reducing the element of risk the Council is exposed to. This follows a similar model to other parts of the Country.

3.0 Legal Implications

3.1 Kent County Council have an MOU with Kent Police in relation to this service which runs until 31st March 2030. This was reviewed and thoroughly checked by Invicta Law and signed by the Director of Highways and Transportation in October 2024. This MOU can be seen at Appendix B.

4.0 Options Considered but discarded

4.1 Some Police Authorities commission courses from the private sector, however Kent Police works in the strategic partnership with KCC to reduce road casualties and there is a desire to retain services within this partnership directly supporting Vision Zero, Kent County Council's Road Safety Strategy. Working within the partnership also provides opportunities to extend the benefits of road safety education and training to the wider community across Kent.

5.0 Equalities and Data Protection implications

5.1 An EqIA has been undertaken. There were no negative impacts on protected groups identified.

5.2 UKROEd Ltd and the relevant police force which invites an individual to an NDORS course are joint data controllers. KCC is then appointed by UKROEd as a processor on its behalf and therefore a UK GDPR compliant data processing agreement sits between UKROEd and KCC. UKROEd was set up for this purpose – to engage all registered course providers on behalf of UK police forces.

6.0 Other Corporate Implications

6.1 There are no other corporate implications identified in taking this decision.

7.0 Governance

7.1 Delegated authority will be provided to the Director of Highways and Transportation.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The previous Key Decision for the Kent Police Driver Diversionary Partnership has expired, necessitating an update in governance.

8.2 The service is self-funding and highly regarded as highlighted by UK Road Offender Education in their 2025 review.

8.3 Kent Police wishes to retain these services with KCC until 31 March 2030.

9.0 Recommendation(s)

9.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give approval to continue to operate NDORS in partnership with Kent Police to 31 March 2030 in line with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as shown at Appendix A.

10.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B - [MOU Kent police and Kent County Council](#)
Equalities Impact Assessment

11.0 Contact Details

Report Authors: Jacqui Lalley/Nikola Floodgate

Job title: Senior Programme Manager (Active Travel) and Road Safety & Active Travel Group Manager

- Phone number: 03000 416239.
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Lead Director: Haroona Chughtai
- Job title: Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 412479.
- E-mail: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

Corporate Director: Simon Jones

- Job title: Corporate Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 411683. Page 49

- E-mail: Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osbourne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

DECISION NO:

25/00063

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to continue to operate NDORS in partnership with Kent Police to 31 March 2030 in line with the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Reason(s) for decision:

The previous Key Decision (Decision - 17/00139 - Memorandum of Understanding for The Kent Police Driver Diversionary Partnership) has expired and therefore it is necessary to update the governance in place.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal will be considered by Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9th September 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Some Police Authorities commission courses from the private sector, however Kent Police works in the strategic partnership with KCC to reduce road casualties and there is a desire to retain services within this partnership directly supporting Vision Zero, Kent County Council's Road Safety Strategy. Working within the partnership also provides opportunities to extend the benefits of road safety education and training to the wider community across Kent.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

This page is intentionally left blank

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

National Offenders Retraining Scheme - NDORS Course Delivery

Responsible Officer

Jacqui Lalley - GT EW

Type of Activity**Service Change**

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility**Directorate**

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Kent Driver Education Team / Road Safety and Active Travel

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council, is a Licensed Service Provider for the delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses, KCC has provided these services to the Kent Police Driver Diversionary Partnership since 2008. These services have been formalised through an agreement between Kent Police and The Kent County Council.

The primary focus of the service is to re-educate low end driving offenders in order to reduce road casualties, through delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses.

KCC provide the booking system for clients, the trainers, the venues and the course material to the high standard as required by the governing body National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme in order to continue to be Licenced Service Provider

Kent Police wish to retain KCC's services for the continued delivery of this driver offender training. It is proposed that these services are provided by KCC for a further five years to commence on the 01 April 2023. This activity supports KCC's Vision Zero road safety strategy.

No major change - no potential for discrimination and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

Kent Police identify prospective offenders for training. KCC will tailor the delivery of the training should a specific requirement be highlighted.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

No

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Kent Police

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

No

Details of Positive Impacts

Not Applicable

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No

Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

The Kent Police Area Driver Diversion Partnership

Kent Police and The Kent County Council

Memorandum of Understanding for the Management and Delivery of the National Driver Offender Retraining Schemes (NDORS)

October 2024

Preamble

To support the road safety strategy in Kent in order to reduce road casualties, through delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme Courses

1. Introduction

1.1 The Kent Police Area Driver Diversion Partnership (KPADDP) will be led by Kent Police and managed by a Partnership Client Board comprising representatives from Kent Police and The Kent County Council. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) sets out the purpose of the Partnership and its working arrangements¹. Both partner organisations have agreed to the following and will adhere to the agreement, particularly with regard to investment made by partners and related contract commitments.

1.2 The following areas are covered:

- The purpose of the partnership
- Roles and responsibilities
- Timescales for which the MoU applies
- Resource management
- Risk management
- Period of the MoU
- Partnership liaison
- Investment to improved service delivery

¹ The Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership is managed under a separate MoU

2. The purpose of the Partnership

2.1 The primary purpose of the KPADDP is to contribute to a reduction in road casualties through delivery of National Driver Offender Retraining Schemes (NDORS). The Partnership also aims to reduce reoffending in related aspects of traffic legislation.

3. Role and Responsibilities

3.1 Each partner will adhere to all aspects of NDORS governance as defined in www.ndors.org.uk for the provision of diversion interventions aimed at reducing road casualties.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities specific to Kent Police

Kent Police Shall

- I. Provide strategic leadership for the Partnership.
- II. Engage in regular meetings with KCC to discuss all matters relating to KPADDP.
- III. Identify prospective diversion candidates.
- IV. Serve notice of intention to prosecute to offenders.
- V. Complete due legal process with candidates who fail to comply with the diversion intervention.
- VI. Liaise with those involved in the referral of offenders.
- VII. Act as decision makers in respect of disposal options exercised in respect of all cases in accordance with statutory provisions
- VIII. Provide monthly information to allow KCC to predict demand and allow KCC to manage service provision.
- IX. Influence UK Road Offender Education (UKROEd) to ensure correct and efficient operation of the NDORS computer system.

3.3 Roles and responsibilities specific to The Kent County Council

The Kent County Council Shall

- I. Manage and deliver service provision in accordance with national processing times on behalf of the Partnership and drive continuous improvement in service delivery within the context of the UKROEd/ NDORS Service Provision Licensing Scheme.
- II. Lead any necessary procurement of service provider/s in relation to IT equipment, venues and trainers in a manner that complies with KCC's policies and with the acceptance of the Partnership Client Board.

- III. Ensure that arrangements are in place to meet the needs of all diversion candidates referred by Kent Police and other forces in accordance with UKROEd/NDORS policies and specifications, www.ndors.org.uk.
- IV. Provide arrangements for payments from candidates.
- V. Ensure that all interventions comply with the requirements of the UKROEd/NDORS policies relevant at the time and any future changes, www.ndors.org.uk
- VI. Ensure that standards in training provision and customer care are maintained as defined by the Kent County Council's Service Providers Licence
- VII. Maintain secure, legally compliant up to date records of all courses, candidates, and transactions on behalf of Kent Police, particularly as it relates to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, and any other relevant legislation.
- VIII. maintain a valid Service Providers Licence as issued by UKROEd/NDORS ensuring compliance with all UKROEd/NDORS policies and procedures

4. Timescales

- 4.1 This MoU will operate until 31 March 2030 or earlier if agreed by both parties in accordance with Clause 8
- 4.2 This MoU will be subject to annual performance review and can be extended by agreement if and when it is appropriate to do so. The annual review will identify any improvement actions required by partners.

5. Resource Management

- 5.1 The KPADDP is not an entity in its own right and cannot own assets or employ personnel. Assets associated with services provided as a result of the partnership's activities will be procured and managed by the partner organisation with responsibility for specific aspects of the service. The people required to provide service delivery will be employed by the appropriate partner organisation or their appointed external service provider/s.
- 5.2 All assets procured to support the activities of the Partnership, including Intellectual Property rights both procured and developed, will remain the property and responsibility of the appropriate partner and will be subject to that partner organisation's asset management policies. All assets detailing ownership and maintenance liabilities will be kept on an inventory by each partner organisation.

5.3 Any personnel recruited to support the activities of the Partnership will be either directly employed by the appropriate partner organisation or by their appointed service provider/s. The terms and conditions of employment of these people will be subject to their respective contracts with their particular employer.

6. Risk Management

6.1 The Partnership will co-ordinate and co-operate in identifying risks and mitigation to reduce the risk to each of the individual organisations.

6.2 To protect the sustainability of the Partnership and its activities each partner needs to have a disaster recovery strategy in place. It is essential that each partner organisation has a shared Business Continuity Plan and is in mutual partnership that addresses possible issues that could arise, such as:

- I. IT failure, including hardware and software.
- II. Loss of communications facilities.
- III. Short and/or long-term power failure.
- IV. Accommodation loss.
- V. Short and/or long-term personnel loss.

7. Partnership liaison

7.1 Open communication will be undertaken between all Partners to ensure that the partnership's business is conducted in a transparent manner. It is envisaged that Partnership Client Board meetings will be held at least quarterly, and one annual meeting being with formal minutes signed off as agreed by both organisations.

8. Exit Clause

8.1 Any Partner to the MOU may exit from the agreement by giving 6 months' notice in writing to the other party to the agreement. The partner will consequently be liable to cover all termination costs of the other partner, especially those linked to contracted service. Relevant TUPE regulations will be applied in all cases of transfer of undertakings.

9. Dispute Resolution

9.1 Disputes should be resolved locally between the organisations and escalated to the Client Board meetings in the event that they cannot be resolved

10. Investment to improve service delivery

10.1 Before investment decisions are made by each partner organisation the KPADDP will review and if necessary, agree amendments to the remaining terms of the MoU to ensure that neither partner is put at risk or disadvantaged.

This MOU shall be in effect upon the signature of the authorised officials of both parties. It shall be in force from 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2030.

Both parties indicate agreement with this MOU by their signatures

For and on behalf of **Kent Police**

Signed:..... 

Name:....Karen McMillan.....

Position:....Head of Traffic Process and Safer Detention.....

Date:....15th October 2024.....

For and on behalf of **The Kent County Council**

Signed: 

Name: Haroona Chughtai

Position: Director of Highways, Transportation

Date: 30th October 2024

Definitions

“Organisations” – Kent Police and the Kent County Council

“Partnership” - Kent Police and the Kent County Council

“Interventions” - National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme courses:

- National Speed Awareness Course (NSAC and iNSAC)
- National Motorway Awareness Course (NMAS and iNMAC)
- What’s Driving Us (WDU and iWDU)
- Safe and Considerate Driving (SCD and iSCD)
- Rider Intervention Developing Experience (RiDE)
- Any other diversion interventions that might follow.

“Disposal Options” - National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme course, points and fine or prosecution

“Service Provider Licence” – Licence granted by the National Driver Offender Retraining in order to deliver courses

Service Specification for the Kent County Council

Service Requirements: The Kent County Council are to act as a Licenced Service Provider to Kent Police to deliver the national retraining courses as designed by UKROEd/ NDORS. Delivering the service to promote better knowledge in relation to behaviours and weaknesses to contribute towards a reduction in road casualties and re offending in related aspects of traffic legislation

Resources: The Kent County Council shall:

- Procure venues in accordance with the most up to date NDORS venue specification, www.ndors.org.uk
- Procure UKROEd/NDORS Licenced trainers as appropriate to meet the demands of the diversionary candidates as identified by Kent Police
- Provide arrangements for bookings and payments from diversionary candidates
- Update the National Database within agreed timescales in line with UKROEd/NDORS policies, www.ndors.org.uk
- Comply with the most up to date legislation in relation to data protection
- Maintain a valid Service Providers Licence

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9th September 2025

Subject: Consolidated Active Travel Funding Grant (CATF – Tranche 6) Capital and Revenue

Key decision: 25/00064

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Report: N/A

Future Pathway of Report: for Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Divisions: All

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Consolidated Active Travel Fund – (Tranche 6) and the strategic approach to how officers intend to develop and deliver schemes.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give approval to accept the Consolidated Active Travel Fund Grant (CATF) and take the activities and projects through their various stages of development and delivery as listed below:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.

5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.

6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1.0 Background

1.1 Active Travel England (an Executive Agency for The Department for Transport) have awarded Kent County Council £5,758,216 (£4,453,591 Capital and £1,304,625 Revenue) for the development and/or construction of active travel schemes across the County.

1.2 The Consolidated Active Travel Fund has combined two previous Grants – the Active Travel Fund and the Capability Fund, both annual awards to support Local Transport Authorities with developing and implementing walking, wheeling and cycling facilities in England. The awarded grant is based on the population size of Kent and our self-assessment capability rating. The capability ratings are a key indicator of standards of active travel delivery across the country. They form part of future funding decisions, allowing Government to target funding and support. Local Authorities are rated from 0 to 4 on their capability to make schemes that support the Governments Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The ratings focus primarily on 3 areas:

- Local Leadership
- Network Planning
- Delivery record

1.3 The 2024 rating review moved Kent from Level 1 to Level 2. The five capability rating levels can be broadly characterised as follows:

- Level 0: Little local leadership or support and limited record of delivery
- Level 1: Some local leadership and support with developing plans and isolated interventions
- Level 2: Visible local leadership and support, with emerging network
- Level 3: Strong local leadership and support, substantial network in place with increasing modal share
- Level 4: Dense network in place with a high proportion of trips made by walking, wheeling and cycling. Very supportive leadership and policies to further improve transport choice.

1.4 The Revenue Grant list of activities and initiatives was required to be sent to Active Travel England by 19 March 2025 and the Grant paid as an upfront payment. The Capital Grant indicative list of schemes has been submitted to Active Travel England as this was required by 31 July 2025, and the upfront payment is expected in August 2025.

1.5 Both lists were produced initially from liaising with our district and borough colleagues and seeking their priority lists, as they lead on local walking and

cycling plans. At this time officers at KCC assessed these activities, initiatives and schemes to confirm local support and that designs were generally in line with the Local Transport Notes (LTN) which summarise the latest and most important ideas about traffic management issues and provide guidance for local authorities. LTN 1/20 provides guidance for local authorities on designing high-quality, safe cycling, walking and wheeling infrastructure.

- 1.6 There is an internal Member Cycling and Walking Group which meets bi-monthly to discuss and guide officers on potential schemes to promote. These indicative lists have not been presented to this Group at this stage due to the timing of the group meetings and the pre-election period and local election taking place. This will take place in September.
- 1.7 The Revenue list of capability building activities and initiatives are broken down into as shown in Table 1 along with indicative budgets and on agreement with districts and boroughs, some of the funding given directly to them to progress their priorities:

Capability Building & Behaviour Change Activities	Suggested budget allocation
Network Design	£60,000
Scheme planning & Design (Top priority schemes only)	£584,000
Public Engagement/consultation of schemes/ideas	£20,000
Data & evidence collection	£70,000
Bespoke training for LA officers and Members	£20,000
Other including salaries and Monitoring and Evaluation	£160,000
Communication/marketing	£110,670
Cycle Training	£46,316
Scootability	£14,400
Bike Loan/share	£2,000
Grant	£24,835
Cycle security Measures	£12,000
Organisational Travel planning	£136,301
Cycle Maintenance	£24,316
To be allocated	£55,787
Total	£1,304,625

Table 1 – list of activities and initiatives for the Revenue Grant

1.8 The Capital Grant initial indicative list of priority schemes is shown in Table 2

No.	Scheme type e.g. construction, development, essential maintenance or change control)	Scheme name	Approximate funding allocation
1	Construction	Crab & Winkle extension of existing route, Whitstable	£1,000,000
2	Construction	Langton to Rusthall cycle route Phase 1, Tunbridge Wells	£1,000,000
3	Construction	Otford to Sevenoaks cycle route Phase 1, Sevenoaks	£1,000,000
4	Construction	Walking and cycling route including a bridge over road, Folkestone	£716,591
5	Construction	Old Chatham Road, cycle route improvement, Tonbridge & Malling	£80,000
6	Construction	Dartford Road Zebra crossing	£55,000
7	Construction	Dover Priory to Town Centre, Dover	£250,000
8	Construction	NCN route renumbering and signage, Various	£50,000
9	Construction	Faversham Town junction improvements, Faversham	£85,000
10	Essential Maintenance	Various sites to be confirmed	£100,000
11	Cycle storage	Folkestone Bike Hangers	£17,000
12	Development	St Peter's Walking Zone, Thanet	£100,000
		Total	£4,453,591

Table 2 – Indicative list of Capital Grant development and construction schemes.

2.0 Governance

- 2.1 The Revenue grant activities and initiatives and Capital grant development and construction schemes are located within most of the districts and boroughs and is consistent with 'Infrastructure First' principles by accelerating the delivery of key transport infrastructure and enhancing leverage of external infrastructure investment within the districts and boroughs from central government. The schemes will also contribute towards providing viable and attractive travel options that focus on both road and active travel modes. This supports the Framing Kent's Future – our Council Strategy 2022-2026.

- 2.2 The activities, initiatives and scheme development and construction will be solely funded by the Consolidated Active Travel Grant and therefore supports Securing Kent's Future – 2022-2026. No funding is required from the Council's feasibility reserve. All costs are covered by the Grant – see 3.1.
- 2.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cross-Party working group that we have established provide an oversight and guidance for officers to investigate and prioritise schemes identified by districts and boroughs via their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and via KCC's Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP).
- 2.4 In order to progress schemes as quickly and efficiently as possible, officers undertake the following governance for each scheme:
 1. KCC Officers develop schemes or plans with the districts and boroughs and assists them in producing their LCWIPs where applicable.
 2. Consultations take place with the local communities and stakeholder groups prior to any progression of detailed designs and construction.
 3. The KCC Cycling and Walking Member Group are kept up to date along with local KCC Members where schemes are within their elected ward boundaries.
 4. Results of consultations and officer recommendations are reported to the local Joint Transportation Boards.
 5. Joint Transport Board recommendations are agreed by the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of the schemes will be fully covered by the grants awarded to KCC. These grants make allowance for the staff costs and design fees associated with the scheme delivery in addition to the construction costs and any legal costs associated. When necessary, a change control procedure allows KCC to manage costs within the funding envelope with no additional KCC funds required from base budgets. This is a ring-fenced grant for walking, wheeling and cycling schemes only and ATE would not permit its expenditure on other projects.
- 3.2 There are no revenue implications to KCC, the schemes' costs are scalable to suit the budgets available and Change Control with the DfT via Active Travel England can take place to adjust projects within the overall programme.
- 3.3 The detailed costings for construction schemes will be revisited as the projects progress through the various design stages and will be using the Highway Term Maintenance Contract (evidencing best value). The costings include an element to cover risk and contingency and use of the existing procured contracts reduces any cost uncertainty to ensure it is affordable within the funding envelope.
- 3.4 The assurance process requires best Value for Money evidence for construction and maintenance schemes but not for development schemes and maximises outcomes. Each scheme is assessed on its own merits rather than its location within the county and includes assessing key benefits from active travel including improved health and lower workplace absenteeism

from physical activity; environmental and congestion benefits from reduced car miles; and journey quality benefits from safer and more pleasant travel.

4.0 Programme

- 4.1 The Council must commit to spend the Revenue Grant funding by the end of the funding period, 31 March 2026 and delivered by the end of September 2026. The Capital Grant funded named schemes must be committed by the end of March 2026 and delivered as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. All construction funded schemes should be completed by the end of March 2028 however there is the ability to request from Active Travel England changes to the programme via a change control process.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that construction will be undertaken using the Highway Term Maintenance Contract mainly but there is also the opportunity to use other highways frameworks or via competitive tender procedures.

5.0 Options considered but discarded

- 5.1 Not to accept the direct grant. KCC would not be able to fund active travel projects that are shown to have health, environmental, accessibility, community and economic benefits for Kent residents.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Council is expected to have the necessary governance and assurance arrangements in place and that all legal and other statutory obligations and consents will be adhered to, which may include, but not solely, state aid/subsidy control, equalities duties, procurement, health and safety and fraud.

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be provided as each scheme is developed to determine and mitigate any impacts for all users, be it temporary or permanent. It is widely expected that there will be positive impacts for all users. If there are some temporary negative impacts during the construction, this will be explored further and mitigated as appropriate.

8.0 Other Corporate Implications

- 8.1 There are no other corporate implications identified in taking this decision.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 Active Travel England (an Executive Agency for The Department for Transport) have awarded Kent County Council £5,758,216 (£4,453,591 Capital and £1,304,625 Revenue) for the development and/or construction of active travel schemes across the County.
- 9.2 The Revenue Grant list of activities and initiatives was required to be sent to Active Travel England by 19 March 2025 and the Grant paid as an upfront payment. The Capital Grant indicative list of schemes has been submitted to Active Travel England as this was required by 31 July 2025, and the

upfront payment is expected in August 2025. The grants will fully cover all costs of the schemes.

- 9.3 The Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Cross-Party Working Group provide governance oversight and guidance for officers to investigate and prioritise schemes identified by districts and boroughs via their Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) and via KCC's Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP)

10.0 Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport to give approval to accept the Consolidated Active Travel Fund Grant (CATF) and take the activities and projects through their various stages of development and delivery as listed below:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.
5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

11.0 Appendices

- Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B: EqIA

12.0 Contact Details

Report Authors: Jamie Watson/Nikola Floodgate

Job title: Senior Programme Manager (Active Travel) and Road Safety & Active Travel Group Manager

- Phone number: 03000 416239.
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Lead Director: Haroona Chughtai
- Job title: Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 412479.
- E-mail: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

Corporate Director: Simon Jones

- Job title: Corporate Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 411683.
- E-mail: Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

DECISION NO:

25/00064

For publication**Key decision: YES**

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Consolidated Active Travel Funding Grant (CATF – Tranche 6)
Capital and Revenue

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) Grant award and the deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the S151 Officer to agree to enter into the necessary grant agreements.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to deploy and manage the grant allocation funding to take the CATF activities and projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery.
4. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member and S151 Officer, to accept and deploy future years funding allocations of the grant, providing it is on similar terms.
5. DELEGATE authority to Director of Infrastructure to progress and complete all relevant construction property and Compulsory Purchase Orders as necessary to deliver the schemes.
6. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

Active Travel England (an Executive Agency for The Department for Transport) have awarded Kent County Council £5,758,216 (£4,453,591 Capital and £1,304,625 Revenue) for the development and/or construction of active travel schemes across the County.

A key decision is required to seek approval to accept the Capital & Revenue Grant because it is over the £1m threshold

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

No formal consultations have been undertaken yet however as each scheme develops, local consultations will take place and should there appear to be a lack of support for the scheme then a recommendation will be made to the local Joint Transportation Boards and a decision made by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation as to whether it progresses or not.

A Cycling and Walking Member Group is in place to guide KCC officers on prospective schemes, policies and best practice procedures.

Local Members will be consulted as schemes develop within their constituencies

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not to accept the direct grant. KCC would not be able to fund active travel projects that are shown to have health, environmental, accessibility, community and economic benefits for Kent residents.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
.....
signed

.....
..
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Consolidated Active Travel Funding Grant

Responsible Officer

Jamie Watson - GT TRA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqlA must be completed within the EqlA App)

Tim Read - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Highways & Transportation

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

The Consolidated Active Travel Funding Grant is awarded by Active Travel England to Local Highway Authorities with the aim of developing and constructing walking, wheeling and cycling facilities in England, as well as supporting behaviour change activities and capability building measures plus community engagement and training activities.

The Consolidated Active Travel Fund will supersede the annual Active Travel Fund (Capital) and annual Capability Fund (Revenue) in financial year 2025 to 2026.

It supports the development and/or construction of inclusive walking, wheeling and cycling schemes such as improved road crossings and junctions, dropped kerbs to facilitate easier access, provision of segregated, partially segregated or shared routes. It also funds cycle training via Bikeability to thousands of Children and Adults.

The funding package also provides guidance to help ensure that local residents and businesses are heard when designing and delivering transport changes.

An aim is to improve public health by providing alternatives to vehicular use.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

No

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Schemes will be developed and consulted on with the following groups along with all the statutory groups:

Districts and Boroughs

Elected members of KCC

KCC internal departments

Emergency Services

Public Transport

Local residents & Businesses

Utilities if affected

Local Access Forums such as Kent Association for the Blind

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Age UK

Local Schools and Colleges

Active Travel England

National Highways

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The indicative programme of highway improvements is designed to be as inclusive as possible and ensure access for all. The individual schemes will have further specific EqIA's and will identify any positive or negative impacts on protected groups. The aim of the highway improvement schemes, behaviour change programmes and training is to provide a safe environment for all users and help improve health.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee, 11 September 2025

Subject: Internal Drainage Board Expansion

Key decision 25/00066

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Ashford Rural South Bill Barrett, Ashford East Dean Burns, Ashford Rural East Brian Collins, Ashford Rural West Jeremy Eustace, Ashford South Nick Wibberley, Ashford Central Pamela Williams, Canterbury City North Alister Brady, Herne Bay East Paul Chamberlain, Whistable East and Herne Bay West Adrian Kibble, Herne Village and Sturry Mark Mulvihill, Canterbury City South Connie Nolan, Canterbury North Alex Ricketts, Canterbury South Mike Sole, Deal and Walmer Chris Burwash, Dover North Bridget Porter, Sandwich Peter Evans, Birchington and Rural Luke Evans, Maidstone Rural South Brian Black, Tunbridge Wells Rural Mark Munday

Summary: Internal Drainage Boards have a legal authority to expand their districts under the Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 3(1). Where expansion is sought, the relevant Internal Drainage Board must demonstrate that they have consulted with the relevant authorities and sought their approval, prior to the order being granted by DEFRA. The River Stour Internal Drainage Board and Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board are both seeking to expand their districts to align with the catchment boundary. The proposed approach to expansion differs for each Internal Drainage Board, but the expansion will ultimately improve oversight and management of flood risk.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment on the proposed decision to:

1. ENDORSE the proposed expansion of the River Stour Internal Drainage Board District and
2. ENDORSE the trial expansion of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and the joint working arrangement between the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council and the Internal Drainage Boards are Risk Management Authorities for flood risk in Kent and work in partnership to manage the associated risk.
- 1.2 Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority is the responsible authority for surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. The Council provides a strategic overview of flood risk across the county.
- 1.3 Internal Drainage Boards are local independent public bodies responsible for managing water levels, drainage and flood risk within a defined low-lying area, known as an Internal Drainage Board District. Districts are typically rural, agricultural areas located on the coast or within a major river catchment where effective drainage is needed for land use and to maintain public safety.
- 1.4 The Land Drainage Act 1991 requires Internal Drainage Boards to undertake the duties set out within the Act. The main role of the Internal Drainage Board is to manage drainage of agricultural land, maintain flow within the watercourses, operate and maintain pumping stations, sluices and weirs to manage water levels, regulation and control of activities in and alongside the drainage system to ensure that flood risk management and drainage is not impaired and protect and enhance biodiversity.
- 1.5 In addition to their duties, Internal Drainage Boards have powers to maintain and improve watercourses within their district. This can include dredging, clearing obstructions, constructing banks, culverts or outfalls. Under these powers, the Internal Drainage Boards have a right to access land to undertake emergency work and can carry out enforcement for unauthorised works.
- 1.6 The Act gives Internal Drainage Boards the power to create by-laws, which strengthens the legislation to manage and protect drainage infrastructure and reduce flood risk. Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority does not have the same power to create or enforce bylaws.
- 1.7 As an independent body, Internal Drainage Boards are governed by a board of members drawn from landowners (elected members) local authorities (appointed members) and specific interest groups (co-opted members). The day-to-day operation is overseen by a clerk, with staff comprising of engineers, operations and technical officers and administrative officers.
- 1.8 Internal Drainage Boards in Kent are funded by drainage rates charged on agricultural landowners and special levies collected from local authorities for non-agricultural land. The Internal Drainage Boards may also seek capital grants for improvement schemes or developer contributions where drainage improvements are required. Rates are set annually by the board.

2. Internal Drainage Board Expansion

- 2.1 The River Stour Internal Drainage Board District stretches from Lenham Heath in the west to Richborough and Deal in the East, and from Sellinge in the south, up to Reculver in the north. The district includes the urban areas of Ashford, Canterbury and Sandwich. The district also encompasses areas of marshland in the Wantsum Channel and the Lydden Valley. It covers the Environment Agency maintained main rivers Great Stour, East Stour, Little Stour, Ruckinge Dyke, Whitewater Dyke, Aylesford Stream, Sarre Penn, Wantsum, North & South Streams and their tributaries.
- 2.2 The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board District includes the areas of East Peckham, Edenbridge, Forest Row, Frittenden, Groombridge, Headcorn, Lingfield, Maidstone, Marden, Paddock Wood, Staplehurst and Tonbridge and Malling. The district includes the urban areas of Tonbridge and Maidstone. It covers the Environment Agency main rivers Beult, Teise, Medway and their tributaries.
- 2.3 Both Internal Drainage Boards are seeking to expand their districts under the Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 3 (1) to align with the full extent of the natural catchment boundary.
- 2.4 This approach brings practical and environmental benefits, allowing the Internal Drainage Board to take a more joined-up and efficient approach to managing water levels and reducing flood risk across the whole catchment.
- 2.5 With oversight of the catchment, the Internal Drainage Boards can plan and carry out maintenance more effectively, respond quickly to issues upstream that may impact communities or land downstream, and apply its powers more consistently.
- 2.6 The Internal Drainage Boards will undertake their powers for consenting activities near watercourses, enforcing bylaws, and coordinating long-term improvements that protect homes, farmland and the environment. Aligning boundaries with catchment areas also helps reduce confusion over the responsible authority for land drainage and ensures that water management decisions are made with a full understanding of how water moves through the landscape.
- 2.7 The River Stour Internal Drainage Board is proposing to undertake a single coordinated expansion of the district, aiming to streamline governance and deliver a consistent delivery of water level management and duties across the catchment area.
- 2.8 The changes from the current River Stour Internal Drainage Board district area to the expanded district area will see the incorporation of a small number of ordinary water courses which are currently the land drainage responsibility of Kent County Council.

- 2.9 The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board is proposing a phased expansion starting with the sub-catchment of the Teise around Marden followed by the Rhoden sub-catchment.
- 2.10 This phased approach will allow the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board to work closely with Kent County Council via a Public Services Cooperation Agreement for a period of three years.
- 2.11 The Public Service Cooperation Agreement (Annex A) will allow both parties to develop and deliver joint surface water and natural flood management projects in areas where we have known and ongoing flood risk.
- 2.12 This approach will allow the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board to build local support for the expansion, trial practical delivery on the ground and ensure each phase of the expansion is underpinned by measurable benefits.
- 2.13 Kent County Council will be able to utilise additional resource and operational delivery to land drainage activity and better protect local communities within these catchment areas.
- 2.14 Following the three-year trial, if considered by the Board to have been successful, the expansion will be formally incorporated.
- 2.15 The differing approaches to the proposed expansions reflect the unique geographical, operational and partnership arrangements within each respective Internal Drainage Boards district.
- 2.16 The expansion of the boundaries provides benefits to both Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and local communities:
- 2.16.1 Improved coordination – the expansion will allow Internal Drainage Boards to take additional responsibility for maintenance and regulation of all watercourses across the catchment, reducing the ambiguity between Kent County Council and the Internal Drainage Board
 - 2.16.2 Reallocation of resource – with the Internal Drainage Board managing ordinary watercourses, Kent County Council can prioritise strategic planning, delivery of sustainable drainage and flood risk management schemes and coordination of flood risk management
 - 2.16.3 Strengthening partnership resource – the Internal Drainage Board brings technical expertise, local knowledge and an established operational workforce across a wider area, providing opportunity for partnership delivery of Lead Local Flood Authority objectives
 - 2.16.4 Benefits to local communities include a consistent approach to watercourse maintenance, flood risk management being managed as a whole system and improved communication with a single organisation.

3. Options Considered but discarded

- 3.1 Not to endorse the expansion proposals, however the expansion is considered to provide benefits for both Kent County Council and local communities by offering improved coordination of watercourses and flood risk management, increased resources through joint delivery of projects and improved communication with communities through a single point of contact.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 As a Lead Local Flood Authority, Kent County Council has permissive powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to consent works to ordinary watercourses outside of Internal Drainage Board Districts or those designated main rivers.
- 4.2 The Land Drainage Engineer undertakes this activity within the Flood and Water Management team and is a base funded member of staff.
- 4.3 The expansion of the Internal Drainage Board districts will result in consenting of works to ordinary watercourses being undertaken by the Internal Drainage Board.
- 4.4 The loss of revenue is expected to be no more than £500 per year across both the River Stour Internal Drainage Board and the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board.
- 4.5 The consenting fee charged by Kent County Council is £50 per consent as set by s.23(2) Land Drainage Act 1991 but this is not considered an accurate reflection of staff resource required to complete the consenting process.
- 4.6 The loss of financial income is considered negligible as staff resource will be reallocated to projects which are externally funded with full cost recovery.
- 4.7 There is therefore no additional pressure on the KCC budget that would result from this decision.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications resulting from this decision as Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and the Internal Drainage Boards duties and activities are defined by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Water Resources Act 1991 and the Land Drainage Act 1991.
- 5.2 All parties will continue to carry out their roles and responsibilities as defined within these Acts.

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 An EqIA screening has been completed and identified no harmful implications for any protected characteristic groups at this stage.

7. Other corporate implications

- 7.1 The Internal Drainage Board expansion has the potential to assist the KCC highways authority in areas related to flood risk, surface water management and infrastructure resilience.
- 7.2 Internal Drainage Boards have expertise in managing water levels, ditches and watercourses. The expansion can provide opportunities for better coordinated removal of surface water from roads, reducing road flooding, water damage to carriageways and drainage related complaints.
- 7.3 As the Internal Drainage Boards often maintain watercourses, culvert and drainage adjacent to highways, expansion could mean that more of these assets are protectively managed. This in turn can reduce silt build up in roadside gullies, lowering maintenance costs and risk of localised surface water flooding.
- 7.4 The expansion of the Internal Drainage Boards will provide a proactive drainage partner that compliments the highway authority's statutory duties and helps reduce risks and costs associated with poorly managed surface water.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The River Stour Internal Drainage Board and Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board are seeking to expand their districts under the Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 3 (1) to align with the full extent of the natural catchment boundary.
- 8.2 This approach brings practical and environmental benefits, allowing the Internal Drainage Board to take a more joined-up and efficient approach to managing water levels and reducing flood risk across the whole of their catchment areas.
- 8.3 Whilst each Internal Drainage Board is proposing a different method to deliver their expansion, Kent County Council will continue to work in partnership with both parties to delivery flood risk management.
- 8.4 The expansion is considered to provide benefits for both Kent County Council and local communities by offering improved coordination of watercourse management, increased resources through joint delivery of projects and improved communication with communities through a single point of contact.

8. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment on the proposed decision to:

- 1. ENDORSE the proposed expansion of the River Stour Internal Drainage Board District and
- 2. ENDORSE the trial expansion of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and the joint working arrangement between the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority as shown at Appendix A.

9. Background Papers

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

10. Contact details

Report Author:

Louise Smith
Flood and Water Manager

03000 414 829

Louise.Smith@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Matt Smyth
Director for Environment and Circular
Economy

03000 416 676

Matthew.Smyth@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment

DECISION NO:

25/00066

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision:** Internal Drainage Board Expansion**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment, I agree to:

1. ENDORSE the proposed expansion of the River Stour Internal Drainage Board District and
2. ENDORSE the trial expansion of the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and the joint working arrangement between the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority

Reason(s) for decision:

The River Stour Internal Drainage Board and Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board are seeking to expand their districts under the Land Drainage Act 1991 Section 3 (1) to align with the full extent of the natural catchment boundary.

Prior to the expansion order being granted by DEFRA the Internal Drainage Boards must consult with key stakeholders including the County Council. KCC does not sit on the Boards

Endorsement from KCC is intended to form part of the formal consultation process led by the Internal Drainage Board and does not constitute final endorsement of the expansion. The decision is therefore conditional and subject to:

- The outcome of the stakeholder consultation.
- Endorsement by other key stakeholders.
- Final approval by Defra via an Expansion Order.

Should Defra be satisfied with the consultation responses, they can proceed to grant and enact the expansion order for the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) under Section 3 of the Land Drainage Act 1991

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

No public consultation by Kent County Council is planned or required.

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Not to support the expansion, however the expansion is considered to bring benefits to Kent County Council and local communities by offering improved coordination of watercourses and flood risk management, increased resources through joint delivery of projects and improved communication with communities through a single point of contact.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the

Proper Officer:

signed

date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Internal Drainage Board Expansion

Responsible Officer

Louise Smith - GT ECE

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Helen Shulver - GT ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

Stakeholder to the Internal Drainage Board expansion

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Flood and Water Management

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Shulver - GT ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT ECE

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council is a stakeholder to the proposed Internal Drainage Board expansions within the Upper Medway and River Stour Drainage board districts.

KCC has been asked to support the expansions to enable the IDBs to better deliver their services and duty for land drainage and flood risk management within their catchment boundaries.

The IDB expansion will result in residents within the expanded areas engaging with the IDB rather than KCC for land drainage consenting.

KCC is being consulted on the expansion of the IDB and is therefore not directly responsible for how the IDB will communicate with other stakeholders or members of the public, we would however encourage the IDB to complete their own EQIA assessment for the expansion.

For KCC there will be no change for how we continue to engage with residents, members or organisations across the IDB districts.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

No

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
No
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
Yes
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
KCC is a stakeholder to the Internal Drainage Board expansion and is not directly responsible for the the wider consultation. This will beundertaken by the Internal Drainage Boards.
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients
No
Staff
No
Residents/Communities/Citizens
Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
The expansion of the Internal Drainage Boards will deliver improved coordination of the flood risk management, land drainage and maintenance across the IDB catchment areas. This will result in improved operation of flood risk management for residents and communities.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No

Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9th September 20205

Subject: **Procurement for the Receipt and Processing of Paper and Card Waste Contract Countywide CN260429**

Decision Number: 25/00067

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Electoral Division: All electoral divisions

Summary

Existing contracts held by Kent County Council (KCC), as the Waste Disposal Authority, for the receipt and processing of approximately 30,000 tonnes per annum of paper and card are due to expire on 30th November 2026. A procurement seeks to establish new countywide contractual arrangements from 1st December 2026.

Recommendation(s)

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment to:

- (i) APPROVE the procurement and contract award of a paper and card recycling contract for an initial 5 years (plus an extension of up to 2 years);
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity;
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions including but not limited to awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and
- (iv). DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 KCC has a statutory responsibility as the Waste Disposal Authority to arrange for the disposal of waste collected at kerbside by the Waste Collection Authorities and to arrange for the disposal of waste deposited at the Household Waste Recycling Centres by Kent residents.
- 1.2 KCC has processes in place for the recycling of paper and card as this is both environmentally and economically beneficial.
- 1.3 KCC currently contracts out the management of the processing of c.30,000 tonnes per annum of paper and card waste.
- 1.4 This report provides information concerning the expiry of the contract on 30th November 2026 and details the commissioning process to commence a new contract from 1st December 2026.
- 1.5 KCC has planned a sufficient lead-in time for the development of a robust specification, negotiations and mobilisation, as well as completion of all necessary governance and approval processes prior to launching the full tender.

2. Background

- 2.1 KCC currently contracts with Smurfit Kappa based locally in Snodland, Kent who are one of the leading paper-based packaging companies globally.
- 2.2 Smurfit Kappa has been an excellent and reliable provider for Kent County Council, consistently delivering high-quality services for the receipt and processing of paper and card waste and providing significant revenue to KCC from the sale of processed material. Their local facility in Snodland has played a key role in supporting KCC's recycling objectives, ensuring that materials are processed efficiently and in accordance with environmental standards.
- 2.3 There are several effective methods for managing paper and card waste. KCC currently relies on local reprocessors, including paper mills, which recover high-quality fibres for reuse in the manufacture of packaging and other paper products. This approach not only supports the circular economy but also helps to minimise haulage distances and associated emissions.
- 2.4 The recycling process for paper and card typically involves sorting, shredding, pulping, and de-inking, followed by the reformation of fibres into new paper-based products. The quality of the input material is critical to the efficiency and value of this process. Clean, uncontaminated paper and card streams yield higher-quality recycled products and are more readily accepted by reprocessors.
- 2.5 Contamination remains a key challenge in paper and card recycling. Materials such as food residue, plastics, and laminated or coated paper can significantly reduce the recyclability of the load. KCC works closely with collection authorities and site

operators to promote good separation practices and reduce contamination at source, thereby improving the quality and marketability of the material collected.

- 2.6 Initial market engagement has indicated interest from local and regional processors. The market is sensitive to changes in quality standards and international trading restrictions and has seen fluctuating markets which affect the potential revenue. KCC will continue to explore innovative sorting and fibre recovery technologies where available to improve material quality and value.
- 2.7 Kent is home to several large and established paper and card reprocessors as well as smaller reprocessors who provide local recycling services for a range of materials, including paper and card. These facilities contribute to Kent's recycling infrastructure, and their capacity, acceptance criteria, and commercial interest in future contracts will be confirmed through the commissioning process. This process will also assess the viability of maintaining local processing, reducing haulage emissions, and securing best value through competitive procurement.
- 2.8 As part of its commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, KCC is monitoring emerging technologies in the paper and card recycling sector to ensure that KCC's contracts incorporate the most modern techniques.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Collecting paper and card separately keeps the material cleaner and generates substantially higher revenues for the Council.
- 3.2 Under the Simpler Recycling legislation, by March 2026, paper and card are materials that are required to be collected separately at kerbside by the Waste Collection Authorities, however Waste Collection Authorities can choose to co-mingle paper and card with other materials subject to carrying out an assessment that identifies technical, environmental, economic and practical reasons for not collecting this material separately.
- 3.3 Whilst a Waste Collection Authority may deem a comingled approach to be operationally more effective it often leads to more contamination, which reduces the quality and value of the paper and card.
- 3.4 KCC continues to work collaboratively with districts to promote best practice and highlight the financial and environmental benefits of separate collection, to achieve the best value for the Kent taxpayer.
- 3.5 Paper and card collected at Household Waste and Recycling Centres and through kerbside collections can vary in quality. Contaminants such as food residue, plastic film, and laminated paper reduce the recyclability of the material and may lead to rejected loads. Despite efforts by site operators and collection authorities to promote clean separation, contamination remains a challenge that impacts both environmental outcomes and financial returns.

3.6 Through robust procurement activities, KCC will ensure that:

- The contract is structured in one lot as a single county-wide contract. This is following feedback from the market whose preference is to accept the total tonnage. This will bring the largest financial benefit to KCC, with higher income rates.
- Let'srecycle.com will be used as the source of the pricing strategy (mixed paper), adjusted on a monthly basis.
- Haulage costs, albeit paid for under separate contracts that KCC hold to haul the waste to the provider's facility, will be included in the economic evaluation (whole life cycle costs).
- The pricing mechanism within the contract produces the highest return possible and considers the quality of material, with no guaranteed minimum tonnage.
- The contract mandates providers to comply with all relevant environmental permitting and planning requirements.
- Social value commitments from providers are included and evaluated, including initiatives that support local employment, education, and community engagement. These commitments will be monitored throughout the contract to ensure meaningful delivery.
- No paper and card waste managed under this contract will be permitted to be disposed of at landfill. All material must be recycled or otherwise recovered in accordance with the waste hierarchy and Kent's zero-to-landfill objective.
- The output materials must meet relevant industry standards for recycled paper.
- The contract term considers market conditions, local government reform and a two year extension option that considers local government reform.
- The extension will be considered based on provider performance and value for money, in line with the Council's "Securing Kent's Future" strategy. A benchmarking exercise will be conducted 18 months prior to the extension point to assess competitiveness and service quality.
- The contract will include key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor service quality, contamination rates, recycling performance, and turnaround times. Performance against these KPIs will be reviewed regularly and published annually in accordance with the Procurement Act 2023.

3.7 Local Government Reorganisation has been considered, and contract clauses will be inserted into the contract to address the potential novation of the contract to Unitary Authorities. As Unitary Authority numbers or boundaries are not yet known, it is not possible at this stage to 'lot' the contract to align with new structures.

4. Options

- 4.1 **Option 1 - Do nothing** – the current arrangements will cease and KCC will be unable to accept the waste - this is not an option due to KCC's obligation to receive this material under waste legislation and dispose of it as per the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2024
- 4.2 **Option 2 - Continue to accept the waste but utilise alternative disposal options by using landfill or incineration** - This is not a viable option. KCC has a legal obligation to manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, which prioritises recycling over disposal. Sending paper and card to landfill or incineration would not only undermine the Council's recycling and landfill diversion targets (currently less than 1%), but would also result in a significant financial burden. Currently, clean paper and card can generate an income. In contrast, incinerating the same material would incur a disposal cost. This shift would have a substantial negative impact on the Council's waste management budget and is therefore not considered a sustainable or cost-effective option. Furthermore, the inclusion of Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities such as Allington in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028 will introduce new carbon levies on all fossil-derived waste emissions, further increasing the cost of disposal.
- 4.3 **Option 3 - Extend for a further period** - This is not legally possible, as the paper and card contract has been extended within the parameters of the existing contracts.
- 4.4 **Option 4 – Commence a full procurement exercise (recommended option).** This is the preferred option and provides sufficient time to undertake a full commissioning exercise before 1st December 2026, and to secure a provider who can treat and utilise the waste material meeting the circular economy desired outcomes. A 5+2 year contract term has been proposed as it offers an optimal balance between operational stability and financial viability, enabling providers to spread capital investment and overhead costs such as fleet and equipment over a longer period. Shorter contract durations typically result in higher annualised costs, which can reduce the value of the income offered to the authority and limit market competitiveness.
- 4.5 **The Recommended option is option 4 which is to re-procure.** This provides an opportunity for KCC to engage with the market, to realise potential benefits of improved efficiency and innovation, competitive pricing and updated regulatory requirements.

5. Recommended Option Risks

- 5.1 The commissioning of a new contract for paper and card waste management carries several risks. Market uncertainty remains a key concern, particularly due to fluctuations in global recovered fibre prices, changes in export regulations, and the limited number of domestic reprocessors with sufficient capacity. These factors can affect competition, pricing, and the financial viability of the contract

- 5.2 Providers must meet stringent environmental permitting and planning requirements, and the Council must ensure that all operations comply with relevant legislation resulting in compliance risks for the authority. Additionally, contamination in the paper and card stream remains a persistent challenge.
- 5.3 Local Government Reorganisation involves elements of unknown risk. Therefore, KCC has chosen to ensure that statutory services remain in place during the transition period. These services can then be reviewed once boundaries and responsibilities are more clearly defined.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 A market engagement questionnaire was posted to the Kent Business Portal with responses received on the 3rd July 2025. Response to the market engagement was limited, with only 4 respondents.
- 6.2 The engagement exercise sought information and clarity on a range of subjects including location, facility type and capacity, acceptance criteria, contract term, lotting, changes in legislation, innovation, environmental impact, social value and price, all of which has shaped the recommendation, specification and proposed route to market.
- 6.3 Key learning from the market engagement has been considered in the procurement documentation and is listed in 3.6
- 6.4 The Commercial and Procurement Oversight Board convened on 17th July 2025 and approved the commissioning route, lot strategy, duration of contract and extension period.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 This is a revenue-based **income** contract.
- 7.2 Estimated value of this contract is based on receiving 30,000 tonnes per annum.
- 7.3 A 5 year contract for 30,000 tonnes p/a would produce revenues of £13.5m for the full term (subject to market rate fluctuations).
- 7.4 Expected revenue budgeted for 2025/26 is currently forecasted at £2.397m
- 7.5 Tonnage will increase slightly (to an estimated 31,045 tonnes) in line with growth for commencement of the contract in December 2026, resulting in a forecasted income budget for 2026/27 of £2.794m, which as an increase of income will be reflected in the next update to the Medium term Financial Plan.
- 7.6 It should be noted that market prices can go down as well as up and are affected by global and UK influences which are outside of the Authority's control.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 A competitive procurement process will be carried out under the Procurement Act 2023, which meets the obligations on transparency, fair treatment and best value.
- 8.2 The Council's standard terms and conditions will be utilised and legal advice will be sought where required.
- 8.3 A key function of the Waste Disposal Authority operating under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Section 51 states that it shall be the duty of each Waste Disposal Authority to arrange:
 - a) for the disposal of the controlled waste collected in its area by the waste collection authorities.
 - b) for places to be provided at which persons resident in its area may deposit their household waste and for the disposal of waste so deposited.
- 8.4 The Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC) sets the basic concepts and definitions related to waste management, including the principles of the waste hierarchy. It requires councils to take measures to encourage the separation and recycling of waste.
- 8.5 Under the Simpler Recycling legislation, from 31 March 2026, all collection authorities in England will be required to collect paper and card as a separate recyclable waste stream from all households. While paper and card can be co-collected with other dry recyclables (such as plastics and metals) where appropriate, the legislation encourages separate collection where it improves material quality and environmental outcomes. The decision on whether to collect paper and card separately or as part of a mixed stream remains with the waste collection authorities.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The Equality Impact Assessment undertaken concluded that no protected characteristics will be impacted upon negatively as a result of this contract award. This is due to the contract delivering a business-to-business service, all customer services are conducted at the kerbside by the waste collection authority or at the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

10. Other corporate implications

- 10.1 A **Data Protection Impact Assessment** (DPIA) screening was undertaken and it concluded that due to the fact that no personal data is handled or stored, (employee or service user), no further assessment is required.
- 10.2 **Environmental Impact** - Recent guidance from Kent County Council's Sustainable Procurement Toolkit has emphasised the importance of embedding environmental quality into waste service contracts.
- 10.3 The Toolkit outlines a framework for considering interconnected environmental topics—such as air quality, energy use, water management, and flood risk—within procurement specifications. It also encourages the use of targeted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor environmental outcomes and community wellbeing.

10.4 For waste contracts, including paper and card processing, the advice highlights the need to engage with the market early, promote transparency in environmental data, and explore opportunities to support marginalised groups and biodiversity. These principles have informed the commissioning approach for this procurement, ensuring that environmental sustainability, statutory compliance, and social value are central to the contract design.

11. Governance

11.1 The Director of Environment and Circular Economy will inherit the main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegation due to the potential financial value of this contract.

12. Conclusions

12.1 This procurement is essential to ensure continuity of service, legal compliance, and environmental performance. It provides an opportunity to secure a financially and environmentally beneficial contract that supports Kent's long-term waste strategy.

12.2 The Cabinet Committee is asked to endorse this decision to secure a provider who can meet the county's needs and contribute to its environmental goals.

13. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet Committee - The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment to:

(i) APPROVE the procurement and contract award of a paper and card waste processing contract for an initial 5 years (plus an extension of up to 2 years);

(ii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity;

(iii) DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions including but not limited to awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and

(iv). DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract as shown at Appendix A.

14. Background Documents

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- Equality Impact Statement

15. Contact details

Report Author: Kay Groves

Service Delivery Manager

Telephone number 03000 411642

Email: kay.groves@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Matthew Smyth

Director for Environment and Circular Economy

Telephone number 03000 416676

Email: matthew.smythe@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment

DECISION NO:

25/00067

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Procurement for the Receipt and Processing of Paper and Card Waste Contract Countywide CN260429

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment, I agree to:

- I. APPROVE the procurement and contract award of a paper and card recycling contract for an initial 5 years (plus an extension of up to 2 years);
- II. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity;
- III. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions including but not limited to awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision; and
- IV. (iv). DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract

Reason(s) for decision:

Existing contracts held by Kent County Council (KCC), as the Waste Disposal Authority, for the receipt and processing of approximately 30,000 tonnes per annum of paper and card are due to expire on 30th November 2026. A decision is needed to procure and award new countywide contractual arrangements from 1st December 2026 to meet statutory duties for waste disposal.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A market engagement questionnaire was posted to the Kent Business Portal with responses received on the 3rd July 202.

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do nothing – the current arrangements will cease and KCC will be unable to accept the waste - this is not an option due to KCC's obligation to receive this material under waste legislation and dispose of it as per the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Separation of Waste (England) Regulations 2024

Option 2 - Continue to accept the waste but utilise alternative disposal options by using landfill or incineration - This is not a viable option. KCC has a legal obligation to manage waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy, which prioritises recycling over disposal. Sending paper and card to landfill or incineration would not only undermine the Council's recycling and landfill diversion targets (currently less than 1%) but would also result in a significant financial burden. Furthermore, the inclusion of Energy from Waste (EfW) facilities such as Allington in the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028 will introduce new carbon levies on all fossil-derived waste emissions, further increasing the cost of disposal.

Option 3 - Extend for a further period - This is not legally possible, as the paper and card contract has been extended within the parameters of the existing contracts.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
.....
signed

.....
..
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Procurement for the Receipt and Processing of Paper and Card Waste Contract Countywide CN260429

Responsible Officer

Emily Rigney O'Hanlon - GT ECE

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Susan Reddick - GT ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Resource Management & Circular Economy

Responsible Head of Service

Susan Reddick - GT ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT ECE

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council is seeking a contract to receive and process paper and card waste arisings from household kerbside collections and deposited at Household Waste Recycling Centres by Kent residents.

As a Waste Disposal Authority, the provision of such waste processing services is a statutory obligation under the Environmental Protection Act (1990).

Aims and Objectives:

From 1st December 2026, Kent County Council will:

- Provide a continuous service by contracting with a Provider to process paper & card waste arisings from kerbside collections within the Authority
- Provide a continuous service by contracting with a Provider to process paper & card waste arisings from Household Waste Recycling Centres within the Authority

Beneficiaries:

This EQIA supports the commission and its intended beneficiaries, being the householders as users of the Household Waste Recycling Centres service in Kent and recipients of the District and Borough council

kerbside collection services.

As the WDA, KCC is responsible for ensuring that all waste collected in Kent is disposed of correctly, in the most financially efficient way. The disposal of this waste is a back-office procedure, with all customer-facing elements of this process the responsibility of the Waste Collection Authority or, at the Household Waste Recycling Centre of which there is a separate EQIA for their operation.

No impact, either positively or negatively, on protected characteristics for residents - no change.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Market engagement was carried out in July 2025 to ascertain market appetite and interest. 4 responses were received.

Staff and team members.

Commissioning.

Incumbent.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Gender:

The contract dictates inclusive policies and training for staff which can ensure that individuals undergoing gender reassignment feel respected and safe when working at waste processing facilities.

Maternity & Pregnancy:

The contract dictates equality laws are followed with regard to employment.

Disability:

Although the operation is not necessarily conducted off with physical disabilities, there are areas of the

service under this contract which can actively be accessed.

Race & Ethnicity:

Culturally sensitive communication and outreach programmes can ensure that there are employment opportunities for all, including underrepresented groups, regardless of their background.

Sexual Orientation:

The contract reflects KCC's anti-discrimination policies and can ensure that individuals of all sexual orientations feel safe and respected.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No. Note: If Question 19a is "No", Questions 19b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Completed

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Completed

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No. Note: If Question 20a is "No", Questions 20b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Completed

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Completed

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race
No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Race
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Completed
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Completed
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No. Note: If Question 27a is "No", Questions 27b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No. Note: If Question 28a is "No", Questions 28b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 9th September 2025

Subject: **Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership- Information only paper**

Classification: Unclassified

Past Pathway of paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary: The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership was formed in July 2002, to reduce death and serious injuries on Kent and Medway’s roads. Safety camera enforcement only takes place at sites where there is a history of fatal and seriously injured casualties where speed has been a contributory factor in the crashes. The Camera Partnership consists of Kent County Council, Medway Council, Kent Police and National Highways.

The Partnership is committed to influencing, educating and encouraging motorists on the roads in Kent and Medway to slow down, stay within the speed limit and help reduce the number of speed-related crashes and casualties through the combination of education, publicity and enforcement.

Safety camera locations are determined by the relevant local authority based on evidence of casualty and speed data.

Each Local Authority maintains camera assets on their own roads, while Kent Police, as the enforcement authority, are responsible for the processing of offences detected.

The Local Authority does not directly receive any revenue from fines for offences detected. All the funding goes to the Treasury’s consolidated fund (central governments bank account).

Recommendation: This report is for information only at the request of the previous administration’s request.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The origin of Safety Camera Partnerships was linked to section 89 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, under which it is an offence to exceed the speed limit. The Road Traffic Law Review, set up in 1985 and which reported in 1988, recommended that greater use should be made of technological innovations to promote compliance with road traffic law, including modern camera technology. The necessary legislation supporting this recommendation

was put in place through the Road Traffic Act 1991. Until 2002, safety cameras, their implementation and maintenance across all Highway Authorities, was managed by the Department for Transport. After that time, responsibility for this function was devolved to Local Highway Authorities and police authorities. In July 2002 the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership was formed.

- 1.2 The Partnership comprises of Kent County Council, Medway Council, National Highways and Kent Police and is responsible for the operation of speed, red light and average speed safety cameras within Kent and Medway.
- 1.3 The Partnership is committed to influencing, educating and encouraging motorists on the roads in Kent and Medway to slow down, stay within the speed limit and help reduce the number of speed-related crashes and casualties through the combination of education, publicity and enforcement.

2. Background

- 2.1 Since the formation of the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership (KMSCP) around 90 fixed safety camera sites have been installed across Kent and Medway.
- 2.2 No new fixed camera locations were identified for around 20 years, until 2018.
- 2.3 In 2016, a programme to replace old “wet film” cameras was implemented to utilise advancements in camera technologies to digital capabilities. During this upgrade period, a review of each site was undertaken to ensure that the site was still needed, and that other engineering measures had not been undertaken that negated the need for a safety camera. Those sites where other engineering measures, such traffic lights, had been installed, were recommended for removal. Unless the characteristics of a road have been changed, there is no other legitimate reason to remove a safety camera. A site detecting zero offences does not mean the camera is not needed, it determines the camera is doing its job.
- 2.4 The digital upgrade was completed in its entirety in 2023. There are currently a total of 65 fixed camera sites in Kent and 27 in Medway, and several cameras on National Highways network, not covered by the KMSCP. The KMSCP also supports 53 mobile camera sites across Kent and Medway.
- 2.5 Fixed safety cameras such as speed, red light and average speed systems are determined and installed at sites where safety has been compromised. These sites are identified by recorded and validated personal injury collisions because of excessive speed and/or red-light violations, for example. The current criteria fall broadly in line with national advice and policy and fixed cameras are considered where there has been three or more serious or fatal speed related personal injury collisions over a three-year period. In addition to this, safety cameras may also be installed following a robust investigation that determines safety cameras are the most appropriate measure to reduce

evidenced personal injury collisions. Details of the criteria can be found at www.kmscp.co.uk.

- 2.6 Fixed safety cameras are a valuable tool in road safety's armoury of measures to mitigate injury on the highway. The latest study of 20-year data to the end of 2024, shows that almost all locations covered by fixed and mobile cameras, saw an average decrease, of the most severe injury crashes, by 48%. Fixed and mobile safety camera locations are reviewed every three years, based on road environment and crash data.
- 2.7 Mobile safety camera sites are determined where there has been one or more fatal or serious injury speed related collision over a 5km stretch of road in the last three years. Mobile enforcement may take place in immediate response to a serious or fatal collision, on the advice of Kent Police's Serious Collisions Investigation Unit. Further mobile van support can be provided at sites where community concern is such that evidence shows persistent excessive speeds. Vans may also support road works, and Kent Police's Speed Watch initiatives. Community based mobile enforcement is a temporary measure and sites are reviewed every year. Kent County Council has a regular dialogue with Kent Police to raise awareness of speed-based community concerns.

3. Repairs

- 3.1 The cost of maintaining cameras and the associated software and hardware is shared amongst its asset owners. For fixed cameras, the cost of the equipment at the roadside is maintained by the relevant Highway Authority, i.e. Kent County Council, Medway Council and National Highways. This includes the yellow housings and associated signing and lining. The physical cameras, back-office hardware and software and vans, are all maintained by Kent Police, as the enforcement authority. Contracts are in place with the equipment suppliers to ensure the equipment is maintained to the expectation of the Home Office and its required approvals. Maintenance is funded by the asset owner.
- 3.2 The last major upgrade (i.e.. wet film to digital) was fully funded from the income received through the Kent Driver Education funding (perpetrators paying to go on speed awareness courses). Any future upgrades would need to be funded from any available NDORS (speed awareness course) surplus or by the local highway authority where the camera is situated and these would need to be costed on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.3 Ongoing maintenance of KCC's Safety Camera assets is covered by an annual base revenue budget of £60,000. Additional costs that may be needed for more substantial repairs or upgrades to the Safety Cameras would need to be funded by the Local Authority themselves as the Kent and Medway Safety Camera partnership has no dedicated funding.

4. Funding

- 4.1 Revenue from speeding offences, is not received by the Highway Authority. Money from fines goes directly to the Treasury's consolidated fund (central governments bank account). There is also a capital and revenue cost associated with the implementation of speed enforcement equipment. This is not always fully understood by public road users and is sometimes subject to misunderstandings. When Kent County Council, as the relevant Highway Authority, wishes to introduce new Safety Cameras, in line with the KMSCP policy it is required to self-fund this out of the existing Integrated Transport Block allocation (Local Transport Plan funding) and there would still be a need for full support from Kent Police in line with the approved approach as there is a revenue cost to enforcing sites.

5. Contact

Report Author: Tara O'Shea	Director: Simon Jones
Job title: Project Manager, Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership	Job title: Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport
Telephone number: 03000 413743	Telephone number: 03000 418181
Email: tara.oshea@kent.gov.uk	Email : simon.jones@kent.gov.uk

From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Economy and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025

Subject: Folkestone & Hythe Transfer Station – Delivery Options

Key Decision: 25/00068

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Report: N/A

Future Pathway of Report: for Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Folkestone & Hythe – Elham Valley

Summary Kent County Council has a legal duty under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), as the waste disposal authority, to dispose of the waste collected at kerbside by the waste collection authorities (the districts) within their administrative boundaries. KCC does this by accepting the waste at a site known as a waste transfer station facility.

KCC currently has a temporary arrangement with a contractor (Veolia) at Ross Way, Folkestone, to provide an interim waste transfer facility until 2028. This facility is very small and cannot accommodate all the waste streams collected at the kerbside and, therefore, cannot meet the needs of Folkestone and Hythe District Council as the waste collection authority or KCC as the waste disposal authority. A more sustainable provision is therefore required.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to:

1. PROCEED with option 3, which is to utilise waste reserve funds to close the budget gap and extend the developer contribution collection period to 2040, thus allowing the continuation of development of the site near junction 11 of the M20.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to approve the capital funding for this project and to the Director of Infrastructure to approve the purchase of the land.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A

1. Introduction

- 1.1** Kent County Council has a legal duty under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), as the waste disposal authority, to dispose of the waste collected at kerbside by the waste collection authorities (the districts) within their administrative boundaries. KCC does this by accepting the waste at a site known as a waste transfer station facility. At the waste transfer station, waste collection vehicles deposit the separate waste streams into individual large bays. To ensure haulage efficiency, it is then loaded on to artic lorries for onward transport to its final disposal location.
- 1.2** To operate as a waste transfer station, the site must have full planning permission as well as an environmental permit issued by the Environment Agency. The waste infrastructure in Folkestone and Hythe is currently insufficient to handle the amount of waste produced by existing housing levels. The development of Otterpool Garden Town will exacerbate this issue.
- 1.3** KCC currently has a temporary arrangement with a contractor (Veolia) at Ross Way, Folkestone, to provide an interim waste transfer facility until 2028. This facility is very small and cannot accommodate all the waste streams collected at the kerbside and, therefore, cannot meet the needs of Folkestone and Hythe District Council as the waste collection authority or KCC as the waste disposal authority. This interim measure has cost KCC over £400,000 in 24-25, with costs increasing in 25-26 due to essential maintenance works that will consequently result in an increase in fees.
- 1.4** As a result, food and residual (black bag) waste is currently tipped at the KCC waste transfer station in Ashford. This out of district tipping means that legally KCC must pay compensation to Folkestone and Hythe District Council. This cost KCC over £87,000 in 2024-25. Tipping away payments apply when the County Council, acting as the waste disposal authority is unable to provide the District and Borough Councils (waste collection authorities) with a suitable location to tip waste within a reasonable distance of the boundary of their area.
- 1.5** Out of district tipping at Ashford is operationally challenging for all parties due to long queuing times and limits to the permitted tonnes of waste as set out in the environmental permit for the site. This does not allow for efficiency in waste collection or disposal activities, with waste collection authority vehicles having to travel further. This pressure to the site will only increase due to the housing growth in Ashford and the intended growth in Folkestone and Hythe which has been forecast to increase by 28.3% between 2020 and 2040.
- 1.6** In 2019, a bid for capital monies for the development and delivery of a new waste transfer station for the Folkestone & Hythe district was submitted to KCC's capital officer group. The project was estimated to cost £7M. The budget at the time was based upon costs to develop the recently opened Ashford waste transfer station and a site owned by Folkestone and Hythe District Council near junction 13 of the M20, which was to be sold to KCC at cost.

- 1.7** Funding for the project would comprise of KCC capital monies as well as developer contributions collected by Folkestone & Hythe district. Developer contributions is a collective term used to refer to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Planning Obligations (commonly referred to as 'Section 106' obligations). These are used to secure financial and non-financial contributions to provide infrastructure to support development and mitigate the impact of development on the local area.
- 1.8** Approval to plan status was given by capital officers group and feasibility work on the site near junction 13 was undertaken. However, this determined it to be unviable due to recently granted residential planning permission on half of the site. Several rounds of site searches were subsequently undertaken between 2019 and 2022. 35 sites, including Ross Way in Folkestone, were investigated and discounted. The preferred site for the development was therefore concluded by KCC to be the site off junction 11 of the M20.
- 1.9** In August 2022, Folkestone and Hythe District Council concluded an appraisal of all the site searches and added their support to the KCC preferred site near junction 11 of the M20. Since then, work to deliver a new waste transfer station near junction 11 has been developed in partnership with Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Otterpool garden town promoters (as adjacent landowners).
- 1.10** KCC has progressed the design works for the project, with a robust cost plan reviewed by independent quantity surveyors. A planning application was submitted in July 2024 and approved August 2025 and a four-year option agreement to purchase the land was entered into in February 2024. A site plan is included in Appendix B for reference.
- 1.11** Planning permission for the development includes a number of conditions which include the need for additional land to accommodate tree screening and ecology requirements. Folkestone and Hythe District Council has the benefit of an option to acquire this additional land and subject to necessary approvals and agreements, Folkestone and Hythe District Council has confirmed that they will fund the cost of the additional land acquisition and put in place appropriate ownership and access arrangements that will enable KCC to deliver the new waste transfer station. Costs associated with implementing the tree screening and ecology requirements, as well as management of the additional land, is fully budgeted and will be the responsibility of KCC as an integral part of the project.

2. Budget Deficit

- 2.1** A review of the project budget in January 2025 highlighted that the income from developer contributions was significantly lower than originally profiled, creating a budget gap of £4.4M, as shown in Table 1.
- 2.2** This is partly due to the delay in the delivery of the Otterpool Park development (S106 payment) but largely due to reduced Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments resulting from key developments not being delivered. Folkestone and Hythe District Council have since updated their

profiling to predict an annual income to KCC of £350,000-£420,000. The lower of these values has been used in the options analysis in this paper.

Table 1: Budget gap

£M	Original figures	Current position
Cost	15.380	15.380
Funded by:		
KCC Capital borrowing	6.165	6.165
CIL to 2030/31	5.691	3.603
S106	1.653	1.208
Total Funding	13.509	10.976
Gap	1.871	4.404

- 2.3** The budget deficit of £4.4M cannot be designed out and therefore is a budget pressure. Alternative options to close the budget gap have been assessed to allow KCC to deliver a waste transfer station within the Folkestone and Hythe district in a financially viable manner that limits the risk to the Council and delivers to operationally imperative timeframes. This paper reviews the options available to progress the project, provides a detailed risk rated analysis of the viable options and the whole life cost for each.
- 2.4** In 2025/26, KCC placed in reserve £13.288M, specifically for the management and disposal of household waste. This money has been set aside to support the Council in its mitigation from the forthcoming impacts of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and to make changes to infrastructure due to legislative changes to either save money or avoid future unfunded cost pressures. Using some of this reserve to fund the budget gap and/or forward fund developer contributions has been considered in the options detailed below. The Emissions Trading Scheme is a cap-and-trade system that applies an additional cost to fossil-based emissions released by the incineration process. The expansion of the Emissions Trading Scheme to include Energy from Waste (EfW) plants will bring additional costs to KCC.

3. Options

- 3.1 Option 1 Do nothing – pause project (not viable).** The need for this project remains, however, with slower housing growth in the Folkestone and Hythe district, as evidenced by reduced developer contributions, this option considers the potential to pause the project.

Option 1 is not viable for the following reasons:

- KCC only has a four-year option agreement on the land, which expires in 2028. By pausing the project, this agreement may expire, and design work and other expenditure to date on development of this land will have been wasted.
- Developer Contributions must be used or given back to the District Authority after 10 years. Delaying the project limits the timescale for

development of the site and leaves the Council in a position where these contributions must be returned and therefore the budget gap would increase.

- Delaying the project leaves it exposed to market conditions, with potential costs increasing due to inflation and rising fuel and material costs. This increase would again widen the budget deficit.
- Delays to the project puts the existing infrastructure under more pressure, both sites (Ashford and Ross Way waste transfer stations) are often at operational capacity, and increasing housing and therefore tonnages may lead to a failure in KCCs ability to provide this statutory service.

3.2 Option 2 Extend the developer contribution collection period to 2045 to close the gap (not recommended).

- 3.2.1 Developer contributions forecasting is currently to 2030. KCC has the ability to direct all Folkestone and Hythe District Council CIL monies it receives to this project for as long as necessary, plus ensuring that S106 requests are made for waste infrastructure. This option requires an extension of the developer contribution collection period to 2044/45 to bring in an additional £4.4M to close the budget gap.
- 3.2.2 This option is considered financially high risk as KCC would need to forward fund these contributions. To date the CIL projections have not delivered, and simply extending the contribution period does not ensure their delivery.
- 3.2.3 This option ringfences the CIL funding to waste infrastructure, meaning that other essential Council services such as highways, libraries and community learning will not be able to access this funding, which may have a detrimental impact to the surrounding area.

3.3 Option 3 Extend the developer contribution collection period to 2040 and utilise waste reserve funds to close the gap (preferred option).

- 3.1.1 Extension of the developer contribution collection period to 2040 to bring in an additional £3.5M is required. This date is in line with the KCC housing led forecast published in 2021¹, providing more certainty over delivery. KCC will forward fund these developer contributions plus fund the remaining budget gap of £0.9M from the waste reserve. Capital borrowing remains at the agreed £6.165M.
- 3.1.2 A robust cost plan has been developed for this option by an independent quantity surveyor based upon the detailed feasibility and outline design works undertaken to date.

¹ [Housing Leds Forecast 2021](#)

- 3.1.3 This option proposes to use part of the waste reserve to forward fund developer contributions, as well as funding the remaining budget gap of £0.9M.
- 3.1.4 The use of the waste reserve is considered for this option but not considered advisable for option 2, due to the amount required (which will greatly diminish the reserve) and the longer duration of payback. The Council will require the use of this reserve to mitigate the impacts of the Emissions Trading Scheme in 27/28, of which the liabilities are estimated to be between £12-17M.
- 3.1.5 Whilst this extension to the developer contribution collection period is only five years shorter than the extension proposed in option 2, the risks in this option are spread and much reduced, for the following reasons:
- The Council does not need to borrow the money to forward fund the developer contributions, reducing the amount of interest incurred and charged to revenue.
 - There is no change to the original capital borrowing request, as £0.9M is funded via the waste reserve.
 - The project can be delivered by Summer 2027, which delivers to our operational objectives.
 - Developer contributions are accessible for other services by 2040.
 - Risks related to the developer contributions delivering to the profile continue to exist here, but with the forward funding from the waste reserve, the risk is limited to reducing that reserve rather than incurring additional costs in interest.

3.2 Option 4 Change to a design, build, finance, operate model (not viable).

- 3.2.1 The budget gap would be funded through third party investment and extension of the developer contribution collection period to 2040 (forward funded from the waste reserve). The third-party investment would be recouped by the operating contractor and paid from KCC revenue. KCC would continue to work to secure planning at junction 11 and purchase the land. A contract to complete the construction drawings and operate the site with a financial investment of £0.9M would be procured.
- 3.2.2 Following procurement advice, this option is discounted as the route to market is very limited due to the significant progress that has been made on the project already. The project is already at a detailed design phase, with planning submitted. Any operator that would take on the project under this option is highly likely to want to be involved in the design at an earlier stage, or at the very least review the design and potentially make changes to suit their operations, which would result in delay to delivery. The Council would also need to be very prescriptive over the tender as we only require £0.9m to be invested which does not make this an attractive proposition to the market. For these reasons, this option is discounted.

3.3 Option 5 Procure a commercial facility to deliver the service (not viable).

3.3.1 Best value is continuously assessed within the Council's delivery model for this project. Consideration of a different delivery model was made following KCC, as the Waste Planning Authority, receiving a letter from Countrystyle Recycling Ltd to advise of their intention to build a waste transfer station at their Otterpool Quarry site (2 miles west of the KCC Junction 11 site).

3.3.2 The Quarry facility's suitability was assessed. This concluded that there is a fundamental issue for KCC as the Quarry site does not have the correct permissions to accept KCC's waste, as it can only accept certain types of commercial waste. This is therefore not a viable option for the Council.

4. Analysis of Options

Table 2: 25 Year Whole Life Cost Analysis

Option	KCC Capital Investment	Developer Contributions	EPR/Third Party Investment	Interest on Capital & Dev Con	Interest on Third party investment 4%	Operating Revenue Cost (25yrs)	Land Asset Value at Yr 25	Contract CE claims (FCC Haulage)	Whole Life Cost (WLC) to KCC 25 years	WLC Ranking	Net Present Value	NPV Ranking
1	NOT A VIABLE OPTION											
2	£6,165,000	£9,215,000		£3,835,449		£34,211,990	£3,000,000		£41,212,439	2	£29,217,049	2
3	£6,165,000	£8,311,415	£903,585	£2,495,592		£34,211,990	£3,000,000		£40,776,167	1	£27,983,747	1
4	NOT A VIABLE OPTION											
5	NOT A VIABLE OPTION											

Table 3: Risk Impact Analysis

Option	Political	Economic	Service Delivery	Legal/Commissioning	Local Government Reform (LGR)	Overall Score
1	NOT A VIABLE OPTION					N/A
2	Would require CIL to be ringfenced for Waste until at least 2044/45. This means that other KCC projects would not benefit from CIL funding for longer.	High risk, as CIL receipts are not fixed and this option would require collection for 7 years beyond current Local Plan profiled period. Additional revenue pressure as longer period of borrowing to forward fund CIL monies. Doesn't require additional capital borrowing. Project design to RIBA Stage 3 has been undertaken enabling a robust cost plan to be developed.	Allows WTS to be delivered to meet operational requirements (Spring 2027). Delivery of this site is only possible if F&HDC purchase the land adjacent to the site, which will enable KCC to discharge the requirements of the planning consent with regards to screening.	Low commissioning risk as uses existing frameworks and Contracts for delivery.	Uncertainty over security of future CIL receipts if LGR sees FHDC incorporated into a Unitary Authority during the lifetime of the required receipts. This has a greater impact on this option than Option 3, due to the increased reliance on CIL to close the gap. No guarantee that the new authority would support the project with the same amount of CIL receipts. Operational contract would need clauses allowing it to novate to the new authority.	16
	5	4	1	1	5	
3	Would require CIL to be ringfenced for Waste until 2040. This means that other KCC projects would not benefit from CIL funding for longer. More certainty over developer contributions as 2040 horizon fits with KCC housing forecast and closely with FHDC Local Plan to 2037.	Less reliance on CIL as increased KCC funding. Economic risk is reduced to low as it is spread between funding sources. More certainty over developer contributions as 2040 horizon fits with KCC Housing Forecast and closely with FHDC Local Plan to 2037. No additional KCC capital borrowing is required, budget gap is met by Waste EPR Reserves and extended developer contribution collection period. Project design to RIBA Stage 3 has been undertaken enabling a robust cost plan to be developed.	Allows WTS to be delivered to meet operational requirements (Spring 2027). Delivery of this site is only possible if F&HDC purchase the land adjacent to the site, which will enable KCC to discharge the requirements of the planning consent with regards to screening.	Low commissioning risk as uses existing frameworks and Contracts for delivery.	Uncertainty over security of future CIL receipts if LGR sees FHDC incorporated into a Unitary Authority during the lifetime of the required receipts. Operational contract would need clauses allowing it to novate to the new authority.	12
	4	2	1	1	4	
4	NOT A VIABLE OPTION					N/A
5	NOT A VIABLE OPTION					N/A

3. Med	4. High	5. Very high Likelihood is very high /vulnerable to change. Impacts are catastrophic.
2. Low	3. Med	4. High
1. Very Low Likelihood is very low / proposal is	2. Low	3. Med



Scoring

- 4.1** Table 2 shows the whole life costs over 25 years to range from £40,776,167 to £41,212,439. Option 3 is the cheapest, however, the options are extremely close with a difference of £436,272 between the lowest and highest. A comparison of net present value (NPV) costs also showed the options to be financially close. The lowest being £27,983,747 and the highest £29,217,049, giving only a £1.23M difference between them.
- 4.2** A 40-year whole life cost was considered but discounted as an unsustainable approach due to the changing landscape of waste management, funding uncertainties and population growth forecasts. It should be noted that options 2 and 3 allow KCC to retain long term (26 years+) control of the facility and therefore local waste management arrangements.
- 4.3** As well as assessing the whole life costs and net present value, a further analysis of the options to consider the risks, (which have been broken down into political, economic, service delivery, legal and Local Government Reform) has been undertaken. This is presented as Table 3.
- 4.4** Table 3 shows that option 3 scores the lowest, representing the lowest overall risk to KCC, considering all factors excluding whole life costs. Option 3 has no very high risk impacts identified. It also has the lowest whole life and net present value costs. In terms of service delivery and legal/commissioning risks, this option presents very low risk to KCC.

5. Reasons for recommendation:

- 5.1** Based upon the risk analysis shown in Table 3 and the whole life and net present value costs, **option 3** is the recommended option. Option 3 represents the lowest overall risk to KCC and does not have any very high-risk impacts identified. In terms of service delivery and legal/commissioning risks, this option presents very low risk to KCC. It also has the lowest net present value and whole life costs.

6. Consultation

- 6.1** The project is supported by Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Otterpool garden town promoters.

7. Risk

- 7.1** Political, economic, service delivery, commissioning and local government reform risks are assessed in Table 3. These show the biggest risks for the preferred option 3 relate to political and local government reform ones. Economic, service delivery and commissioning risks have been mitigated through the design work undertaken on the project to date.

- 7.2** Risk considerations have been given to the land required for screening. To mitigate this risk, any option to purchase the land will only be progressed subject to KCC being able to fulfil all the requirements of the planning consent, which includes the purchase of the additional land by Folkestone and Hythe District Council for the screening of the site as detailed in paragraph 1.11.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1** The proposed decision supports Securing Kent's Future as delivery of a Waste Transfer Station in Folkestone & Hythe will allow a sustainable waste service to be provided. Allowing KCC to move away from the current inadequate facilities, negating the need to pay high gate fees and tipping away charges. KCC has secured developer contributions towards this project and utilised frameworks to ensure best value is achieved.
- 8.2** The total project cost is £15.38M, including the cost of purchasing the land. This is financed through the following funding streams:
- £6.165M KCC capital borrowing
 - £0.9M from KCC waste reserve
 - £8.315M developer contributions (£6.81M of which is forward funded by the KCC waste reserve)
- 8.3** A robust cost plan has been developed for the project by an independent quantity surveyor based upon the detailed feasibility and outline design works undertaken to date. Work has been commissioned through existing frameworks to ensure value for money is achieved and financial risks are low.
- 8.4** In addition to capital costs for building the facility, revenue costs for operating the new facility of £1.59m pa will be incurred. To meet this requirement, £661k of these costs will be utilised from within the existing budget for current facilities/arrangements, with the remaining £929k included in the Medium Term Financial Plan in future years as a growth pressure. Financing costs for the element of the capital funding that relates to borrowing are included within corporate budgets.
- 8.5** Spend to date on the project is £492,032. Should option 3 not be progressed, these costs would become abortive and charged to revenue.

9. Legal/Commissioning implications

- 9.1** As detailed in Table 3, progressing with option 3 seeks to utilise existing Frameworks for the build and existing contracts for the operation of the facility. This is considered to pose a low risk.

10. Equalities implications

- 10.1** There are no impacts to equalities at this stage of the project. As and when the detailed design is undertaken an equality impact assessment will be produced.

11. Other corporate implications

- 11.1** We are working collaboratively on the development of the facility with colleagues in Infrastructure.

12. Governance

- 12.1** The Divisional Director of Environment and Circular Economy will inherit the main delegations for this project.

13 Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to:

1. PROCEED with option 3, which is to utilise waste reserve funds to close the budget gap and extend the developer contribution collection period to 2040, thus allowing the continuation of development of the site near junction 11 of the M20.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to approve the capital funding for this project and to the Director of Infrastructure to approve the purchase of the land.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A

14. Background documents

Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision
Appendix B Site Plan

15. Contact details

Report Author: Charlotte Beck
Environmental Infrastructure and
Compliance Manager
Telephone number 03000413388
Email: charlotte.beck@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Matthew Smyth
Director for Environment & Circular
Economy
Telephone number 03000 416676
Email: matthew.smyth@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble, Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment

DECISION NO:

25/00068

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Folkestone & Hythe Transfer Station – Delivery Options

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for the (Kent) Environment, I agree to:

1. PROCEED with option 3, which is to utilise waste reserve funds to close the budget gap and extend the developer contribution collection period to 2040, thus allowing the continuation of development of the site near junction 11 of the M20.
2. DELEGATE authority to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to approve the capital funding for this project and to the Director of Infrastructure to approve the purchase of the land.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Director of Environment and Circular Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

Kent County Council has a legal duty under section 45 of the Environmental Protection Act (1990), as the waste disposal authority, to dispose of the waste collected at kerbside by the waste collection authorities (the districts) within their administrative boundaries. KCC does this by accepting the waste at a site known as a waste transfer station facility.

KCC currently has a temporary arrangement with a contractor (Veolia) at Ross Way, Folkestone, to provide an interim waste transfer facility until 2028. This facility is very small and cannot accommodate all the waste streams collected at the kerbside and, therefore, cannot meet the needs of Folkestone and Hythe District Council as the waste collection authority or KCC as the waste disposal authority. A more sustainable provision is therefore required

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

No direct public consultation undertaken for the project, as it is not a public facing part of the service. The project has included submission of a planning application (ref KCC/FH/0115/2024) to support the delivery of the facility. This has included public and key stakeholder consultation.

The proposal will be considered by Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9th September 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do Nothing – Pause Project rejected due to:

- Expiration of the land option agreement in 2028, wasting design work and expenditures.
- Developer contributions must be used or returned within 10 years, increasing the budget gap.
- Exposure to market conditions, leading to cost increases.
- Increased pressure on existing infrastructure, risking failure in statutory services.

Extend Developer Contribution Collection Period to 2045 rejected due to being financially high risk because:

- KCC would need to forward fund contributions, and CIL projections have not delivered.

- Ringfencing CIL funding to waste infrastructure limits access for other essential services.

Change to a Design, Build, Finance, Operate Model rejected due to:

- Limited route to market due to significant project progress.
- Potential delays as operators may want to review and change the design.
- Unattractive tender due to the small investment required.

Procure a Commercial Facility to Deliver the Service rejected due to the Quarry site not having the correct permissions to accept KCC's waste, only certain types of commercial waste.

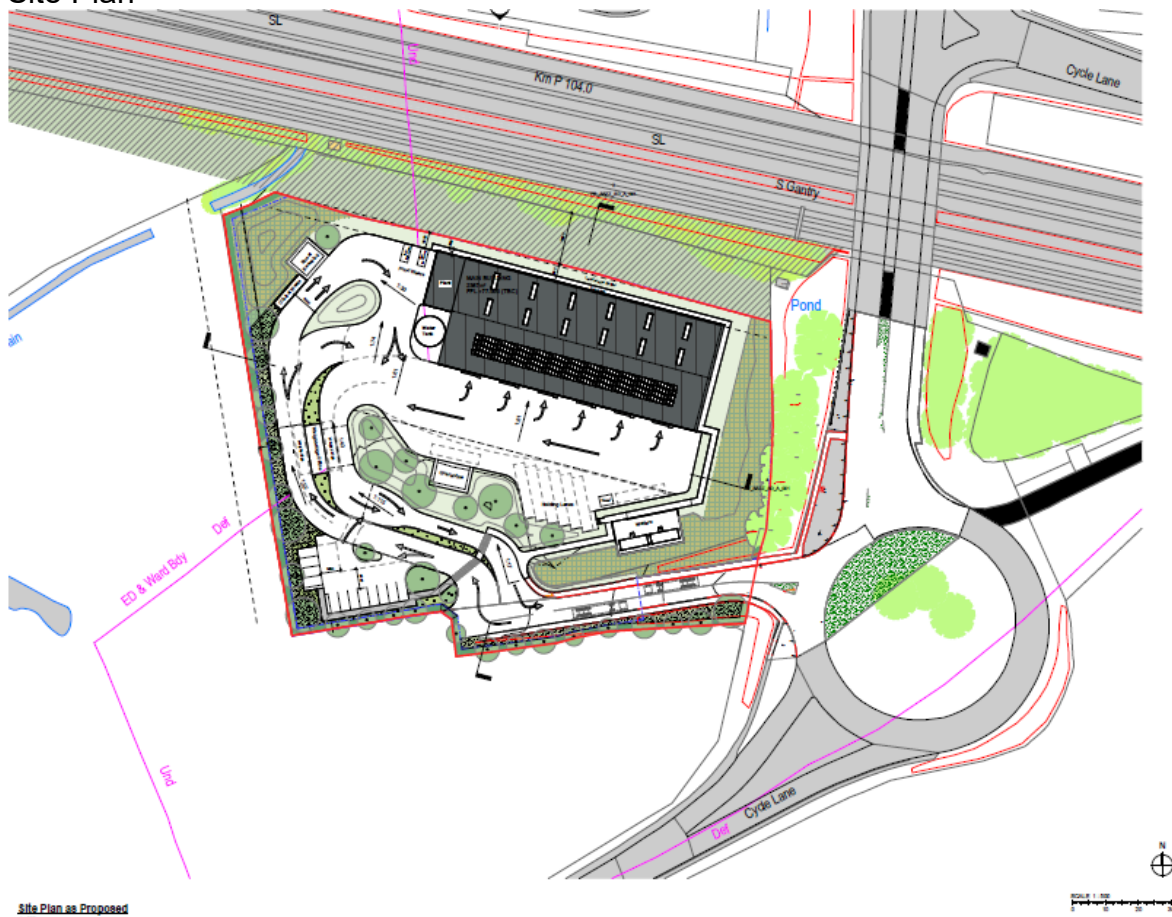
Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

Appendix B

Site Plan



This page is intentionally left blank

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Folkestone and Hythe New Waste Transfer Station Facility

Responsible Officer

Charlotte Beck - GT - ECE

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Susan Reddick - ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

RMCE

Responsible Head of Service

Susan Reddick - ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT - ECE

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the project is to provide a new WTS for the F&H District to secure capacity for kerbside collected waste to be accepted. The WTS is not a public facing service. The project is at design stage. As such no negative impacts have been identified. The EQIA will be updated once the facility has been built, prior to use.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Not Applicable

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

This project is to deliver a WTS which is not a public facing service. Consultation has only been undertaken as part of the planning application submission for the project.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
Service users (Districts) will have a new modern waste transfer station facility that complies with all current legislation. Weighbridges with adjoining offices will negate need for drivers to exit their vehicles when weighing in and out. Staff operating the site will have use of welfare facilities that meet current standards.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable

28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: **Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025**

Subject: **Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy**

Key decision: **25/00075**

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: **For Cabinet Member Decision**

Electoral Division: **All divisions**

Summary: In 2023, Kent County Council was appointed the Responsible Authority for the development of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This paper provides an outline of the Strategy's preparation, in advance of publication in October 2025.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to

APPROVE and ADOPT the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, developed by Kent County Council as the Responsible Authority under the Environment Act 2021, subject to the formal endorsement by relevant supporting authorities

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board to publish the strategy and take any necessary actions to support its implementation and associated monitoring functions.

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment to make non-substantive revisions or updates to the strategy as appropriate during its lifetime

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1 What are Local Nature Recovery Strategies?

1.1 The Environment Act 2021 resulted from the urgent need to respond to the crisis facing our natural environment. The updated State of Nature report¹ in 2023 clearly demonstrated this need²:

- Abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has fallen on average by 19% since 1970.
- Distribution of flowering plant species has decreased by 54% since 1970.
- Distribution of 4,979 invertebrate species has decreased by 13% since 1970.
- Abundance of 13 species of seabird has fallen by an average of 24% since 1986.
- Of 10,008 species assessed, 2% (151 species) are extinct and a further 16% (almost 1,500 species) are threatened with extinction.
- Only one in seven of the UK's important habitats for wildlife were found to be in good condition.

1.2 Given these statistics, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that the UK is currently classified as one of the world's most nature-depleted countries.

1.3 Action to address this is not just needed for nature's sake but also for all the services we get from nature. We rely on the natural environment for the food, water and materials it supplies. It also regulates and supports our environment, by cleaning air, storing carbon, pollinating crops and supplying healthy soils for food production. And it provides society with cultural services of tourism and recreation, which in turn deliver physical health and wellbeing benefits. Many of these services have economic associations in the commodities they generate. In addition to this are the costs that would be incurred if we had to manufacture the benefits they bring.

1.4 Consequently, the Environment Act made a commitment to ending the decline of nature and for nature to recover. In 2022, the government published the Act's associated legally binding targets to protect our environment, clean up our air and rivers, and boost nature. For nature, these were:

- Restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042.
- Halt the decline of species abundance by 2030. Ensure that species abundance is at least 10% greater than 2030.
- Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042.
- Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050.

1.5 Recognising that any recovery of nature would need targeted, co-ordinated and collaborative action at the local level, the Environment Act set out the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies. These were seen as a

¹ stateofnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/TP25999-State-of-Nature-main-report_2023_FULL-DOC-v12.pdf

² The State of Nature report focuses on three measures of biodiversity change: abundance (the number of individuals), distribution (the proportion of sites occupied) and extinction risk. These measures are assessed for hundreds and in some cases thousands of species native to the UK, as the available data allow.

critical new tool for driving the national ambition to increase species abundance and reduce risk of species extinctions.

- 1.6 Across England, 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies are being developed with no gaps or overlaps. They are a landscape scale strategy designed to agree local priorities and actions for nature recovery that collectively will provide a nature recovery network for England.
- 1.7 In 2023, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs appointed Responsible Authorities to lead the development of these Strategies and provided grant funding to cover the costs. The development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is led by regulations and statutory guidance.
- 1.8 The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs guidance states that a Local Nature Recovery Strategy will identify potential measures (actions) that could be taken to support the recovery of nature and specify the areas of the county where action is likely to provide the greatest gains. However, the Strategy does not dictate those actions nor instruct their implementation. It also does not force landowners and managers to make changes to the way they use and manage the land or their operations. Implementation of the proposed action is voluntary, but delivery will be incentivised by linking a range government grants and funding to Strategy priorities and measures.
- 1.9 The guidance also makes clear that whilst a Local Nature Recovery Strategy will have a mandatory role in informing future local plans, the Strategy does not offer any statutory protection to the mapped areas for nature recovery nor prevent development from happening within them.
- 1.10 Also defined by the guidance is the role that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will play in Biodiversity Net Gain³. Biodiversity Net Gain will be more meaningful in terms of nature recovery if gains are not only situated in areas of greatest need but also deliver the action required. The Strategy maps and denotes these areas of “strategic significance” and the Biodiversity Net Gain metric incentivises delivery of the actions in these locations, by placing more value on gains that align with the mapped potential measures.
- 1.11 Following appointment as the Responsible Authority, Kent County Council commenced work in October 2023 to develop a Strategy that would:
 - Agree a set of priorities for nature recovery, with measures to deliver against these.
 - Establish a shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions in Kent and Medway.
 - Provide a framework for joined-up action, developed with those that will be instrumental in its delivery.
 - Set out an ambitious but realistic and deliverable strategy, linked to supporting mechanisms and finance.
 - Spatially frame the strategy for nature, focussing action to where its most needed and will deliver the greatest benefits.

³ Biodiversity Net Gain is a mandatory requirement that aims to make sure that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity. The “gain” is calculated through the use of a standardised metric, which identifies the biodiversity value of the land lost and the biodiversity gained.

- 1.12. The work was overseen by a Board (chaired by Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment), a delivery group and a number of technical advisory groups.
- 1.13 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy statutory guidance clearly sets out the requirements of the document and its preparation, and states it must include:
- Strategy area description – sets the context and provides the justification for the priorities and actions the Strategy proposes.
 - Priorities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity.
 - Priority species – essentially, those species considered significant at either a local or national scale and in most need of recovery action.
 - Potential measures – the proposed actions that will deliver the priorities.
 - Mapped areas of particular importance for biodiversity – essentially, areas already under some level of protection and/or management.
 - Mapped areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity (comprising mapped potential measures) – essentially, nature recovery opportunity areas prioritised at a county-scale.

2 Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – stakeholder participation

- 2.1 A key requirement of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy development was the need for it to be done collaboratively, with stakeholders' and delivery partners' input. It was therefore decided that a participatory planning approach would be adopted from the very start of the work, inviting all stakeholders to participate at every stage of the Strategy's development.
- 2.2 One of the main ways stakeholders have been involved in the development of the strategy is through a series of 20 workshops, held at a variety of locations across the county:
- Pressures and priorities workshops (January-February 2024).
 - Priorities shortlisting workshops (May 2024).
 - Potential measures workshops (May 2024).
 - Health and access workshop (July 2024).
 - Making the Local Nature Recovery Strategies work for local plans workshop (July 2024).
 - Mapping workshops (September 2024).
 - Priority species workshop (October 2024).
- 2.3 The workshops were well attended, with representation from across a wide range of sectors that saw over 900 individuals from over 250 different organisations, bodies, businesses, affiliations etc. These included representatives from:
- Government agencies
 - Local government
 - Parish and Town Councils
 - Conservation NGOs
 - Species recorders and species groups

- Farming and land management
- Landowners (not farming)
- Community groups and individuals (friends of groups, community groups and residents)
- Marine
- Infrastructure
- Academia and education
- Recreation and access
- Business and commercial
- Health

2.4 The community sector has seen the highest level of engagement, followed by farming and land management, conservation NGOs and local government.

2.5 Of course, it is the quality of that engagement which is key, and the project has been overwhelmed by the level of input throughout all the events. Stakeholders themselves have valued the opportunity for this involvement, with many individuals attending all stages of the strategy development.

2.6 This participation was supported by other outreach and engagement work and we estimate that the reach of the project is in the thousands. The work included:

- A regularly updated website.
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- Monthly e-newsletter.
- Project launch.
- Sector specific online briefings at the start of the work and during the public consultation.
- Attendance of many conferences, events and meetings to reach and connect with stakeholders.
- Dedicated farmer and landowner mapping sessions (September 2024).
- Development of a schools learning and activity pack.
- Commissioning of original artwork, to illustrate what the ambitions of the strategy might look like.
- Online surveys.

2.7 Reports from the workshops, and other project outputs, are all available from [Strategy development - background information | Making Space For Nature Kent](#)

3 Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – mapping areas of particular importance for biodiversity

3.1 The map of areas of particular importance for biodiversity was strictly defined by the regulations and only the county's nationally designated sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitat could be included.

4 Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – identifying priorities and potential measures

- 4.1 Before the county's priorities for nature recovery could be defined, it was necessary to identify the pressures and challenges the strategy should be addressing. In addition, what outcomes people would like to see for nature, providing the beginnings of a priority longlist.
- 4.2 At the same time, assessment criteria to aid the prioritisation of this longlist was developed and feedback was sought from stakeholders to ensure this was a fair and equitable selection process. The criteria included whether or not the priority fell within the scope of the strategy to address, and whether it related to one of the pressures identified. Further, the criteria considered the local and national significance of the habitat, the contribution the priority would make to national targets, the urgency of action required, the vulnerability of the habitat to climate change and whether there was opportunity to deliver wider benefits as a result of the priority. This was applied to the priority longlist, creating a provisional 'shortlist' of 69 priorities.
- 4.3 Two further stakeholder workshops were held in May 2024 to review the priority shortlist. Although this engagement did not lead to any further refinement, it did confirm that the priorities provided the right focus for nature recovery in the county. These workshops also led to the development of a structure for the strategy.
- 4.4 The resulting structure was six principles, against which the potential measures would be framed:
- Better – improve the quality of our existing habitats and ensure they are in a healthy and functioning state; better conserve and safeguard what we already have.
 - Bigger – increase the size of our most valuable and important habitat sites.
 - More – establish new, nature-rich sites that not only provide more space for nature but also provide connectivity between existing core sites.
 - Joined up – enhance connections between, and join up, sites.
 - Nature based solutions – work with nature and use natural processes to tackle some of the socio-economic challenges our county faces.
 - Land management and land use – recognising the critical role private landowners, land managers and farmers have in delivering a better, more coherent and resilient wildlife network.
- 4.5 Input from stakeholders also assisted in the agreement that the Strategy's vision would be formed by 10 high level ambitions:
1. Increasing the functional connectivity of high-quality habitats.
 2. Increasing the use of nature-based solutions to environmental and societal challenges.
 3. Land management and land use increasingly delivering nature recovery gains.

4. Species at the heart of habitat management, restoration, extension and creation.
5. Restoring, connecting and extending species-rich grassland.
6. Safeguarding successional habitats from loss and damage.
7. Bringing woodland, trees and hedgerows under active management and increasing cover and connectivity.
8. Ensuring freshwater habitats are clean, sufficient and healthy and restoring catchments' functions.
9. Providing for nature in urban environments.
10. Securing high functioning, natural and connected coastal habitats.

4.6 Underneath each of these sits the detailed, and habitat-specific, priorities.

4.7 Once the priorities were agreed, further workshops were held with stakeholders to identify potential measures (actions) which would deliver against these. Other experts and partners were also consulted, to ensure we had identified the most appropriate and complete set of measures required.

5 Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – mapping areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity

5.1 The final stage of the strategy development was to identify the “areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity”. These are seen as the main purpose of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, identifying strategic locations for the recovery or enhancement of nature.

5.2 The maps focus the delivery of the identified potential measures to where it will deliver the greatest gains for nature, and the greatest benefits that result from having a healthy, functioning environment. These are the areas where the county collectively proposes effort, funding and investment should be targeted to deliver the ambitions and properties of the Strategy.

6 Developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy – identifying the county's priority species

6.1 To ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy sufficiently focussed on the recovery and enhancement of species, it specifically identifies priority species. To do this the work first identified threatened and other locally significant species within the county and then determined which of these species should be prioritised for recovery action.

6.2 This was a challenging task as over 1,500 species were identified in the first stage as being threatened or locally significant. However, the project was very fortunate to have over 30 of the county's species experts involved in the work and from this long list, were able to determine a priority list of 141 species from a broad range of taxa. These were selected not only on the basis of need and urgency but also in consideration of whether action for them would also support the recovery of other species associated with their habitat assemblage. For each priority species, potential measures to support their recovery have been identified.

7 Public consultation and finalisation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

7.1 On 16th January 2025, an 8-week consultation was launched running until 12th March 2025, which received 330 responses.

7.2 Independent analysis of the consultation responses by Lake Market Research noted:

- The consultation received wide input and secured resident views that perhaps hadn't been heard to date, with the majority of individuals responding to the consultation not having been previously engaged in the Strategy development.
- The consultation revealed that those who had previously been engaged, had found it a positive experience.
- There was work to be done to improve the clarity and ease of understanding, with suggestions that the document needs to be shorter, easier to digest and navigate and different versions created for different audiences.
- An encouraging degree of satisfaction with the development process – 65% of all consultees agreed it had been sufficiently comprehensive, participatory and based on the best available information. Amongst those who had participated in the Strategy's development, agreement increased to 77%.
- A low confidence in the Strategy delivering nature recovery but this was largely a result of external factors outside the scope of the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, such as housing development, national policy and funding, rather than any failings with the Strategy itself.
- Strong agreement with the six principles and 10 ambitions, with around 90% of respondents agreeing with each principle and ambition.
- Strong agreement with the priorities and measures; support was particularly high for the potential measures.
- Reasonably strong agreement that the maps target action to the right places in the county and that the areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity focused action to where it should be prioritised.

7.3 In light of the consultation responses, no significant changes were made to the founding elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There have been amendments made in response to comments received – the detail of all changes made (or not as the case is in some areas) are all detailed in the response to the public consultation report.

7.4 All reports relating to the public consultation can be found online at [Public Consultation Reports | Making Space For Nature Kent](#)

8 Final steps and publication of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

8.1 As per the Local Nature Recovery Strategies regulations, prior to publication the final Strategy and maps must be provided to Natural England, the county's planning authorities and our neighbouring responsible authorities (Sussex, Surrey, London and Essex) for a 28-day review period. This provides them with the opportunity to raise a "publication advisory notice" (essentially an objection to publication proceeding) should they a) consider that part of the final local nature recovery strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the

consultation and/or b) consider that the final local nature recovery strategy is materially deficient. Based on our lengthy engagement of, and work with, the county's planning authorities during the preparation of the Strategy, we do not anticipate issues at this stage. This review commenced on 1st September 2025.

- 8.2 We then will notify the Secretary of State of our intention to publish following this review, with publication in October 2025. There will be a Nature Recovery Conference, where the Strategy will be officially launched, in December 2025.

9 Delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 9.1 Following publication, the responsible authority role focuses on supporting the implementation and delivery of the Strategy and monitoring of its progress. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has provided a £135k (p.a.) grant for this new role, which Kent County Council will use to retain the staff resource associated with developing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will ensure the momentum and delivery partner engagement gained during the Strategy's development will be maintained into arguably the more important phase of the work – turning the ambition into action.
- 9.2 These officers are currently working on the development sector-focused toolkits that will support delivery partners' understanding of how the Strategy relates to their areas of influence and/or activity, and how they should use the Strategy to inform action for nature recovery.

10 Options (other options considered but discarded)

- **Option 1:** Publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and support the implementation and delivery of the strategy and monitoring of its progress.
- **Option 2:** Do not publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, or support implementation and delivery of the strategy. This is not an option as this is a legally required document. Kent County Council was provided funding for the preparation of the strategy and hence to not publish would mean re-payment of the grant.

11 Financial Implications

- 11.1 Preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway was covered by a Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs grant of £381,784.
- 11.2 Kent County Council is the Responsible Authority for the preparation of Strategy – it is not directly responsible for delivery of the actions and there are no associated financial burdens in this regard. Kent County Council does have a role post-publication in supporting the implementation and delivery of the Strategy. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs has provided a £135k grant to cover the financial burden of this.
- 11.3 It is understood that national funding, grants and investment will be used to incentivise delivery of the Strategy. This may result in resourcing opportunities to deliver against our own corporate objectives including Plan Tree, Plan Bee

and Plan Sea (in development). Once the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is published, we will undertake a review of our pollinator action plan and tree strategy to ensure they align. Any potential future calls on KCC resource, be it staff time or match funding, will be considered on a case-by-case basis

12 Legal implications

- 12.1 There is a mandatory requirement for all tiers of local planning to take account of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and reflect it in their local plan.

13 Equalities implications

- 13.1 An equalities impact assessment has been completed and is appended to this report.
- 13.2 There are no negative impacts resulting from the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 13.3 The purpose of the Strategy is to recover nature and its habitat and species focussed. However, there will be additional benefits to people that result from a healthy and functioning natural environment. These are applicable to all people, not just those with protected characteristics - but potentially could have greater impacts for these groups when action is targeted in areas known to be in greatest need of these benefits - for instance, the use of nature based solutions to target air quality in areas with poorest quality would benefit all the local population but may have a greater impact on those with a disability protected characteristic where respiratory function is an issue.
- 13.4 All groups will benefit from improvements to the environment and reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding and heat stress. A reduction in these will be accompanied by improvements in health and wellbeing. Health and wellbeing benefits will also come from increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature.

14 Other corporate implications

- 14.1 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy aligns with a number of the authority's strategies, policies, services and land management. Whilst the strategy does not have any delivery implications, it may offer opportunities to secure funding where objectives align, and funding opportunities incentivise their delivery.

15 Governance

- 15.1 Although prepared by the authority, this is not a Kent County Council strategy and therefore formal adoption is not required.

16 Conclusions

- 16.1 Local Nature Recovery Strategies present a framework for nature that is genuinely linked to delivery mechanisms and financing opportunities. Consequently, the opportunity to address the decline of nature in Kent and Medway, focussing on our areas of greatest need and widest benefits, and

inform land use planning, so that nature's needs are fully considered alongside other considerations, is a welcomed one.

- 16.2 The development of the strategy with the extensive engagement of stakeholders who have the potential to influence and/or deliver the strategy's priorities, or who will be impacted by the outcomes, has proved an effective, albeit resource intensive, process. The real success of this approach will only be fully understood once the strategy is published, and we begin to see action occurring.

17 Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment to

APPROVE and ADOPT the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, developed by Kent County Council as the Responsible Authority under the Environment Act 2021, subject to the formal endorsement by relevant supporting authorities

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board to publish the strategy and take any necessary actions to support its implementation and associated monitoring functions.

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment to make non-substantive revisions or updates to the strategy as appropriate during its lifetime

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

18 Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix 1 – Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Appendix 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment for Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

19 Contact details

Report

Elizabeth Milne

Natural Environment and Coast Manager

elizabeth.milne@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Matthew Smyth

Director for Environment and Circular Economy

matthew.smyth@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Wimble, Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment

DECISION NO:

25/00075

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision:** Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for (the Kent) Environment, I agree to:

APPROVE and ADOPT the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, developed by Kent County Council as the Responsible Authority under the Environment Act 2021, subject to the formal endorsement by relevant supporting authorities

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board to publish the strategy and take any necessary actions to support its implementation and associated monitoring functions.

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy Board in consultation with the Cabinet member for Environment to make non-substantive revisions or updates to the strategy as appropriate during its lifetime

DELEGATE authority to the Director for Environment and Circular Economy to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of, and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

Local Nature Recovery Strategies have been created under the 2021 Environment Act and are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement that will underpin England's Nature Recovery Network. In 2023, Kent County Council was appointed the Responsible Authority for the development of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy and have been collaboratively developing the strategy for Kent and Medway.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

On 16th January 2025, an 8-week consultation was launched running until 12th March 2025, which received 330 responses.

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Do not publish the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, or support implementation and delivery of the strategy. This is not an option as this is a legally required document. Kent County Council were also provided funding for the preparation of the strategy and hence to not publish would mean re-payment of the grant

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Responsible Officer

Elizabeth Milne - GT - ECE

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Natural Environment and Coast - ECE

Responsible Head of Service

Helen Shulver - GT - ECE

Responsible Director

Matthew Smyth - GT - ECE

Aims and Objectives

Recognising that any recovery of nature would need targeted, co-ordinated and collaborative action the Environment Act 2021 set in place a requirement for the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS). With 48 of these across England with no gaps or overlaps, each strategy would agree the priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities.

Responsible authorities were appointed to lead on the preparation of these strategies – for Kent and Medway, this was Kent County Council. Although prepared by KCC, the strategy is not a KCC strategy.

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) provides:

- Set of agreed, ambitious priorities for nature recovery.
- Practical and deliverable potential measures that will deliver on these agreed priorities.
- Spatially framed strategy that not only identifies what potential action but also where, focussing action to where it is most needed and where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
- Shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions in Kent and Medway.
- Framework for join-up action, developed with those who will be instrumental in its delivery.

The intention of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to direct action and investment to areas where it is most needed and will derive the greatest benefits. And to steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets.

Although the strategy will have benefits for people in terms of access, health and wellbeing, environmental services/improvements the scope of the strategy is required to focus on habitats and species.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

No

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

No

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Key to the strategy's preparation was a collaborative approach, with responsible authorities required to work with a wide range of stakeholders to agree what should be included. Stakeholders were considered to be anyone who could play a part in recovering nature and the wider environment – consequently it was a broad and wide ranging number of people that participated. Over 1,000 were engaged at some point with the strategy development - 678 of these through workshop participation. The strategy was also steered by a delivery group of partners and there were a number of technical advisory groups comprising experts and partners.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The purpose of the LNRS is to recover nature and is habitat and species focussed. However there will be additional benefits to people that result from a healthy and functioning natural environment. These are applicable to all people, not just those with protected characteristics - but potentially could have greater impacts for these groups when action is targeted in areas known to be in greatest need of these benefits - for instance the use of nature based solutions to target air quality in areas with poorest quality would benefit all the local population but may have a greater impact on those with a disability protected characteristic where respiratory function is an issue.

All groups will benefit from improvements to the environment and reduced exposure to environmental risks such as pollution, flooding and heat stress. Page 150

improvements in health and wellbeing. Health and wellbeing benefits will also come from increased access to bigger, better, more connected areas for nature.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Not Applicable

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

No

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Disability

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Applicable

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race

No

Negative impacts for Race

Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Race

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race

Not Applicable

24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable



August 2025

Executive Summary

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy sets out the county's priorities for nature recovery and the recommended actions to deliver these. This spatially framed Strategy also identifies where in the county this action should be targeted to deliver the greatest outcomes for the county's habitats and species.

This "first of its kind" Strategy for the county has been prepared by Kent County Council, appointed by Defra as Responsible Authority. It is one of 48 strategies across England, with the shared aim of halting and reversing the decline of nature.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway has been developed with extensive input from partners and stakeholders, with over 1,000 individuals attending events designed to enable full participation in the process.

The intention of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to direct action and investment to areas where it is needed and will achieve the most. And, through its role in local planning, it will also help to steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets. The need for this approach has never been greater. We are in a climate and ecological emergency – the 2023 national State of Nature review reported that the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, with monitoring indicating a decline in species abundance of 19% and nearly 1 in 6 species threatened with extinction. The county's own assessment of the state of nature in 2022 mirrored this national trend of species decline, with species being lost from the county and many more threatened, along with their habitats.

Kent is one of the largest counties in England and its complex geology, soils, topography and other environmental conditions has resulted in a varied landscape with a wealth of natural features and wildlife habitats. Many of these areas are designated for their national and international importance. This breadth of habitats supports a rich and varied wildlife. Over 20,000 species have been recorded in the county, representing nearly 30% of all UK species; and over 3,400 of these are rare and threatened species. The county's landscape and wildlife are also a key part of the county's identity and, as evident from the participation in the strategy's development, is very important to many of the people of Kent and Medway.

The Strategy is framed around the Lawton principles and aims to deliver better, bigger, more and joined up. It is also developed on the basis of better consideration of land management and land use, so that we can work with nature and use natural processes to tackle the challenges our county faces.

The Kent and Medway Nature Recovery Strategy has **ten ambitions for nature recovery**, that the more detailed priorities, and their associated potential measures, sit under:

1. Increasing the functional **connectivity** of high-quality habitats.
2. Increasing the use of **nature-based solutions** to environmental and societal challenges.

3. **Land management and land use** increasingly delivering nature recovery gains.
4. Restoring, connecting and extending **species-rich grassland**.
5. Safeguarding **successional habitats** from loss and damage.
6. Bringing **woodland, trees and hedgerows** under active management and increasing cover and connectivity.
7. Ensuring **freshwater habitats** are clean, sufficient and healthy and restoring catchments' functions.
8. Providing for nature in **urban** environments.
9. Securing high functioning, natural and connected **coastal** habitats.
10. **Species** at the heart of habitat management, restoration, extension and creation.

The Local Habitat Map for Kent and Medway spatially frames the Strategy, presenting:

- Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity – areas already afforded some level of protection and management.
- Potential measures mapping – targeting the proposed action to where it will deliver the greatest impacts for nature recovery.
- Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity – areas identified by the collective potential measures mapping as priority for investment support the recovery of nature in the county.

The potential measures are habitat based and will in turn benefit the many species found in the county. But above and beyond this, the Strategy also identifies some 146 priority species requiring bespoke and targeted intervention owing to their rareness, significance or vulnerability. It is expected that the identified targeted action for these priority species will also offer benefits to the wider species of the county.

Whilst the Strategy makes no requirement for its measures to be implemented, it offers a comprehensive guide to nature recovery that will present many strategic and financial opportunities to farmers, landowners, planners, developers, community groups and others, in taking forward the measures.

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not starting from scratch, nor from a point of inaction – we already have significant and important areas for wildlife, many of which are already benefiting from action to protect and enhance. But we're also not starting from a point of perfection. Many of our protected sites are in unfavourable condition, our wildlife is declining, and our habitats are degraded and fragmented. This is why the Strategy's principles start with improving and safeguarding what we already have and aim towards extending and providing connectivity between these areas, giving nature more resilience.

The Strategy is indebted to the extensive contributions of all partners and stakeholders who contributed so much time, expertise and support throughout the process. This now established framework of collaboration for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides a firm footing on which to take the strategy forward following publication.



An introduction to the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy document

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is presented four parts, in line with the statutory requirements. Click on the links to go straight to that section of the document.

Part 1 – What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy

[1. Background to the Local Nature Recovery](#) – why the Strategy has been developed.

[2. Purpose of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) – what the Strategy provides, what it intends to do and what it does not do.

[3. Understanding the elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) – the statutory elements of the Strategy and what they provide.

[4. Informing nature recovery in Kent and Medway](#) – how the Strategy:

- [Directs action for nature.](#)
- [Influences local planning.](#)
- [Influences planning decisions.](#)
- [Influences biodiversity net gain.](#)

[5. Development of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) – outlining how the Strategy was developed, including:

- [Collaborative framework.](#)
- [Identification of pressures and challenges for nature.](#)
- [Agreeing the priorities for nature recovery in Kent and Medway.](#)
- [Developing the potential measures that would deliver the nature recovery priorities.](#)
- [Mapping the potential measures.](#)
- [Creating the Local Habitat Map.](#)
- [Identifying the Strategy's priority species.](#)



Part 2 – Strategy Area Description

1. Kent and Medway's Natural Landscape – a look at the various natural features which comprise the county.

2. Protected areas of Kent and Medway – including National Landscapes and nationally and locally designated areas.

3. What makes Kent and Medway's nature so special – a summary of the habitats and species of note that can be found within the county. More detail on the habitats can be found in Part 3 of the Strategy.

4. A changing landscape – a look at how the county's habitats and species have changed.

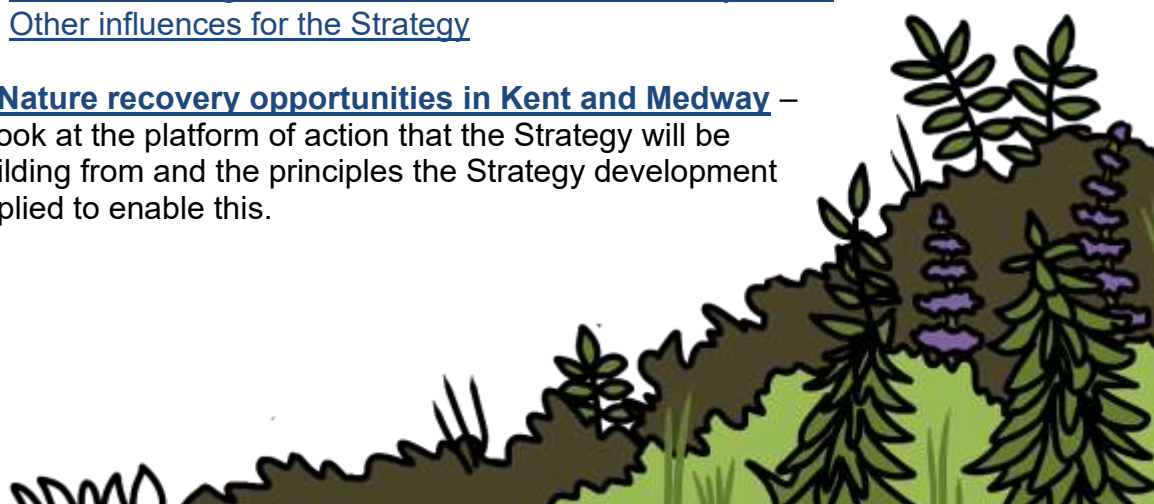
5. Pressures, threats and challenges for Kent and Medway's nature

- Climate change
- Pollution
- Water demand and management
- Human pressures
- Built up areas
- Agricultural practices
- Land management practices
- Game hunting, wildfowling, game fishing and coarse fishing
- Diseases and invasive and non-native species
- Lack of funding and resources
- Lack of data, evidence and understanding

6. Strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- Local strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy – local plans
- Local strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy – other relevant spatial plans in Kent and Medway
- National Strategic context for the Kent and Medway LNRS
- Other influences for the Strategy

7. Nature recovery opportunities in Kent and Medway – a look at the platform of action that the Strategy will be building from and the principles the Strategy development applied to enable this.



Part 3 – Statement of Biodiversity Priorities

Better, bigger, more and joined up – the overarching principles for nature recovery in Kent and Medway.

Kent and Medway’s Vision for Nature Recovery – outlining the Strategy’s ten ambitions for nature recovery.

Understanding the priorities and potential measures – an overview of how the priorities and measures deliver against the Strategy principles.

The priority and measures page layout – how the Strategy priorities and measures are presented and how to use the information presented.

How to use the potential measures and mapping to inform nature recovery – including:

- [Mapping limitations.](#)
- [Identifying action to recover nature.](#)
- [Prioritising action.](#)
- [Using the wider measures maps.](#)
- [Informing biodiversity net gain.](#)
- [Protecting nature.](#)

Connectivity priorities and potential measures – an [overview](#) of habitat fragmentation and the importance of improving connectivity, and presentation of the [priorities and potential measures](#).

Nature-based solutions priorities and potential measures – an [overview](#) of nature-based solutions and the opportunities in Kent and Medway, and presentation of the [priorities and potential measures](#).

Land management and land use priorities and potential measures – an [overview](#) of land management and land use and the opportunities in Kent and Medway, and presentation of [the priorities and potential measures](#).

Habitat priorities and potential measures – an overview of the county’s habitat, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering the habitat; a summary of nature-based solution opportunities and wider benefits of the habitat; and presentation of the priorities, potential measures and priority maps for:

- **Grassland** habitats [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).
- **Successional** habitats [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).
- **Woodland, trees and hedgerows** [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).
- **Freshwater** habitats [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).
- **Urban** habitats [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).
- **Coastal** habitats [overview](#), and [priorities and potential measures](#).

Species priorities and potential measures – an overview of Kent's species; and presentation of the species identified as priorities for the Strategy and the potential measures needed for their recovery.

- [Amphibians](#)
- [Annelids](#)
- [Bees, Wasps and Ants](#)
- [Beetles](#)
- [Birds](#)
- [Butterflies](#)
- [Caddisflies](#)
- [Crustaceans](#)
- [Dragonflies and Damselflies](#)
- [Fish](#)
- [Fungi](#)
- [Grasshoppers, Crickets and Allies](#)
- [Lichen](#)
- [Mammals](#)
- [Millipedes](#)
- [Molluscs](#)
- [Moths](#)
- [Reptiles](#)
- [Spiders](#)
- [True Bugs](#)
- [Vascular Plants](#)



Part 4 – Local Habitat Map

The mapped components of the Strategy's [Local Habitat Map](#):

- Location and extent of [areas identified as of particular importance for biodiversity](#).
- Locations where [potential measures have been proposed](#).
- Location and extent of [areas identified that could become of particular importance for biodiversity](#).

Maps are better viewed online with the [Kent and Medway Nature Recovery Strategy online mapping tool](#).



Part 1

What is a Local Nature Recovery Strategy



1. Background to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

In 2022, the Government published targets to protect our environment, clean up our air and rivers and boost nature were published. These legally-binding commitments pledged to end the decline of nature and for nature to recover. These commitments acknowledged that such action was required not just for nature's sake but also for all the services that we rely on nature for:

- Provisioning – for example, food and drink, water supply and materials.
- Regulating – for example, clean air, carbon storage and pollination.
- Supporting – for example, healthy soils and nutrient cycling.
- Cultural – for example, physical health and wellbeing, tourism and recreation.

Recognising that any recovery of nature would need targeted, co-ordinated and collaborative action the Environment Act 2021 set in place a requirement for the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

With 48 of these across England with no gaps or overlaps, each Strategy would agree the priorities for nature recovery and propose actions in locations where it would make a particular contribution to achieving those priorities.

Responsible authorities were appointed to lead on the preparation of these strategies – for Kent and Medway, this was Kent County Council. Responsible authorities were provided with a grant for the development of the Strategy and were required to follow the Local Nature Recovery Strategy regulations and statutory guidance when preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Key to the Strategy's preparation was a collaborative approach, with responsible authorities required to work with a wide range of stakeholders to agree what should be included.

Stakeholders were considered to be anyone who could play a part in recovering nature and the wider environment – consequently it was a broad and wide-ranging number of people that participated.

By working closely with these stakeholders, many of whom would be future delivery partners, the Strategy would benefit from the input of people who know and understand the Strategy area and what's needed to restore nature and help it thrive. Responsible authorities were expected to provide local leadership to draw together knowledge, expertise and the best available information and data to create an ambitious but achievable Strategy, with practical proposals.



2. Purpose of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides:

- Set of agreed, ambitious priorities for nature recovery.
- Practical and deliverable potential measures that will deliver on these agreed priorities.
- Spatially framed Strategy that not only identifies what potential action but also where, focussing action to where it is most needed and where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
- Shared vision for nature recovery and the use of nature-based solutions in Kent and Medway.
- Framework for joined-up action, developed with those who will be instrumental in its delivery.

The intention of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is to:

1. Direct action and investment to areas where it is most needed and will derive the greatest benefits.
2. Steer losses and impacts away from the county's most valuable natural assets.
3. Maximise the opportunities for development, land use and land management to make a positive contribution nature recovery.

How the Strategy will be used to inform nature recovery is detailed in section 4.

The mechanisms for this are provided by

- A new duty on all public authorities to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies.
- An incentive in how the new requirement for biodiversity net gain is calculated - to recognise the added impact of taking action where the Local Nature Recovery Strategy proposes.
- Integration of Local Nature Recovery Strategies into the planning system, so that areas of greatest potential for nature recovery can be better reflected in planning decisions.
- Funding for specific activities that local nature recovery strategies will be expected to propose locations for.

The Strategy will not:

- Draw localised, detailed boundaries but will identify areas where action is likely to provide the greatest gains.
- Dictate actions or instruct their implementation but will identify potential measures that could be taken to support the recovery of nature.
- Force landowners and managers to make changes to the way they use and manage the land or their operations. But action will be incentivised by linking delivery of the Strategy priorities to a wide range of government grants and funding.

- Prevent development from happening but will inform future local plans, in terms of land use planning, and inform development management, in relation to biodiversity net gain.
- End in 2025 – once published, the real work begins in respect of delivery. Further the Strategy itself will be reviewed, revised and republished on a regular cycle, which must happen every 3 to 10 years.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy is habitat and species focussed and can only include priorities and actions which relate to nature recovery and wider environmental benefits. Consequently, it does not make provision for access nor health and wellbeing. However, it does seek to maximise the benefits to these societal needs of a healthy and thriving natural environment by, where appropriate, directing nature recovery action to where such additional benefits will be most notably felt.



3. Understanding the elements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) is a set of agreed priorities for Kent and Medway's nature recovery, with spatially framed potential measures to deliver these.

A **priority** is the outcome we want to see for nature.

A **potential measure** is the proposed action to deliver the priority – these must be practical and achievable.

The **Local Habitat Map** is a map of the Strategy area that provides a clear visual way for groups and individuals to understand the areas which are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity and the environment to target nature recovery action. The mapped parts include:

- Location and extent of areas identified as of particular importance for biodiversity.
- Locations where potential measures have been proposed.
- Location and extent of areas identified that could become of particular importance for biodiversity.

Areas of particular importance for biodiversity are the strategy area's national conservation sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitat. The areas eligible for inclusion in this map is tightly defined by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy regulations.

Potential measures mapping identifies where the action determined as necessary for our nature recovery priorities should be strategically targeted to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity and deliver the widest environmental benefits.

Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity comprise the extent of the potential measures, with areas of particular importance for biodiversity excluded. These are the areas where the Strategy proposes effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, to achieve the greatest gains for nature and derive the greatest benefits from a healthy, functioning environment. They are the areas of Kent and Medway where targeted action will enable us to deliver on the priorities laid out by the Strategy.

Wider measures are proposed actions which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas or those where it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action. Collectively, these wider measures identify areas of additional opportunities for nature recovery but do not form a part of the formal Local Nature Recovery Strategy's Local Habitat Map.

Priority species are species the Strategy has determined should be prioritised for recovery action. They were identified from an initial list of threatened and locally significant species.

Within the Strategy document you will also find:

- A description of the Strategy area and its biodiversity – with a general overview in the Strategy Area Description and more detail provided alongside the relevant habitat and species priorities in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.
- An overview of how the distribution and extent of habitats has changed.
- Pressures for nature, and challenges to its recovery.
- The national and local strategic context for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- The opportunities for recovering and enhancing biodiversity.
- Wider environmental issues affecting part or all of the Strategy area which changes in land use or management, nature-based solutions, could help to address.



4. Informing nature recovery in Kent and Medway

4.1 Directing action for nature recovery

The Strategy goes beyond ambition, identifying potential measures (actions) for nature's recovery. The Strategy also identifies the areas of the county where this action is most needed or is likely to provide the greatest benefit.

The Strategy maps these measures, and the target areas, in the “areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity”. These maps do not dictate actions nor instruct their implementation – landowners and managers should not read these as enforced changes to the way they use and manage the land or their operations. However, delivery of these potential measures (actions) will be incentivised through a range of government grants and funding and other public and private finance.

4.2 Influencing local planning

4.2.1 National planning practice guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies

In February 2025, the Government published updated planning guidance to outline the requirements in respect of the regard Local Plans should pay to Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are intended to support local planning authorities in preparing local plans that conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment, and local planning authorities have a legal duty to have regard to the relevant strategy for their area. Local planning authorities should consider the priorities set out in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy when determining how their local plan should contribute to and enhance the local and natural environment.

Paragraph 192(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that local plans should identify, map and safeguard areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation. Local Nature Recovery Strategies, prepared by local partnerships, identify these areas and therefore provide an important and ready-made evidence base for the local plan requirements.

Local planning authorities should consider how the areas mapped and identified in the relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the measures proposed in them, should be reflected in their local plan. In doing so, they should consider what safeguarding would be appropriate to enable the proposed actions to be delivered, noting the potential to target stronger safeguarding in areas the local planning authority considers to be of greater importance. This will enable local planning authorities to support the best opportunities to create or improve habitat to conserve

and enhance biodiversity, including where this may enable development in other location.

Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategies can also inform the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Spatial Development Strategies.

4.2.2 Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Kent's local plans

Many of the county's planning authorities already have in place revised local plans and policies, or are well advanced in their process of plan revision. In the absence of anything to the contrary in the February 2025 guidance, it is not expected that the Strategy will be applied retrospectively or supersede any land use decisions already taken, including allocated sites.

It is also important to note that whilst the Strategy has an important role in informing local plans and may be used by local planning authorities to identify areas they wish to safeguard, is not designed as a tool to prevent development nor do the identified "areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity" preclude development. Instead, it will guide development in maximising positive outcomes for nature.

The term safeguard, used throughout the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, does not imply a formal protection nor prevention of potentially impactful activities, unless already identified within an existing and adopted local plan or an already established legal protection. Safeguarding may be delivered by setting aside the land but also refers to the use of active management that prevents loss and damage, the use of buffers to minimise human impacts and connecting habitats to increase resilience. Where measures refer to safeguarding areas, this does not mean that nothing can happen in these areas; rather that appropriate action should be taken within these areas to support the habitats and species they are notable for.

4.3 Influencing planning decision making

The 2025 updated planning guidance states that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is an evidence base which contains information that may be a 'material consideration' in the planning system, especially where development plan documents for an area pre-date Local Nature Recovery Strategy publication. It is for the decision-maker to determine what is a relevant material consideration based on the individual circumstances of the case.

In cases where there is a draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy that has been consulted upon but not yet finalised and published, the draft strategy may contain useful evidential information that can support appropriate decision making.

4.4 Influencing biodiversity net gain

The Strategy will also help the delivery of meaningful biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain is a mandatory requirement that aims to make sure that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity. This “gain” is calculated through the use of a standardised metric, which identifies the biodiversity value of the land lost and the biodiversity gained.

The 2025 updated planning guidance notes that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify areas where habitat creation, restoration or enhancement would be most beneficial for nature recovery and wider environmental outcomes and that the Strategies can play a critical role in supporting offsite gains to be delivered in a way that maximises biodiversity benefits, when these are required to achieve a development’s biodiversity gain objective. This can help to support bigger and more joined-up areas in which our wildlife can thrive.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are designed to promote the delivery of offsite biodiversity gain in the right places, where offsite provision is needed to meet the biodiversity gain condition for a development and it cannot be met in full through onsite habitat enhancements.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy can be used as a key source of information regarding strategic approaches to off-site biodiversity net gain delivery and connections to existing habitat, when local planning authorities are carrying out their functions in respect of biodiversity net gain.

The statutory biodiversity metric formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat’s size, condition, type and strategic significance. Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type. Where a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published, high strategic significance (and the associated score) is applied when:

- the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of the Strategy; and
- the proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the habitat parcel.



5. Development of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

5.1 A collaborative framework for development

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy's preparation was evidence-led and collaborative, with wide involvement of public, private and voluntary sectors.

The work was undertaken in a transparent and inclusive manner, with clear communications at every step.

To support this, a governance and delivery structure was created to ensure that the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

- Met the requirements of the regulations and statutory guidance.
- Benefitted from the knowledge and expertise within the county, to ensure it is technically sound.
- Engaged all stakeholders throughout the whole process, to secure the support and buy-in critical to the successful delivery of the Strategy's priorities.

This structure included:

Project Board – providing political and strategic oversight and governance for the development of the Strategy.

Delivery Group – providing technical and sectoral advice required to steer the preparation of the Strategy.

Supporting Authorities Group – Supporting Authorities for the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy are defined under the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Regulations (2023) as all of the Strategy area's local planning authorities and Natural England. The regulations require the Responsible Authority (Kent County Council) to take reasonable steps to involve, share information with and have regard to the opinions of supporting authorities. Consequently, this group was formed to provide a forum where Supporting Authorities' input to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy can be effectively and efficiently facilitated, in a collaborative manner.

Technical Advisory Groups, focussed groups of the county's experts, for specific elements of the Strategy development, selected on the basis of their technical competency and/or experience, that ensured the soundness of resulting Strategy. The advisory groups were appointed to advise on and support – data, evidence and mapping; species recovery; landowner engagement; and broader stakeholder engagement and communications.

Neighbouring Responsible Authority Group, ensured regular linking in with the Local Nature Recovery Strategies being developed in adjacent counties to enable

join-up of shared priorities where the Strategy areas meet and compatible approaches for the Strategy's development.

Participation forums and workshops for the wider stakeholder base – across the Strategy's development twenty, open to all, workshops were held with the participation of over 1,000 people all contributing to the resulting Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

All elements of the collaborative framework participated at every step of the development process. Throughout all these developmental stages, partners and stakeholders informed and inputted to the process. More detailed information on the development of each stage is provided in Local Nature Recovery Strategy development supporting information, available from www.makingpsacefornaturekent.org.uk

The Strategy is indebted to the extensive contributions of all partners and stakeholders who contributed so much time, expertise and support throughout the process. Appendix 1.1 acknowledges all organisations and individuals who contributed.

Development of the Strategy has followed Defra and Natural England guidance and advice – details of these document can be found in the Reference section.



DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LNRS WAS A *Collaborative* APPROACH, WITH STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDING: FARMERS + LANDOWNERS, ENVIRONMENTAL / WILDLIFE NGOS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, RESIDENTS, BUSINESSES, DEVELOPERS, BIODIVERSITY RECORDING GROUPS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THERE WAS A GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE THAT OVERSAW THE PROCESS:

OVER 12 MONTHS, WE HELD WORKSHOPS, ONLINE BRIEFINGS + QUESTIONNAIRES THAT ENGAGED OVER 1000 PEOPLE IN TOTAL

TOWN + PARISH COUNCILS

PROJECT BOARD
STRATEGIC + POLITICAL OVERSIGHT

DELIVERY GROUP
TECHNICAL + SECTORAL ADVICE, STEERING A DELIVERABLE STRATEGY

ENVIRONMENTAL + WILDLIFE NGOS
LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES + NATURAL ENGLAND + SHARING INFORMATION + OPINIONS ON DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECT

TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUPS (TAGs)

- DATA, EVIDENCE + MAPPING TAG
- SPECIES RECOVERY TAG
- LANDOWNER + FARMER TAG
- ENGAGEMENT + COMMUNICATION TAG
- COUNTRY'S EXPERTS - PROVIDING SPECIFIC TECHNICAL GUIDANCE TO ENSURE SOUNDNESS OF THE STRATEGY

8 CREATED A LOCAL HABITAT MAP, SHOWING AREAS THAT ARE, OR COULD BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR NATURE...

7

CREATED A MAP OF AREAS THAT COULD BECOME OF IMPORTANCE FOR BIODIVERSITY (ACIB)...

1 MAP OF AREAS OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE FOR BIODIVERSITY (APIB) WAS ESTABLISHED...

2 IDENTIFIED THE PRESSURES + CHALLENGES FOR BIODIVERSITY...

3 CREATED A LONGLIST OF OUR PRIORITIES FOR NATURE...

4 REFINED LONGLIST TO MAKE A SHORTLIST FOR LNRS PRIORITIES...

5 DEVELOPED POTENTIAL MEASURES (OR ACTIONS) THAT WOULD DELIVER THE LNRS...

6 WE MAPPED THE POTENTIAL MEASURES...

5.2 Identification of pressures and challenges for nature

The starting point for the development of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy was to determine the key issues the Strategy needed to consider when setting priorities for nature recovery – what the Strategy should be responding to and the actions needed to address these. Through a series of workshops, stakeholders identified pressures, threats and challenges facing the county's biodiversity both now and as anticipated into the future.

These pressures and challenges are discussed further in Part 2 chapter 5.

5.3 Agreeing the priorities for nature recovery in Kent and Medway

At the same time as determining the pressures and challenges for the county, stakeholders also outlined the outcomes they would like to see for nature – what a county with recovered habitats and restored species populations would look like. This created the initial longlist of potential priorities.

Criteria to aid the prioritisation of this longlist was developed, with input from stakeholders to ensure this was a fair and equitable selection process. Refinement against the criteria selected priorities that:

- Were within the scope of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy remit and ability to affect.
- Addressed key pressures and challenges.
- Related to habitats and/or species of national or local significance.
- Contributed to national targets and/or supported local targets (as identified by the review of national and local strategies and plans – see Part 2 chapter 6 for further detail).
- Were urgent, related to climate change vulnerability and/or presented opportunity for nature-based solutions.

Further workshops were held to review the draft priorities. Although this did not lead to any further refinement, it did confirm that the priorities provided the right focus for nature recovery in the county.



5.4 Developing the potential measures that would deliver the nature recovery priorities

Potential measures were also developed with stakeholders – this ensured that future action for the county’s nature was based on expert and experienced input, meaning the measure would be both appropriate and deliverable. To support this work, the strategy and plans review highlighted where existing ambitions and targets for the county could be aligned with, and supported by, the future measures of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (see Part 2 chapter 6).

Potential measures were also taken from the number of Local Nature Recovery Strategy guidance documents produced by nature conservation and species charities and groups (Part 2 chapter 6), and reference was made to eligible actions under the various Environmental Land Management funding streams.

5.5 Mapping the potential measures

The purpose of mapping of the potential measures is to determine where in the county effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, in order to achieve the most for biodiversity and the wider environment.

The potential measures mapping was created by an iterative process which is outlined below.

5.5.1 Initial approach to mapping of potential measures

Available data and evidence to inform and define the mapping of each potential measure was reviewed, to determine whether or not the measure could be mapped as per the statutory prerequisites of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. These require the Strategy to be ambitious in proposing change but also realistic in the need to concentrate effort where it will have most benefit. The guidance notes that indiscriminate or widespread mapping of areas will not aid the targeting of available resources and therefore when considering feasible locations, it should be considered which would have the greatest impact on achieving the priorities and which would achieve greater connectivity.

5.5.2 Ensuring the value of the whole county to nature recovery was represented by the maps

The initial approach of only mapping measures that could be sufficiently refined in order to meet the Local Nature Recovery Strategy mapping requirements, meant that some areas of the county appeared to have no potential or importance for nature recovery. This was not the case and instead represented areas where measures largely related to improving management (and therefore there was little on which to prioritise one area over another), or the available data just simply wasn’t sufficient to enable the required refinement. But stakeholders viewed this as problematic and unrepresentative of the actual value of these areas to nature recovery.

The approach was therefore taken to categorise the measures based on whether they led to targeted and defined action or whether they applied more widely across the county, with some mapping possible albeit only to the extent of basing opportunity on existence of habitat type or potential for that habitat type. In some cases, potential measures were not mapped at all as they could be applied widely across the Strategy area, with little spatial limitations. These measures have been included under the land management principles for each priority. Measures therefore are either:

- Potential measure – the proposed action has been identified to an area or areas that will have the greatest impact on achieving the priorities and which would achieve greater connectivity. Collectively, these potential measures identify areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity and are a constituent part of the formal Local Nature Recovery Strategy's Local Habitat Map.
- Wider measure – a proposed action which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas or it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action. Collectively, these wider measures identify areas of additional opportunities for nature recovery but do not form a part of the formal Local Nature Recovery Strategy's Local Habitat Map.

The data and mapping approach for each potential measure can be found in Appendices 1.2 and 1.3.

5.5.2 Refining and reviewing the maps

The potential measures mapping was reviewed and refined with stakeholders and partners through a series of workshops and meetings, including direct discussions with landowners, local planning authorities and other delivery partners and decision-making bodies. This provided extensive local knowledge and expertise, which allowed some ground truthing of the desk-based mapping work, further focussing and targeting to more defined areas and the consideration of deliverability in the areas proposed.

Additional refinement of the potential measures mapping focussed on opportunities to address wider environmental challenges by nature-based solutions; other wider benefits such as health and access; and opportunities to build on existing action or delivery. The final data and mapping approach for each potential measure can be found in Appendices 1.2 and 1.3.

5.5.3 Mapping potential measures to nationally designated sites

Potential measures have been mapped to areas of particular importance for biodiversity. It is recognised that the majority of designated sites in the county (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and National Nature Reserves) will already have in place management plans and approaches, with some of these designed to maintain and/or protect the feature(s) the site is designated for. It would therefore not be appropriate for the mapped potential measure to override anything already in place. This is

particularly the case where the potential measure relates to the creation of habitat. However, the potential measures mapping has been designed to deliver a coherent network for nature recovery across the Strategy area and therefore it was determined that measures mapped to designated areas should be retained, so their appropriateness can be considered at the point of planning for delivery or when and if the management plan is reviewed. How potential measures may be applied to nationally designated sites in the future, will be an ongoing point of discussion during the Strategy's delivery, monitoring and review phases.

5.5.4 Inclusion of areas identified for development

During the development of the mapping, the work questioned whether local plan site allocations, which identify specific locations for future development, should be excluded from the potential measures mapping and, consequently, the "areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity". In agreement with the county's local planning authorities, it was agreed that such sites would not be excluded, for the following reasons:

- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not instruct what should happen on land, rather it informs. Therefore, overlap with a potential measure does not prevent development from occurring on that land. It does however offer direction on what measures for nature could be integrated within the development site to aid nature recovery.
- If allocated sites were removed, it would undermine the integrity of the Strategy and its role in biodiversity net gain – that being to identify strategically significant areas for nature and inform strategic significance within the metric. The potential measures will also indicate what actions (gains) would be most beneficial – removal would result in missing the opportunity to steer onsite biodiversity net gain.
- Removal of allocated sites would give the message that nature has no place within development or growth, suggesting that the two are incompatible. Planned and designed correctly, necessary development has the potential to contribute to nature recovery efforts and removal of future sites would undermine this.
- The potential measures mapping identifies opportunities for nature-based solutions, which can assist developers in finding solutions to challenges on site.

For the same reason, sites where development is coming forward were also included.

For sites where development has already been through the planning process or where construction is underway, it was determined that these would be excluded except for measures which fell under priorities relating to urban, successional, connectivity, freshwater and coastal. It was considered that measures under these priorities would still be applicable on newly developed land in the future.

5.5.5 Online tools to spatially capture existing and future nature recovery action

Using online mapping tools, stakeholders were asked to let the project know where in the county nature recovery action was already taking place and where in the county they wished to see action, and what. The intention was to use this information in the refinement of the potential measures mapping, using it as an indication of where gains could be built on and where delivery may be more achievable, based on an expressed interest.

However, although there was a good response and useful information was captured, it was considered too sporadic and incomplete a picture to confidently base the mapping of potential measures on.

Whilst it was considered not appropriate to use the data to refine the location of potential measures in a strategic context, the data will be useful in the delivery of the measures and can be used to indicate where efforts to deliver potential measures might be best focused in the first instance.

5.5.6 Mapping more than one potential measure to the same location

In some instances, more than one measure has been mapped to the same location. The Strategy has done this for a number of reasons:

- One measure does not necessarily preclude the delivery of another – the Strategy is aiming to maximise benefits for both biodiversity and wider environmental gains; it is also looking to create a mosaic of different habitats and stages of habitats, necessary for the recovery of nature and supporting the life stages of many of the county's threatened and vulnerable species.
- The mapping of potential measures has been desk-based and theoretical, albeit with the input of partners and experts who have an in depth understanding of the county's ecology. However, the appropriateness of a measure to a location can only really be guaranteed with up-to-date knowledge and/or assessment of the land itself. Hence the Strategy sets out the best option or options for nature recovery but does not make assumptions on what measure should be prioritised over another. There should be full consideration before taking action, and ideally with the guidance of a suitable expert/professional.
- Mapping more than one potential measure to a location will support the development of both small-scale (one action, one habitat, on species) project but also those that are larger, long-term and more ambitious in scale.
- Preference over measures does not just come from an ecological perspective. There may be actions that are more palatable to a landowner than other, because of impacts on current and future uses of the land and also financial benefits of one action over another. Having more than one potential measure mapped to a location, all of which will deliver benefits for nature recovery, maximises the opportunity for an action to be picked up.

5.6 Creating the Local Habitat Map

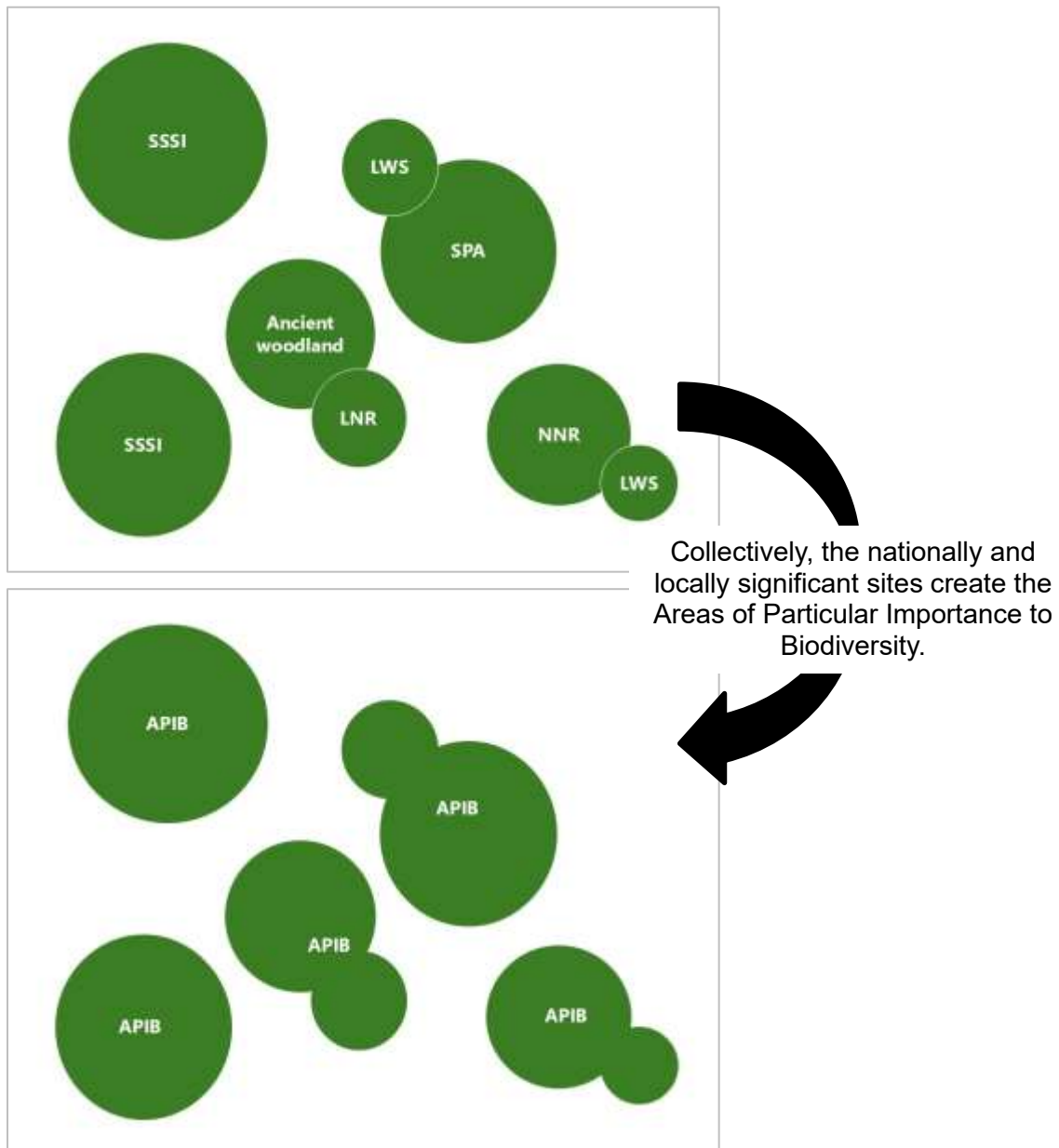
The local habitat map illustrates the county's Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity.

5.6.1 Areas of particular importance for biodiversity

Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity are defined by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy statutory guidance as:

- National conservation sites.
- Local nature reserves.
- Local wildlife sites.
- Areas of irreplaceable habitat – for the purposes of this mapping, areas of irreplaceable habitat were defined as those included in the Biodiversity Net Gain irreplaceable habitats list, namely: Ancient woodland; Ancient and veteran trees; Blanket bog; Limestone pavements; Coastal sand dunes; Spartina saltmarsh swards; Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub; Lowland fens.

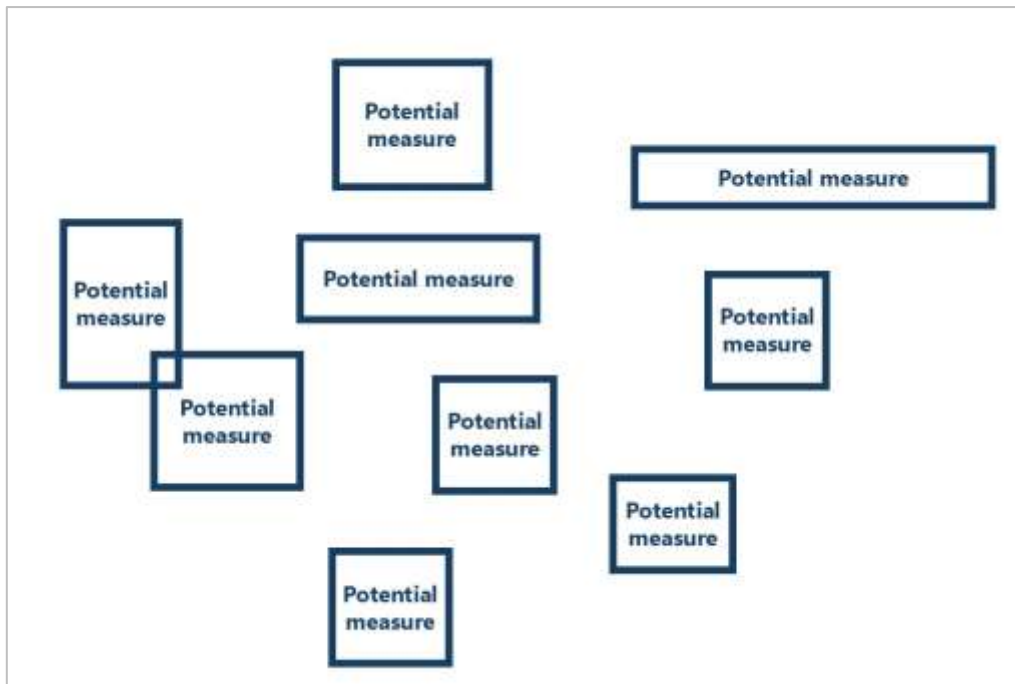




5.6.2 Areas that could become of particular importance for biodiversity

Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity are where the Strategy proposes effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, to achieve the greatest gains for nature and derive the greatest benefits from a healthy, functioning environment. They are the areas of Kent and Medway where targeted action will enable us to deliver on the priorities laid out by the Strategy.

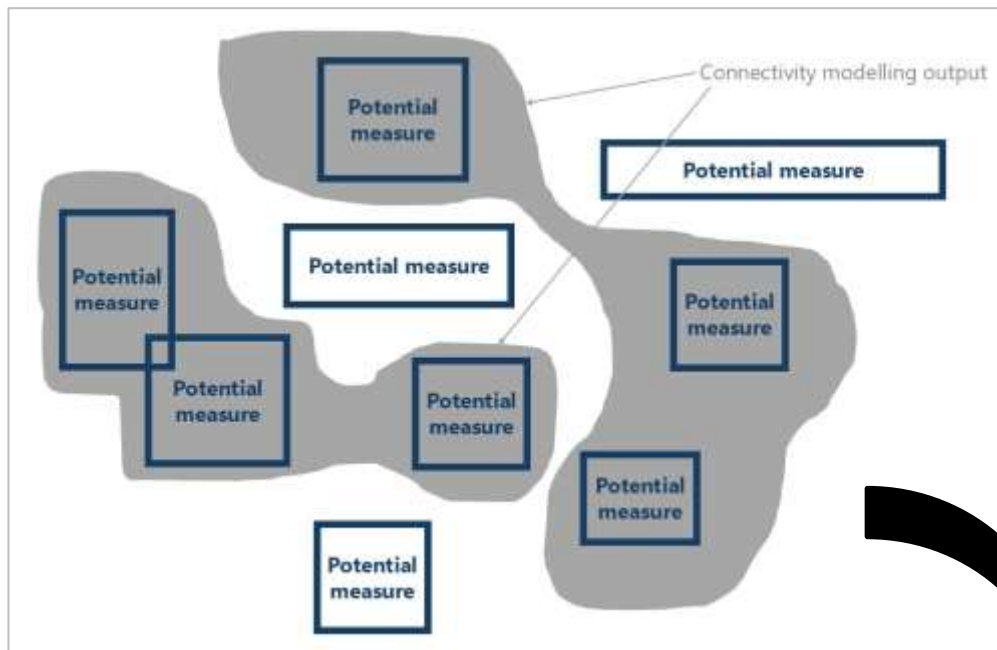
The first stage in mapping the Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity was the mapping of the potential measures.



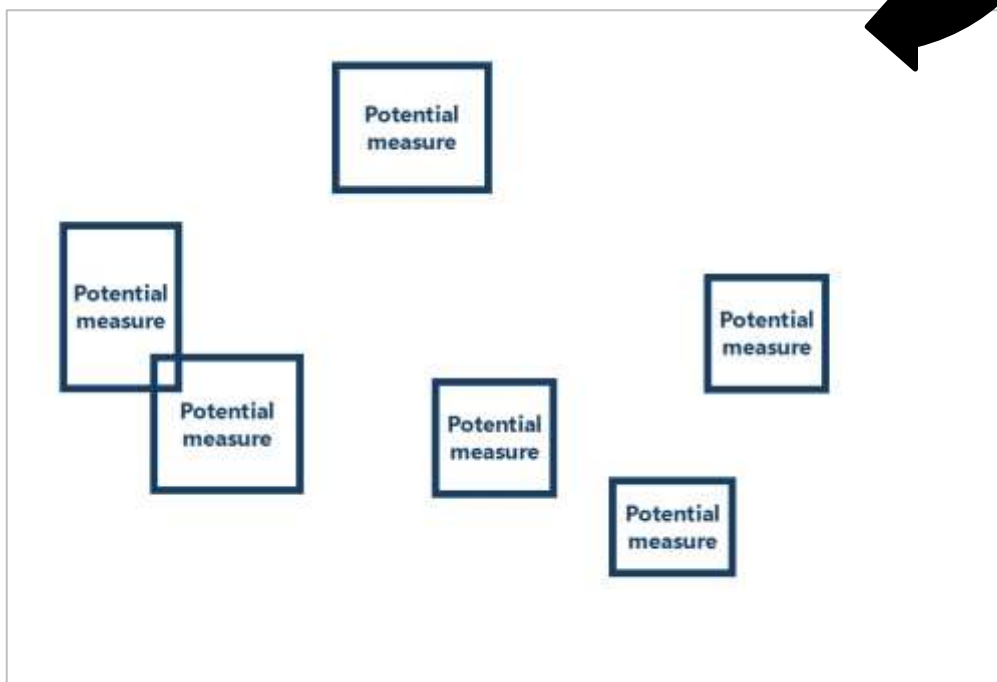
However, despite best efforts to focus the mapping of potential measures, the resulting draft Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity were considered to have too broad a coverage to satisfy the purpose of the Strategy's spatial element – that being to effectively and efficiently target available resources.

To address this, connectivity modelling was used to refine and target action further, with priority given to potential measures located in areas of low species flow and connectivity bottlenecks and where action would provide buffering/linking of existing Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity. The rationale for this approach being that a more “joined up”, connected landscape was the ultimate ambition of the Strategy, if the applied Lawton principles are considered a hierarchy of going from better to joined up.

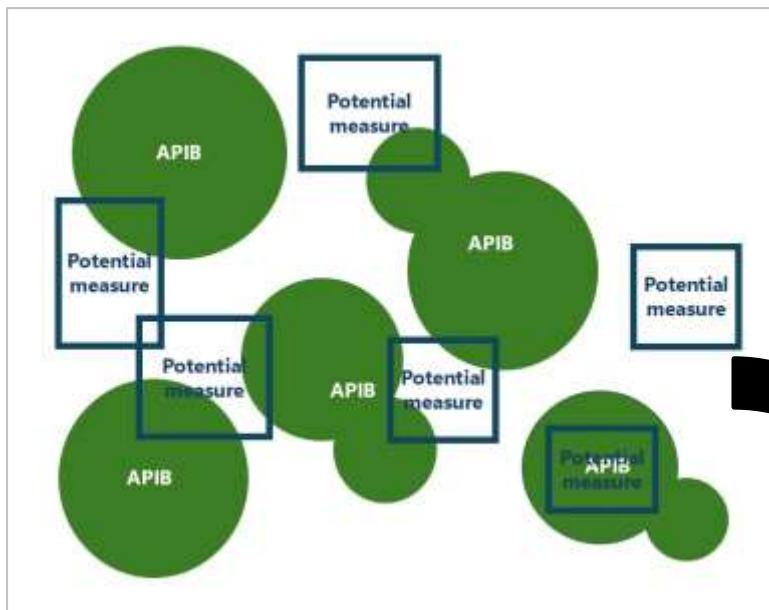




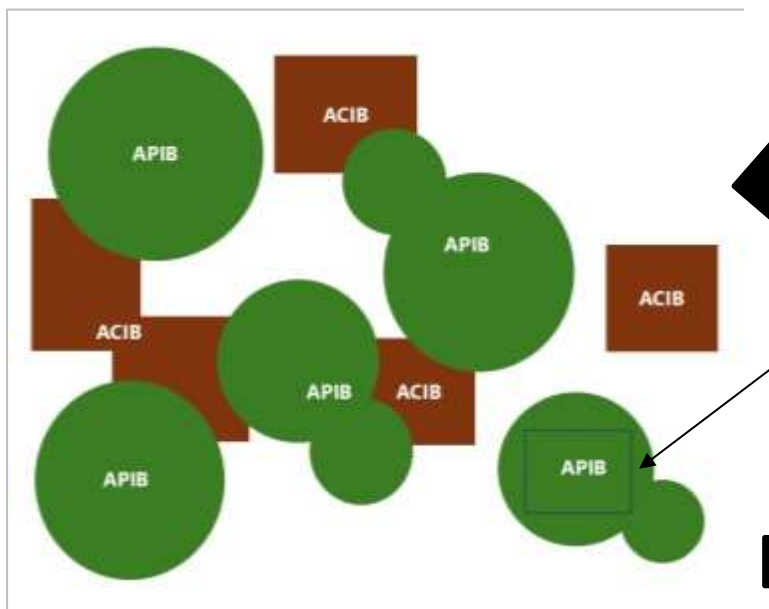
Refined potential measures mapping, retaining only those located in connectivity modelled target areas.



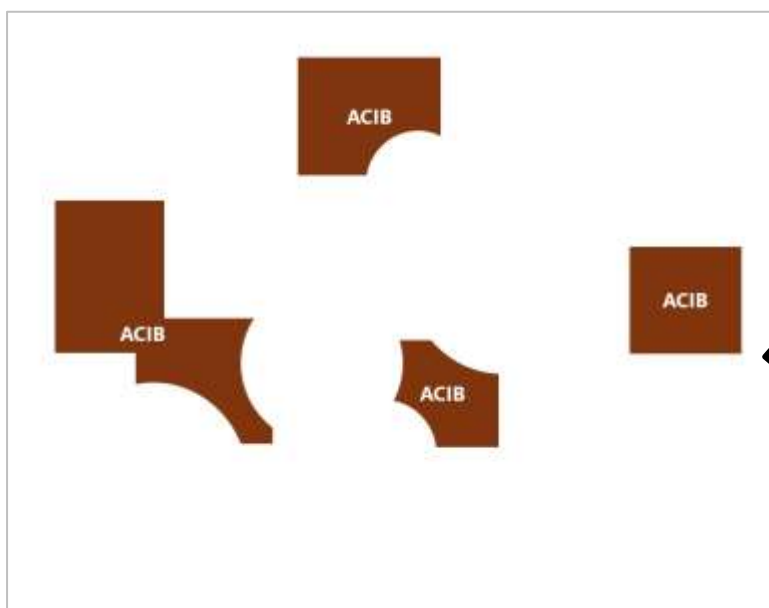
To create the Areas that Could become of particular Importance to Biodiversity, the refined potential measures mapping was laid over the Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity to identify where the Areas that Could become of particular Importance to Biodiversity could not be situated, given that the areas of existing importance cannot overlap with the areas of opportunity.



By cutting the area of the mapped potential measure so that it does not overlap with the areas of particular importance to biodiversity, the areas that could become of particular importance of biodiversity are defined.



This potential measures will not be mapped to the areas that could become of particular importance because it completely falls within the areas of particular importance.

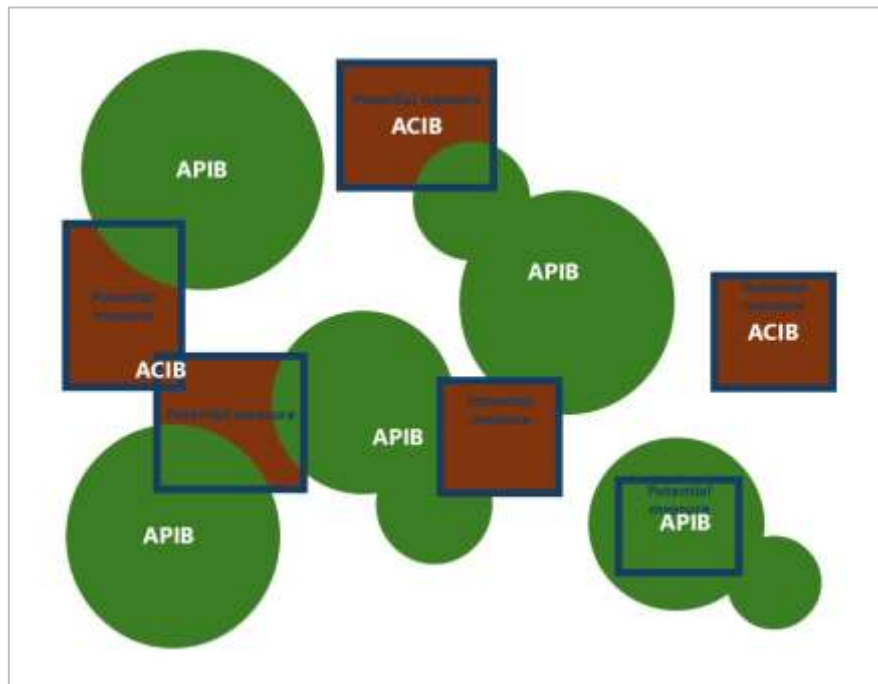


The resulting mapping layer denoting areas that could become of particular importance of biodiversity.

5.6.3 The Local Habitat Map

The Local Habitat Map brings all these mapping components together and presents:

- Location and extent of Areas identified as of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (in the illustration below, in green).
- Locations where potential measures have been proposed (in the illustration below, in blue outline).
- Location and extent of Areas identified that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity (in the illustration below, in brown).



5.7 Identifying the Strategy's priority species

5.7.1 Creating the Local Nature Recovery Strategy species longlist

To identify the county's priority species, a long list of species was first compiled. Species in the long list were selected against Natural England criteria, designed to enable Local Nature Recovery Strategies to contribute to the national species extinction risk targets of:

- Halt the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030.
- Increase species abundance by the end of 2042 so that is greater than in 2022 and at least 10% greater than in 2030.
- Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022.

As such, species which met the following criteria were to be included on the species longlist:

- Any native species which have been assessed as Red List Threatened or Near Threatened against IUCN criteria, at a Great Britain scale.
- Any native species which have not been formally assessed against IUCN Red List criteria but where strong evidence is provided to show that they would meet the criteria for Threatened status in Great Britain.
- Any native species considered to be nationally extinct that re-establish themselves or are rediscovered.
- Any native species which Natural England suggest as suitable candidates for conservation translocation, or any native species already subject to translocation efforts that, on Natural England's advice, need to be scaled up to maximise success.
- Other species of local significance which have not yet been Red List assessed or lack approved Red Lists but for which there is strong evidence to show – or in the absence of this, authoritative expert opinion – that they would meet criteria for Threatened status.

The Natural England guidance notes that there are roughly 2,000 species in England which meet these criteria. When species present in Kent were assessed and other species of local significance added, there were 1,503 species in the long list, demonstrating the value of Kent and Medway to supporting rare, threatened and significant species.

5.7.2 Identifying the Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species were identified by a technical advisory group, comprising over 37 of the county's species specialists, including county recorders. The work was led by the Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre.

In the first instance, the long list was assessed to determine which of the species the Local Nature Recovery Strategy could best support. Species fell into three categories:

1. Requires better, bigger, more or connected habitat but did not require specific or targeted recovery measures.
2. Requires specific and targeted habitat management, improvements in environmental quality and/or bespoke conservation actions.
3. Requires better evidence/understanding before necessary action can be determined, action outside England and/or is a vagrant or occasional visitor.

Those in category one were considered to be species that would benefit from the overall delivery of the Strategy's principles and did not require specific habitat measures – 466 species from the longlist were assessed to fall into this category. Those in category three were considered to fall outside the scope of the Strategy's influence at this point in time – 161 species from the longlist were assessed to fall into this category. Therefore, only species which fell into category two (444 species

from the long list) were assessed by the final selection criteria to create a short list of potential priority species. The selection criteria were:

- Urgency of recovery requirements.
- Significance of strategy area nationally and internationally to the conservation of the species.
- Scale of effort required.
- Associated benefits to other wildlife and wider environment.
- Vulnerability to climate change.
- Species needs support tracking or adapting to changing climate.
- Ability to build on existing local, regional and/or national initiatives.
- Local expertise knowledge of other reasons outside above criteria that qualifies species for shortlisting as potential priority species.

The species shortlist was then considered in depth by the species technical advisory group to nominate priority species. This stage of the work included further scrutiny and input via a dedicated workshop, attended by additional species experts and delivery partners. Priority species were selected from the shortlist in consideration of the habitats they were associated with, and which species would deliver action that would have broader impact than just for that individual species alone.

5.7.3 Presentation of the Kent and Medway priority species

The non-statutory guidance on priority species for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy recommends that only species that require bespoke measures are identified and that these bespoke measures are presented alongside the relevant species. However, acknowledging that many of the habitat measures designed for the benefit of a priority species offer wider benefits to other species of that habitat assemblage, it was determined that these should be embedded into the habitat potential measures.

Consequently, a number of the Kent and Medway priority species, whilst meeting the criteria as a priority, seemingly do not have dedicated potential measures – these are noted in this chapter as priority species requiring broad habitat measures, and the relevant habitat priority is identified alongside these. Where a species requires a bespoke measure that will only benefit that particular species, these are noted in this chapter as priority species requiring bespoke measures – the bespoke measures for the priority species are provided in Appendix 3.1.



5.7.4 Mapping potential measures for the Kent and Medway priority species

Mapping of potential measures for the Strategy's priority species has not been developed, due to the complex nature of the bespoke action required.

To aid locating where action could be taken, priority species heat maps were developed for the following habitat assemblages:

Strategy habitat group	Priority species habitat assemblage maps
Grassland habitats	- Arable. - Chalk grassland. - Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. - Heathland. - Lowland meadows.
Successional habitats	- Scrub and open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (brownfield).
Woodland, trees and hedgerows	- Woodlands. - Ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland and traditional orchard.
Freshwater	- Rivers and streams. - Standing open water. - Swamp, reedbed and wet woodland.
Urban	- Urban.
Coastal	- Littoral sediment. - Maritime cliff and slope. - Sand dunes and vegetated shingle.

The maps have been created based on a heat map of priority species density for the habitat assemblage, enhanced with modelling to predict species density in areas that are unrecorded. The initial maps were reviewed and refined with the county's species experts.

The maps identify the areas considered to offer the most benefits for priority species, using the density of priority species for that habitat assemblage as a proxy. The maps are indicative and are intended to provide additional and supporting information for delivery; consequently, they should be used in consultation with species experts.



Part 2

Strategy Area Description



1. Kent and Medway's Natural Landscape

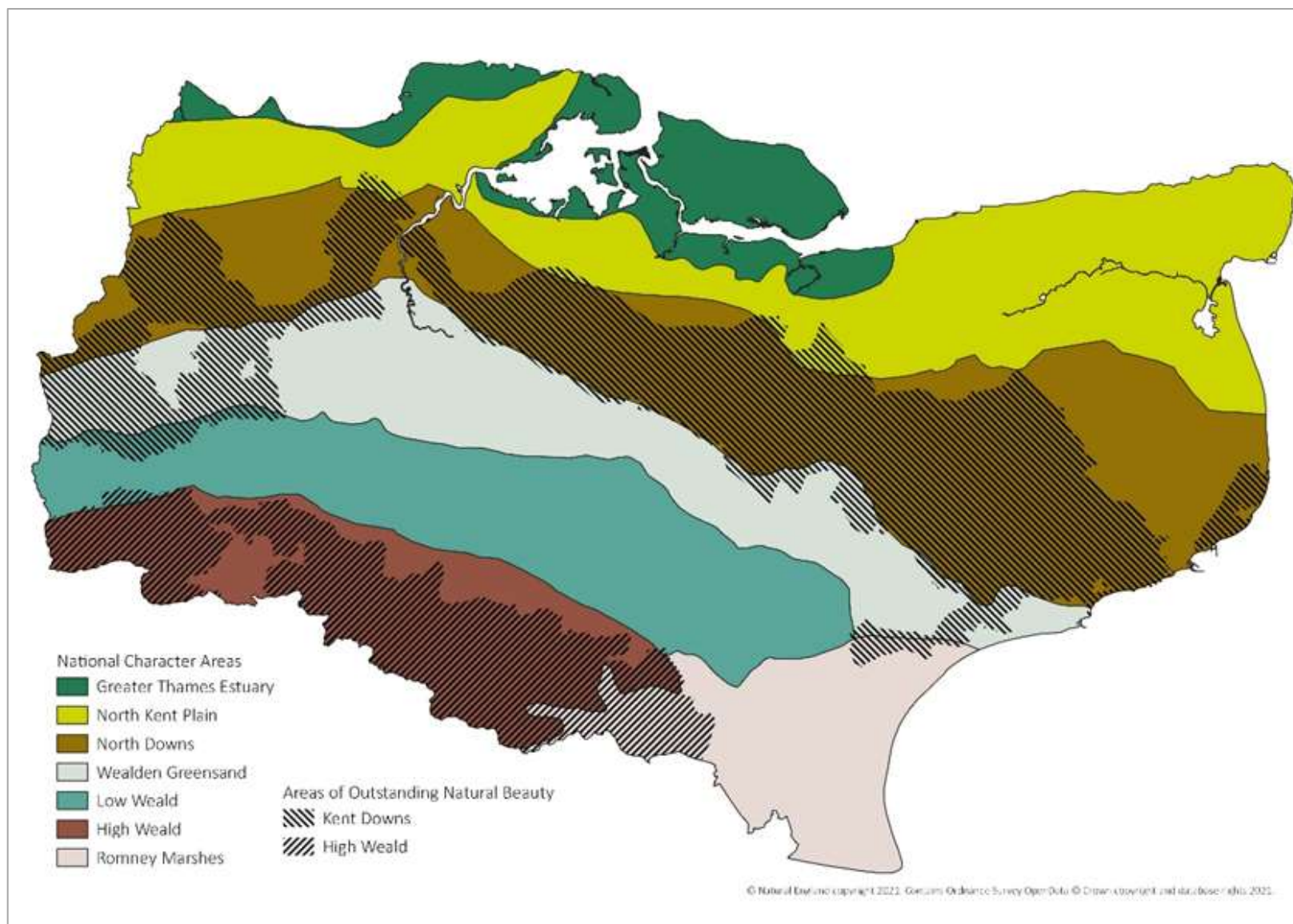
When looking at an area on a large scale, and for the purposes of nature recovery, it is important to look at natural and functional areas, rather than those defined by administrative boundaries.

The National Character Areas provide a means of considering the area at a strategic scale. These follow natural lines in the landscape, defined by a unique and shared combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, cultural and economic activity. The Kent and Medway Strategy area has seven distinct national character areas (NCA):

- Greater Thames Estuary (NCA81)
- North Kent Plain (NCA113)
- North Downs (NCA119)
- Wealden Greensand (NCA120)
- Low Weald (NCA 121)
- High Weald (NCA122)
- Romney Marshes (NCA123)

The Strategy area also includes two National Landscapes (formerly known as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) – the Kent Downs and the High Weald.





The National Character Areas of Kent and Medway and the county's National Landscapes.

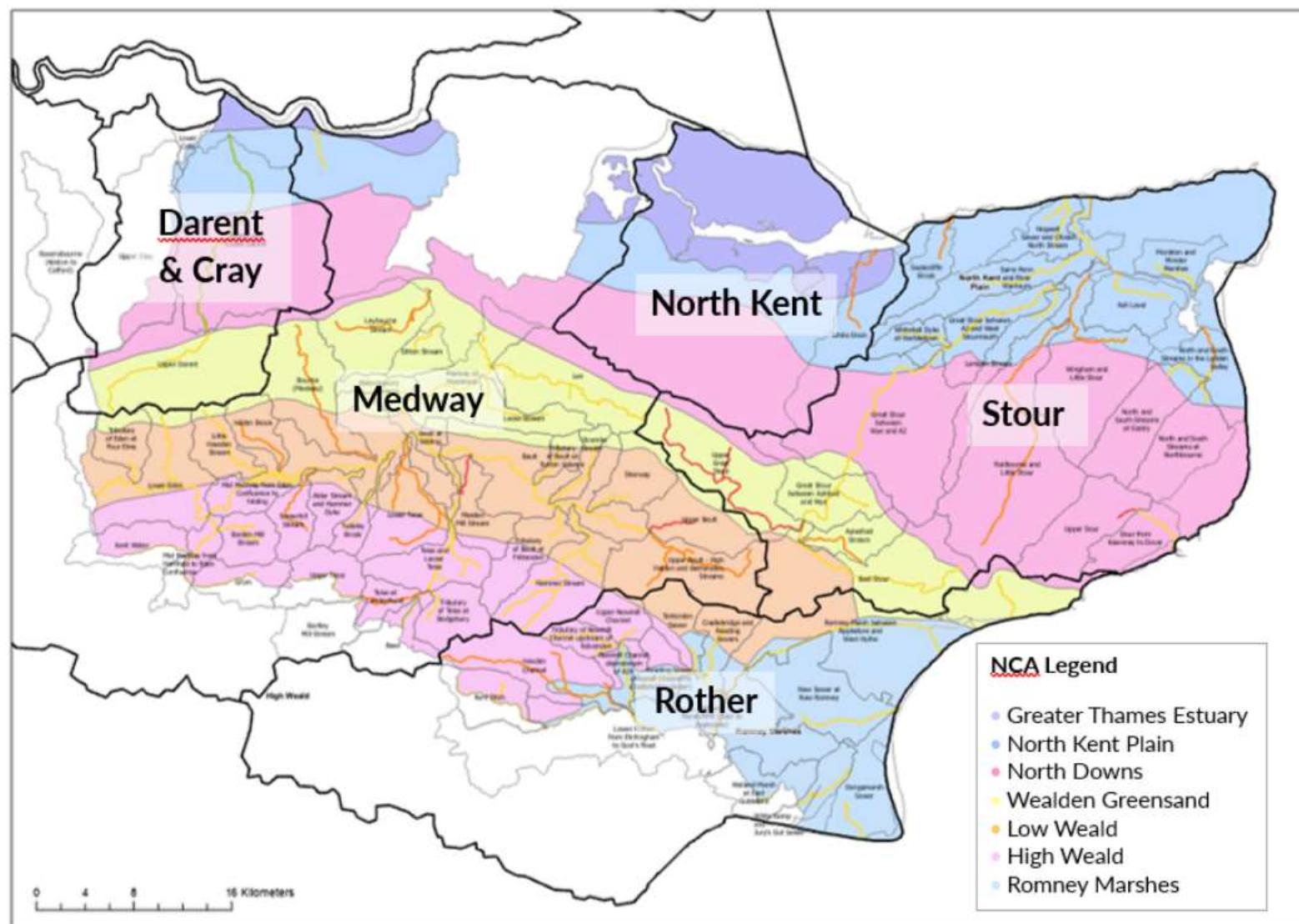
Another way of considering the areas of the county, in terms of functional landscapes, is on a catchment basis. A river catchment is a natural drainage basin, collecting water from various sources channelling this water into a low point, eventually merging into the main river. Everything within a catchment is linked and reliant on each other. Within a catchment there will be areas providing natural flood management, water provision for agriculture and wildlife dependent on the associated food chains, to name but a few ways water may provide a service. For rivers and their connected habitats to be healthy, both need to be healthy.

The county has five catchments (not all exist solely within the borders of Kent and Medway):

- North Kent catchment
- River Stour catchment
- River Medway Catchment
- River Darent and Cray catchment
- River Rother catchment

For the purposes of this introduction to the Strategy area, the description is framed around the National Character Area descriptions, supplemented with further detail on the catchment.





The River Catchment Areas of Kent and Medway.

1.1 Greater Thames Estuary NCA

Predominantly a remote and tranquil landscape of shallow creeks, drowned estuaries, low-lying islands, mudflats and broad tracts of tidal saltmarsh and reclaimed grazing marsh that lies between the North Sea and the rising ground inland. It forms the eastern edge of the London Basin and encompasses the coastlines of South Essex and North Kent, along with a narrow strip of land following the path of the Thames into East London.

Despite its close proximity to London, the Greater Thames Estuary NCA contains some of the least settled areas of the English coast, with few major settlements and medieval patterns of small villages and hamlets on higher ground and the marsh edges. This provides a stark contrast to the busy urban and industrial areas towards London, where population density is high, and development pressures are increasing. Sea defences protect large areas of both reclaimed grazing marsh and its associated ancient fleet and ditch systems, and productive arable farmland. Historic military landmarks are characteristic features of the coastal landscape.

The coastal habitats of the Greater Thames Estuary NCA are internationally important for their biodiversity interest, and support large numbers of overwintering and breeding wetland birds, rare plant and invertebrate species, and diverse marine wildlife. The coastline of the NCA also includes a stretch of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

The vast majority of the coastline and estuaries are designated as Ramsar sites and Special Protection Areas. Brownfield sites support priority open mosaic habitat and its associated nationally-rare invertebrate species. The coastline is also of major geomorphological interest for the study of estuarine and coastal processes, and for its nationally and internationally important deposits of London Clay fossils and Pleistocene sediments.

There is a marked contrast between the wild and remote coastal marshes, and the industrial and urban developments which are highly visible in the low-lying landscape. A key challenge is to accommodate increasing development pressure in the area, with the protection and enhancement of the natural landscape and its internationally important coastal habitats and species, and nationally important open mosaic habitat.

1.2 North Kent Plain NCA

The strip of land between the Thames Estuary to the north and the chalk of the Kent Downs to the south. The area is open, low, and gently undulating. It is a very productive agricultural area with predominantly high-quality, fertile loam soils, characterised by arable use. Traditional orchards, soft fruits and other horticultural crops exist in central and eastern areas, giving rise to the use of the title 'Garden of England'.

There is an extensive area of ancient woodland around Blean, designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for sub-Atlantic and medio-European oak or oak-hornbeam forests. This is one of the largest complexes of ancient semi-natural woodland in England and the largest area of continuous woodland in Kent. Wooded heath and grassland also form a significant part of the Blean complex. The woodlands in the west of the NCA provide important areas of green space and are key sites for biodiversity. They include Chattenden Woods, Shorne and Ashenbank Woods, Great Crabbles Wood, Darenth Wood, Northward Hill, and Crofton Woods. Part of this area makes up the North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve, designated as such in 2025. The east of the NCA is characterised by poplar and alder shelterbelts and small woodlands.

However, the majority of the NCA is an open landscape: characteristic shelterbelts occur within the fruit-growing areas, but the agricultural land is mostly devoid of hedgerows. There are also fragments of neutral, calcareous and acid grassland, and also heathland, including Dartford Heath.

The North Kent Plain NCA meets the sea between Whitstable and Deal, changing from a north-facing to an east- or south-facing shore. There is a great diversity of coastal habitats, including chalk cliffs and reefs around Thanet, and soft cliffs between Herne Bay and Reculver and also at Pegwell Bay. Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay are both designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and as Ramsar sites, the latter reflecting the mudflat invertebrates and internationally important numbers of wading birds they support. There are also areas of intertidal sand and mud, salt marshes (especially at Pegwell Bay), sand dunes (notably Sandwich Bay), shingle beaches (at Minnis Bay and near Deal), brackish lagoons and maritime grasslands on cliff-tops and sea walls.

The North Kent Plain NCA has a strong urban element, with a large number of built-up areas and coastal towns. Developments around London and the Medway towns, in particular, have contributed to significant urbanisation in the west of the NCA.

This NCA is important for food production and associated services (such as soil and water regulation and management) that help to protect the area's natural assets. In addition, flood protection is an important consideration along the rivers and coastline.



To the north is the alluvial Greater Thames Estuary. The area's western boundary is defined by Inner London and the Thames Basin Lowlands.

The North Kent Plain area is characterized by tidal waterbodies and marshy estuarine habitats, many of which include artificial or heavily modified watercourses. It includes the lower and tidal reaches of the Darent and Lower Medway, the network known as the Stour Marshes, plus the White Drain. It also includes the Isle of Thanet chalk groundwater body.

There are some rivers not designated as artificial or heavily modified, which include the Whitehall Dyke, a stretch of the Great Stour between Wye and the A2, Lampen Stream, Wingham, lower part of the Little Stour, and Swalecliffe Brook. Also, the Darent, of which the lowest section flows through North Kent Plain area.

1.3 North Downs NCA

A chain of chalk hills that extend from the Hog's Back in Surrey and end dramatically at the internationally renowned White Cliffs of Dover. The settlement pattern is characterised by traditional small, nucleated villages, scattered farms and large houses with timber framing, flint walls and Wealden brick detailing. Twisting sunken lanes, often aligned along ancient drove roads, cut across the scarp and are a feature of much of the dip slope.

The Kent Downs National Landscape (formerly Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) designation is testament to the scenic qualities and natural beauty of the area.

Agriculture is an important component of the landscape, with variation in soils supporting mixed farming practices where arable, livestock and horticulture have co-existed for centuries. The woodlands, many of which are ancient, are a prominent feature of the landscape, yet their ecological value has suffered in recent years due to a reduction in active management since the 1990s, particularly of mixed coppice. Two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are designated for their rare woodland compositions. Chalk grassland is particularly notable, with seven SAC designated for chalk grassland interest including outstanding assemblages of rare orchids. The chalk downland habitats support rare species, including the Late Spider Orchid, the Black-Veined Moth and Straw Belle Moth, which are currently found only within the North Downs.

The North Downs are cut by the valleys of the Stour, Medway and Darent, with their associated wetland habitats. The chalk aquifer of the North Downs is important for supplying water within Kent. The coast is of international significance with an SAC designation due to the presence of rare maritime cliff communities found within the cliff face and on cliff-tops. Two stretches of the coast are recognised as Heritage Coast: South Foreland, and Dover to Folkestone. An outstanding range of historical and geological features are found along the coast, including Dover Castle and the White Cliffs with their strong cultural associations. Other historical features, including numerous Scheduled Ancient Monuments and buildings dating from the medieval period, are scattered throughout. The Heritage Coast includes a stretch of the King Charles III England Coast Path. Also within this NCA is another National Trail, the

North Downs Way, which runs through the heart of the NCA, from Dover and Folkestone in the east and extending west into Surrey.

In the east, Dover is the main settlement, but the Medway towns of Rochester and Chatham and the town of Folkestone also lie on the periphery of the NCA. Other towns, including Maidstone, Ashford and Sevenoaks, and the city of Canterbury, although within adjacent NCAs, lie close to the boundary.

Views from the eastern scarp are dominated by generally undeveloped landscapes much valued by visitors, with outstanding views from many parts of the downs to France. These views are affected to varying degrees by the Channel Tunnel terminal development and the M25 and M20 corridors.

The North Downs NCA includes all of Kent's chalk streams, namely the Nailbourne and Little Stour, Dour, North and South Streams in the Stour Catchment, the Great Stour below Wye, and the Middle and Lower Darent.

These rivers are typically characterized by their stable flow conditions, clear water and the associated vegetation communities as well as supporting trout and salmon populations, although all are impacted by a range of pressures. The Great Stour and Darent are the only rivers not classified as modified, with the former also classed as a Local Wildlife Site. The Upper Dour includes some reaches identified as Priority River Habitat by Natural England, due to their naturalness.

1.4 Wealden Greensand NCA

The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. Around a quarter of the total NCA is made up of extensive belts of woodland – both ancient mixed woods and more recent conifer plantations. In contrast, the area also features more open areas of heath on acidic soils, river valleys and mixed farming, including areas of fruit growing.

The area has outstanding landscape, geological, historical and biodiversity interest. Some 51 percent of the total NCA is covered by landscape designation, including the Kent Downs National Landscape. The underlying geology has shaped the scarp-and-dip slope topography, with its far-reaching views, but it has also had a significant bearing on the area's sense of place: there are clear links between vernacular architecture, industry and local geology. The heritage assets provide vital connections to the NCA's industrial, military and cultural history, and include distinctive deer parks and more recent 18th-century parklands.

Biodiversity interests are represented by internationally and nationally designated sites alongside numerous local sites and other non-designated semi-natural habitats. The internationally designated sites include three Special Protection Areas (SPAs), two Ramsar sites and eight Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), representing the outstanding value and quality of the heathland, woodland, wetland and coastal habitats found within the Wealden Greensand NCA. In addition, fragments of acid grassland and parkland landscapes add to the overall diversity of habitats.

The Kent area of the NCA is considerably more urbanised than the south-western part, with many towns including Maidstone, Ashford and Folkestone. The area forms a major transport corridor, with the M25, M20 and M26 motorways and other major road and rail routes all running through it.

A short coastal stretch extends from Folkestone to Hythe, with a heavily developed hinterland: as a result, most of the coastline is protected by coastal defences. The exception is Copt Point, where the eroding cliffs are designated for their wildlife and geological interest. This part of the coastline is also part of the defined Dover–Folkestone Heritage Coast. The coastline offers a contrasting recreational experience from that associated with the heathlands, wetlands and woodlands of the wider NCA.

The curved Greensand ridge partially encircles the adjoining Low Weald NCA. The Kent Lower Greensand groundwater body is considered a major aquifer, important for public and industrial water supply both within and outside the Wealden Greensand NCA. The management of the coastal stretch between Folkestone and Hythe influences, and is influenced by, the coastal stretches in adjoining North Downs and Romney Marsh NCAs. The coastline of the NCA also includes a stretch of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

The Wealden Greensand NCA follows the outcrop of Upper and Lower Greensand, which curves around the western end of the Wealden anticline in West Sussex, east Hampshire and Surrey and forms a conspicuous ridge running west to east across Surrey and Kent terminating in coastal cliffs at Folkestone Warren.

The long, curved belt of the Wealden Greensand runs across Kent, parallel to the North Downs, and on through Surrey. It moves south, alongside the Hampshire Downs, before curving back eastwards to run parallel with the South Downs in West Sussex. The NCA features parts of the South Downs National Park and Surrey Hills Protected Landscape.

The Wealden Greensand gives rise to headwaters for several catchments, including the Upper Darent, the upper section of the Bourne in the Medway Catchment, the Leybourne Stream, Loose Stream, Watlingbury Stream, Ditton Stream and Len (also a chalk stream) as well as the main river Medway at Maidstone.

It also feeds the headwater springs supporting the River Beult. The upper reaches of the Stour also rise from this NCA, with the Upper Great Stour, East Stour, Aylesford Stream and the Great Stour from Ashford to Wye entirely in this area. The waterbodies of the Stour catchment are not designated as modified within this NCA, and neither are the Bourne or Upper Darent, but all other waterbodies in the Medway catchment in this NCA are designated heavily modified.

1.5 Low Weald NCA

A broad, low-lying clay vale which largely wraps around the northern, western, and southern edges of the High Weald. It is predominantly agricultural, supporting mainly pastoral farming owing to heavy clay soils, with horticulture and some arable

on lighter soils in the east, and has many densely wooded areas with a high proportion of ancient woodland. At the western end, a small amount falls within the adjacent designated National Landscapes of the Kent Downs and High Weald Areas.

The area is generally wet and woody. It is dissected by flood plains and its impermeable clay soil and low-lying nature make many areas prone to localised flooding. Ponds are common, often a legacy of iron and brick-making industries. Gill woodland is a particular feature and a valuable habitat, scarce elsewhere in the south-east of England. Despite its proximity to London and continuing pressure for development, the Low Weald remains essentially rural in character with small-scale villages nestled in woodland and many traditional farm buildings, including oast houses.

It is important for biodiversity, being rated among the most important NCAs for richness of bat species, Bullfinch and Lesser-spotted Woodpecker, and several plants, including Spiked Rampion, plus a variety of rare lichens. It also supports rare invertebrates, notably woodland butterflies.

The NCA is bounded for much of its length by the Wealden Greensand NCA in the north, crossing the counties of Kent, East and West Sussex and Surrey. It includes areas of the Surrey Hills and High Weald Protected Landscapes, plus South Downs National Park. Like the High Weald, the Low Weald is densely wooded, especially in its western arc through West Sussex and Surrey.

Rivers in the Low Weald NCA are almost entirely part of the Medway catchment and include the River Beult, the only riverine SSSI in Kent and designated for its clay river characteristics.

The Beult tributaries include the Ulcombe Stream, Sherway, Upper Beult and lower reaches of the Hammer Stream. All of these are classified as heavily modified, except for the Upper Beult which is deemed natural (including a section identified by Natural England as priority habitat).



1.6 High Weald NCA

Encompasses the ridged and faulted sandstone core of the Kent and Sussex Weald. It is an area of ancient countryside and one of the best surviving medieval landscapes in northern Europe. The High Weald National Landscape covers the majority of this NCA in Kent. The High Weald consists of a mixture of fields, small woodlands and farmsteads connected by historic routeways, tracks and paths. Wildflower meadows are now rare but prominent medieval patterns of small pasture fields enclosed by thick hedgerows and shaws (narrow woodlands) remain fundamental to the character of the landscape.

In total, some 26 percent of the NCA is covered by woodland, comprising wooded shaws, pits and gills, farm woods and larger woods; of this 26 percent, 17 percent is ancient semi-natural woodland and 5 per cent is ancient, replanted woodland. The majority of the woodland cover is ancient, managed in the past as coppice with standards surrounded with native woodland flora such as Bluebells and Wood Anemones in the spring. Evidence of the area's industrial past is prominent, from the large iron-master houses to iron industry charcoal hearths, pits and hammer ponds found throughout the ancient woodlands.

The small scale and historical patterning of the landscape, interwoven woodland, wetland and open habitats, with many hedgerows and historic routeways supporting semi-natural vegetation, provide a flourishing, accessible landscape for wildlife. Exposed sandstone outcrops along the wooded gills provide nationally rare habitat and support an array of ferns, bryophytes and lichens. The numerous gill streams of the High Weald give rise to the headwaters and upper reaches of rivers which were previously important trade routes for timber, iron and wool out to the coastal ports around Walland Marsh.

In total, the NCA is home to 56 historic parks and gardens covering 4,599 ha. The High Weald provides an example of one of the best-preserved medieval landscapes in north-west Europe and has a strong sense of history. This is enhanced by many features, numerous churches and chapels and an abundance of locally distinctive traditional buildings.

The High Weald provides many services to communities living within the area's towns and villages and adjacent urban populations through the supply of drinking water, flood mitigation and carbon storage and a range of open-air recreational activities based around its distinctive character, from walking its ancient routeways to off-road cycling in Bedgebury Forest and water sports at Bewl Water.

The wooded nature of linear routes throughout this and the Low Weald NCA, together with the wooded gills, provides a high degree of interconnectivity to ancient woodland habitats across the High and Low Weald areas. Gill streams are found in this NCA, which support a specific flora associated with temperate rainforests.

The High Weald and Romney Marsh NCAs are inextricably linked in terms of water resources. The High Weald NCA encompasses some of the same catchments as the Low Weald NCA, and in many cases gives rise to the headwaters of streams which then move down into the Low Weald.

The majority of priority river habitat in Kent, as identified by Natural England, is found in this NCA, predominantly in the form of headwater streams.

It includes part of the Lower Eden, the Mid Medway above the Eden confluence, Barden Mill Stream, Somerhill Stream, upper parts of the Alder Stream and Hammer Dyke, Tudeley Brook and Lower Teise, the Teise and Lesser Teise, Upper Teise, Teise at Lamberhurst and Teise at Bedgebury, the upper sections of the tributaries of the Beult at Frittenden and Hammer Stream.

In the Rother catchment, it includes sections of the Kent Ditch, Upper Newmill Channel and tributary of Newmill Channel, Hexden Channel.

1.7 Romney Marshes NCA

An open landscape of reclaimed, low-lying marshland. The area is bounded to the south and east by the English Channel, and to the north and west by the clearly recognisable ancient cliff-line, which now forms the backdrop to the marshes. It includes the vast sand and shingle beaches and flat marshland between Hythe in Kent and Pett in Sussex. This unique and sometimes forbidding area has a character all of its own and contains a wealth of wildlife and geomorphological features.

Dungeness is an area of international importance for its geomorphology, plants, invertebrates and birds. Home to some of the UK's rarest species, it is designated as a National Nature Reserve, Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest, as well as being a proposed Ramsar site. Dungeness (with Rye Harbour) comprise the largest cusped shingle foreland in Europe, one of the few such large examples in the world.

Scattered settlements are linked by long, straight, open roads and have a distinctive architectural character, including weatherboarding and hung tiles; many have medieval churches at their core. Urban areas account for a small proportion of this rural NCA. The transport links are sparse, and this, coupled with the nature of the landscape, rural isolation and lack of employment, means that the area suffers from issues of social and economic deprivation. The coastline of the NCA also includes a stretch of the King Charles III England Coast Path.

The extensive marshes of the hinterland, now a mixture of arable and grazing land dissected by an extensive network of ditches and watercourses, support a rich flora and fauna and form a striking contrast to the coastal habitats of sandy and shingle beaches, freshwater pits, sand dunes, saline lagoons and flooded gravel pits. The open water network is a vital component of the marshes' irrigation and drainage network.

Areas of the Romney Marsh NCA are designated as National Landscape (Kent Downs and High Weald). These form distinct areas within the NCA which, radiating from the core of the marsh, act as corridors out into the adjoining High Weald NCA and have a unique character. They have a key role to play in connectivity of habitats and linkages to the wider marshland landscape.

The coast continues to evolve; pressures of sea-level rise and climate change will result in coastal change, and informed decision-making will be critical in helping coastal communities and habitats to adapt to change. Much of the area is well below the high-tide level and, as such, is at risk of flooding.

Human land-use has had a major role in fashioning the present landscape, through the drainage of marshes, military activity, gravel digging and the construction of sea walls, housing, tourist amenities, roads, a wind farm, an airport and Dungeness Power Station.

The High Weald and Romney Marshes NCAs are inextricably linked in terms of water resources. The Royal Military Canal is predominantly within this NCA but passes through into Wealden Greensand – it provides a continuous corridor linking the two NCAs.

The Romney Marsh NCA encompasses the eastern part of the Romney Marshes catchment, a highly managed environment with recreational use of watercourses. Waterbodies include Romney Marsh between Appledore and West Hythe, the New Sewer, Dengemarsh Sewer, White Kemp and Jury's Gut Sewer, Walland Marsh, Lower Rother, Cradlebridge and Reading Sewer, Newmill Channel, Hexden Channel, and Reading Sewer.

Some of the streams in this NCA arise in the Low Weald or High Weald NCA.



2. Protected areas of Kent and Medway

2.1 Kent Downs National Landscape

The Kent Downs National Landscape stretches from the White Cliffs of Dover to the Surrey London border. It offers dramatic views, vibrant communities, a rich historic and cultural heritage and diverse wildlife and habitats making it a worthy landscape for national protection.

It is the eighth largest National Landscape and covers 23% of Kent's land area providing a wealth of opportunities for people to explore, enjoy and benefit from this outstanding landscape.

The Kent Downs National Landscape features areas of the North Kent Plain, North Downs, Wealden Greensand, Low Weald and Romney Marshes National Character Areas. The majority of the North Downs NCA is designated as Kent Downs National Landscape.

Wildlife - The unique landscapes of the Kent Downs create and contain a rich and distinctive biodiversity, providing a home to many plants and wildlife including several species that are largely or wholly confined to the Kent Downs. Habitats found in the Kent Downs include chalk grassland, woodlands (ancient woodland, veteran trees and wood pasture), traditional orchards and Cobnut plats, chalk cliffs and the foreshore, chalk rivers and wet pasture, ponds and heathland. Many of these habitats have become isolated making them vulnerable – and some of the plants and wildlife they support are scarce within Kent and across the UK. Farmers, landowners and conservation organisations are working to connect habitats and provide ecological corridors for wildlife to travel between.

Woodland - The Kent Downs is one of Britain's most wooded landscapes, with woodland covering over 20% of the area. It is the second largest land cover after farming and is a vital component of the natural beauty of the Kent Downs. Almost 70% of the Kent Downs' woodlands are ancient woodland. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands includes Bluebells, Wood Anemones, Ramsons and Yellow Archangel, and the bird song of Warblers, Nightingale and Nightjar can be heard too.

The ancient woodlands of the Kent Downs also preserve the evidence of thousands of years of human activity in earthworks, monuments and place names. Coppiced Sweet Chestnut is also frequently seen across many woodlands in the area.

Water and wetlands - Rivers, streams, springs and ditches include a great variety of habitat and landscape types and are important features of the Kent Downs. The Kent Downs is crossed by three major rivers: the Darent (chalk stream), Medway (major tidal river) and Stour (chalk stream), which carve their way through the Kent Downs landscape. Marsh land is not common because of the free-draining nature of much of the underlying rock. However marshy areas can be found at the base of the Downs, including Romney Marsh.

Geology - A large proportion of the Kent Downs is based on chalk, which leads to vibrant and colourful chalk grassland where orchids and other chalk-loving plants thrive. South-facing steep slopes of chalk and greensand, hidden dry valleys, broad and steep-sided river valleys and of course the iconic white cliffs around the Dover coast are some of the dramatic landforms to be seen. Breath-taking, long-distance panoramas are offered across the landscape

Farming - A long-established tradition of mixed farming has influenced the beauty of the Kent Downs – the pastoral scenery is a particularly valued part of the landscape. Farming covers around 64% of the National Landscape. Expansive arable fields are generally on the lower slopes, valley bottoms and plateaux tops. Locally concentrated areas of orchards, cobnut plots, hop gardens and other horticultural production are also present. Livestock – particularly sheep – can often be seen grazing grassland across the Kent Downs.

Heritage - Human activity across Kent for thousands of years has created an outstanding heritage and ‘time depth’ to the Kent Downs. There are the remains of Neolithic megalithic monuments, Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age hill-forts, Roman villas and towns, medieval villages focused on their churches, post-medieval stately homes with their parks and gardens, and historic defence structures from Norman times to the 20th century. Fields of varying shapes and sizes and ancient wood-banks and hedges, set within networks of droveways and sunken lanes add to the historic look and feel of Kent’s rural landscape and the distinctive architecture is a reminder of Kent’s lengthy history.

Access - The Kent Downs National Landscape has 1876km/1166miles of Public Rights of Way network, which is four times the density of the national average. The National Landscape incorporates the Kent stretch of the 153 mile North Downs Way and its coastline includes the King Charles III England Coast Path - both National Trails. The Kent Downs accommodates 40% of Kent’s bridleways and 50% of Kent’s byways on 23% of the county land area.



2.2 High Weald National Landscape

The High Weald National Landscape extends from Romney Marsh through the High Weald of Kent and into Sussex and Surrey. It is a medieval landscape of wooded, rolling hills studded with sandstone outcrops, small, irregular-shaped fields, scattered farmsteads, and ancient routeways.

The High Weald National Landscape features High Weald and Romney Marshes NCA. The majority of the High Weald NCA is designated as High Weald National Landscape.

Wildlife - The High Weald's diverse mix of interconnected habitats – many unchanged since medieval times – are home to an astonishing range of flora and fauna, which add to the unique character of the area. The High Weald's coastline is made up of shingle ridges, saline lagoons, saltmarsh, reedbed, pits and wet grassland with 3,720 different species of plants and animals. It also supports important wintering waterfowl populations. Deeply incised narrow valleys, known locally as gills, create a moist micro-climate which harbours plant populations not found elsewhere in eastern or central England, and which are hundreds of miles from other British populations. Such plants include Ivy-leaved Bellflower and Hay-scented Buckler-fern.

Woodland - Over 22.8% of the High Weald is covered by ancient woodland, in the form of a complex and interlinked mosaic of treebelts, shaws, and small or large woodland blocks. The National Landscape is also particularly important for Gill woodland, a rare habitat, scarce elsewhere in the south-east of England. The High Weald's woodlands harbour rare species such as the Dormouse, the Pearl Bordered Fritillary and the Black-headed Cardinal Beetle. Nightjars breed in the open space created when woodlands are actively worked. The ancient woodland ground flora is species-rich and includes Coralroot Bittercress, another speciality of the High Weald.

Grassland and heathland - The Weald supports 1,400ha of unimproved grassland habitat – nearly 20% of the entire resource of lowland meadow in England. Most of these meadows are scattered across the country; nowhere else is there such a concentration compared with the Weald. There are distinctive zones of open heath, remnants of the area's medieval forests, which are internationally important for their wildlife.

Water and wetlands - Gill streams are fast-flowing, are often within woodland and support a specialised range of plants and animals, particularly invertebrates and fish – including Brown Trout and Bullhead. The area has numerous ponds, many man-made – a legacy of use of the area's natural resources. The rare Great-crested Newt is found in many and they also have a rich assemblage of uncommon water beetles, the Medicinal Leech and uncommon plants such as Frogbit, Lesser Water-plantain and Tubular Water-dropwort.

Geology - The High Weald countryside gets its ridges, valleys and rolling landscape from the underlying bands of sandstone and clay. The harder sandstone forms the high land and ridges, which generally run east-west across the High Weald. The lower land between the sandstone ridges is the result of the softer clays having been

more easily eroded. The action of the elements over time has unevenly eroded these sandstones and clays to leave the steeply ridged and folded countryside that survives today.

Farming - The High Weald's rolling hills are draped with small, irregular fields – edged with ancient boundary features and often containing flower-rich grassland. This pattern of small, irregular fields grew out of the way the High Weald was settled, and is the result of the patient work of many small farmers. With their heavy clay soils and steep slopes, many High Weald fields have never been ploughed up to grow crops and have traditionally been used for rearing domestic livestock instead. Compared to many areas of Britain, the area still has a relatively high number of ancient, undisturbed, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These 'unimproved' grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation, supporting up to 100 kinds of grasses and wildflowers – which, in turn, support a great variety of insects and other creatures.

Heritage - The High Weald is a cultural landscape, shaped by people since prehistory to the present day. Its key landscape features were established by the 14th century, and it is considered to be one of the best surviving, coherent medieval landscapes in Northern Europe. The area held many riches for our ancestors and was an important source of raw materials: its sands and clays, stone and iron ore, woodlands and water. The radiating network of roughly north-south droving routes lives on as the area's narrow, often sunken, roads, lanes, bridleways and footpaths. The woodland pastures were gradually cleared by farmers to create the small, irregularly shaped fields that we see today. In the Medieval period, large tracts of land were set aside as hunting forests and deer parks. Remnants of these Forests still exist. The High Weald was the main iron-producing region of Britain, with industrial-scale exploitation during two periods – the Roman occupation and Tudor and early-Stuart period. The archaeological legacy of this activity can be seen throughout the area's woodlands.

Access - The High Weald National Landscape features a total of 2,570km of Public Rights of Way. More than 75% of the Public Rights of Way are historic, being present on Ordnance Survey maps from at least 1860. The National Landscape's coastline includes the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trails.



2.3 National and international designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features in England, supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. There are 287 SSIs within the strategy area, covering 38,692ha.

Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) are designated to protect habitats and species that are important to biodiversity on a national and international scale.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated to protect areas that are important for breeding, over-wintering and migrating birds. Together these form part of the UK's national site network. There are 30 Special Areas for Conservation, covering 8,774ha and 48 Special Protection Areas, covering 45,3186ha, within the strategy area.

The area also has 68 designated Wetlands of International Importance, known as **Ramsar sites**, covering 26,249ha, most of which overlap with the SACs and SPAs.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are designated area of the ocean, sea, or estuary, managed to protect and conserve marine life, habitats, and cultural or historical features. The key purpose of an MPA is to protect and recover rare, threatened and important habitats and species from damage caused by human activities. MPAs include Marine Conservation Zones and also Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, with marine components.

Also included under MPAs are **Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)**, safeguarding rare, threatened, or nationally important marine species and habitats. There are 16 Marine Conservation Zones off the coastline of the strategy area, covering 167,166ha.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) were established to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. There are 12 National Nature Reserves within the strategy area. This includes the recently designated (2025) North Kent Downs and Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve, part of the *King's Series of National Nature Reserves*, a selection of sites recognised for their ecological importance during the reign of King Charles III. This landscape-scale National Nature Reserve, features a range of habitats, including ancient woodlands, chalk grasslands and arable fields, all providing complex ecosystems that support rare and specialist species.

2.4 Nature sites of local significance

Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) are proposed locally under the scrutiny of the Kent Nature Partnership, using robust, scientifically determined criteria and detailed ecological surveys. Their eventual delineation is by the relevant local planning authority. Their selection is based on the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context. This makes them

some of the Strategy area's most valuable wildlife areas, totalling 476 Local Wildlife Sites covering 27,759ha.

Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs) protect and manage road verges which contain threatened habitats or wildlife. There are over 150 such reserves along the roads of Kent, with a combined length of 89km.

There are also over **40 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)**, which are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally.

Kent has **six Important Bird Areas, four Important Plant Areas and four Important Invertebrate Areas.**

The Strategy area also features many habitats considered irreplaceable – those which take significant time to restore, recreate or replace once they are destroyed, often as a result of their age, diversity or uniqueness. In planning and Local Nature Recovery Strategy terms, these **irreplaceable habitats** are defined in Kent as ancient woodland and ancient trees, coastal sand dunes, spartina swards and lowland fens. This definition of irreplaceable habitats is currently under review and other irreplaceable habitats may be added in due course.





Extent of the strategy area's nationally designated sites, Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves and irreplaceable habitat.

3. What makes Kent and Medway's nature so special

3.1 Habitats

Kent is one of the largest counties in England by area, covering 391,823ha. Its varied landscape has a wealth of natural features and wildlife habitats. The complex geology of the region, soils, topography and other environmental conditions, have all influenced Kent's landscape and habitats. In addition, the long coastline has a range of important, and in some cases unique, coastal and marine habitats.

Further influences on Kent's natural environment come from its location. It has a temperate climate subject to continental weather influences due to its proximity to mainland Europe, generally being drier than the UK average, with warm summers and cold spells in winter. As a result, the county can support many species uncommon elsewhere in Britain. Additionally, it has an ancient landscape history, with many of the semi-natural habitats being a product of historic land management practices, such as the grazed chalk downland of the North Downs and ancient coppice woodland that spreads across the South-East.

Many of these habitats are inherently beautiful and are integral to the attractiveness of Kent's countryside. However, they are also an important resource because they contribute to the maintenance of our environment through the provisioning (e.g. food, water and materials), regulating (e.g. flood management, pollination, temperature regulation), supporting (e.g. healthy soils, nutrient cycling) and cultural (recreation, tourism, health and wellbeing) services they deliver.

In 2012, Kent County Council completed the Kent Habitat Survey. The survey covered the entire county, analysing aerial photographs and previous survey data, and using targeted field survey to produce an up-to-date map of all habitats in Kent. Key findings from the survey included:

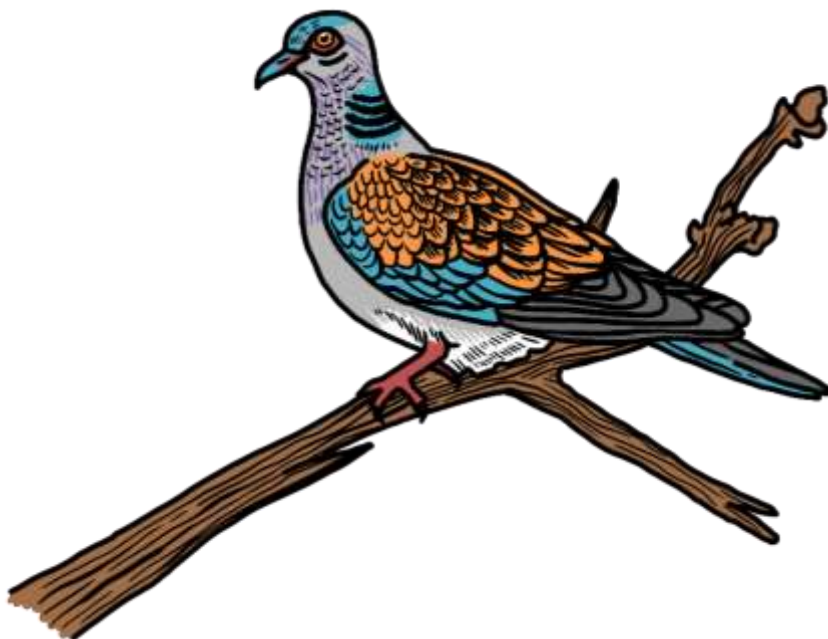
- The natural and semi-natural habitats of Kent cover 27% of its surface area.
- The built environment, including industry, development, travel infrastructure and urban areas cover 16% of the county.
- Arable and horticulture is the land use covering the greatest area, 35% of Kent, followed by intensively managed improved grasslands at 30%.
- Woodlands are the largest semi-natural habitat in Kent, covering 12%, of the county with 11% being broadleaved, mixed or yew woodland.
- Traditional orchards occupy 0.4% but comprise around 10% of the traditional orchard area in England.
- Kent has a very small resource of lowland meadow, with just over 5ha of UKBAP and EU Annex 1 lowland hay meadow. This survey has produced the first records for this habitat type in Kent. A further 19ha of lowland meadow and pasture is also UKBAP priority habitat.
- Heathland is one of the county's most rare and fragmented habitats. Around 74ha was recorded from several sites across the county, an increase on the 52ha recorded in 2003. There are seven main clusters of heathland in Kent, with 19

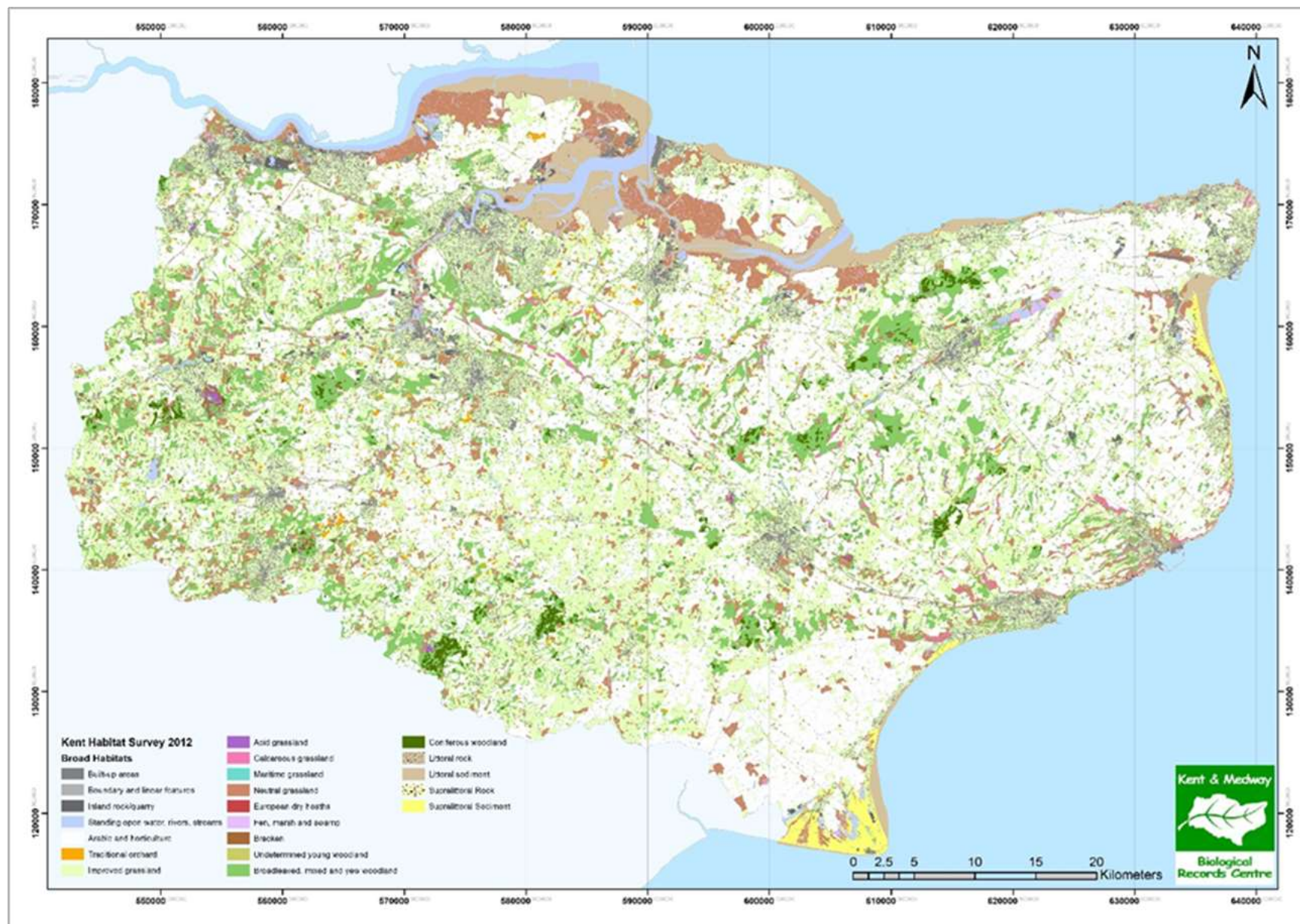
further small sites of heathland found across the county. The largest cluster of heathland contains 25ha.

- The county contains several nationally and internationally important habitats around the coastline including chalk cliffs and reefs, and vegetated shingle.
- Kent has 36 priority habitats. Of these, 17 have been identified as habitats of local and national significance or that support scarce or declining species.

Many of the county's habitats are UK BAP priority habitats – that being recognised as most threatened and requiring conservation action. The diversity and extent of the strategy area's habitats is illustrated by the habitat survey map and the table below.

More detail on the county's habitats is provided within the corresponding habitat priority in part 2.





Kent Habitat Survey 2012 broad habitats

Kent Habitat Survey 2012 findings

Grassland habitats

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Lowland calcareous grassland	1,929 ha	Occurring along North Downs. 60% classed as BAP habitat; represents 5% of the UK's resource.
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	14,174 ha	Majority found along North Kent marshes and grazing marshes of Romney. BAP habitat with greatest cover in county – 3.6% of area. 55% protected by SSSI.
Lowland meadow	27 ha	Locally very rare and represents less than 0.1% of the broad neutral grassland habitat recorded in the county.
Lowland dry acid grassland	512ha	One of the rarest and most threatened habitats in Kent. 51% classed as BAP habitat.
Lowland heathland	74 ha	Mostly found within the NCAs of Wealden Greensand and High Weald, although 22% is within the North Kent Plain and a small amount in the North Downs. All BAP priority habitat, with nearly 90% of this being within either SSSI or LWS.
Arable field margins	-	Not recorded by the 2012 survey. Found throughout Kent where nature-friendly land management practices have been adopted.

Successional habitats

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land	-	Not recorded by the 2012 survey. The county has some significant brownfield sites that support an extremely rich diversity of wildflowers and animals, including nationally scarce invertebrates – many of these sites are found within the Thames Gateway. Most notable of these is Swanscombe Marshes, on the Swanscombe Peninsula in Kent is home to a remarkable mosaic of grasslands, coastal habitats, brownfield features, scrub and intricate wetlands.
Scrub	-	Not recorded by the 2012 survey. This habitat exists across Kent, with examples found at Holborough Marshes and Old Park near Canterbury.

Woodland, trees and hedgerows

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Broadleaved, mixed and yew Woodland	44,490ha	11.4% of Kent - Despite the high cover of woodland across the county, only 3% classed as BAP priority habitat: - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland – 153ha; mostly found within the North Kent Plain and the North Downs NCAs. - Lowland beech and yew woodland – 613ha; present notably in the High Weald and Kent Downs National Landscape - Wet woodland – 662ha, accounting for 46.3% of the total woodland BAP habitat recorded in Kent. Important part of the landscapes in the High and Low Weald, as well as the Wealden Greensand and North Kent Plain.
Wood pasture and parkland	3,176 ha	Notable sites in Kent are Knole Park in Sevenoaks and Hatch Park in Ashford.
Hedgerows	Approx. 11,734km	Found throughout Kent lining roads, railways and footpaths, bordering fields and gardens and on the coast.
Traditional orchard	1676 ha	Largest proportion is traditional apple orchards, followed by cherry, mixed, pear and plums. Traditional orchards are found across the county, particularly found in the Kent Downs and High Weald National Landscapes and the Faversham Fruit Belt.

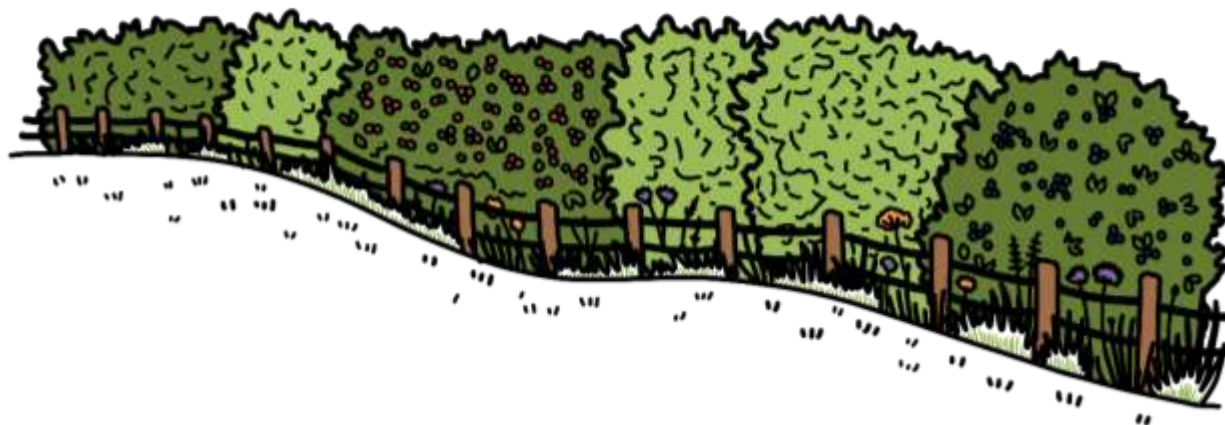
Freshwater

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Rivers and streams	6,592ha	No recorded areas of BAP priority habitats. Chalk streams do emerge from the North Downs and form the source of the rivers Darent, Cray, Shuttle, Dour, Nailbourne and stretches of the Great Stour, Little Stour and North Stream.
Standing open water	4,628ha	Including BAP priority habitats of lowland fen (12ha) and reedbeds (545ha)

Coastal

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Coastal saltmarsh	1,338 ha	Majority found along the north Kent coast, and a large area at Sandwich and Pegwell Bay in the east of the county. Represents 11.2% of the county's littoral sediment resource. Kent's coastal saltmarshes are internationally important.

Habitat	Extent	Significance locally and nationally
Intertidal mudflats	10,078 ha	Majority of habitat is found along the north coast. Coastlines of Medway, Swale and Canterbury districts have more than 85% of this habitat between them. Second largest BAP habitat in the county – 2.6% of the area. Kent's intertidal mudflats are internationally important.
Seagrass beds	29 ha	More than half (52.8%) is found off Medway's shores and 38.9% off Swale's.
Intertidal chalk	415ha	Found to the north-east and east of the county. 56% of England's chalk coastline is found in Kent, making it nationally important.
Oyster beds	-	Not recorded by the 2012 survey – locations of Native Oyster beds are commercially sensitive.
Saline lagoons	286 ha	Kent has 286ha of saline lagoons or ponds, of which 276.2ha is the Annex 1 habitat 'Saline Lagoons' (Coastal Lagoons). They are found primarily along the North Kent coast.
Coastal vegetated shingle	2104ha	Dungeness has the most diverse and extensive examples of stable vegetated shingle in Europe, making it internationally important.
Coastal sand dunes	455 ha	Main dune systems are limited to the eastern and a small area of southern coastline; largest area is found at Sandwich Bay.
Maritime cliffs and slopes	221 ha	Notable examples found at the White Cliffs of Dover, and Folkestone Cliffs and Downs.
Sheltered muddy gravel	9.3ha	More than half found off Dartford, nearly a third off Swale.



3.2 Species

As reported by Kent's 2022 State of Nature review, the wealth of varied habitat in Kent supports more than 3,400 rare and threatened species, with some of these nationally rare and some only found in Kent within the UK. But it is not just the rare or endangered that matter; even the most commonplace species are vital within the wider natural environment. It noted that over 20,000 species have been recorded in total in the county, which represents nearly 30% of all UK species and includes:

- Kent's native **amphibian** fauna consists of five species – Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt, Palmate Newt and Great Crested Newt.
- The county is home to a wide number of nationally important and rare **bee, wasp and ant** species. 219 species of bee, 221 species of wasp and 41 species of ant are present in the county. Amongst these, Kent is nationally important for Banded Mining Bee, Maidstone Mining Bee, Grey-backed Mining Bee, Shrill Carder Bee, Four-banded Weevil-wasp, Square-jawed Sharp-tail Bee and Fringe-horned Mason Bee.
- Almost 68% of Britain's **beetles** have been recorded in Kent. Beetles can be found in almost all habitats in Kent, semi-natural habitats hold the richest diversity of species. Notable species for Kent include Pride of Kent Rove Beetle, Kentish Clown and Sandwich Click Beetle
- About 245 **bird** species have been recorded regularly in Kent during the past 100 years, 150 of them breeding. Kent supports national strongholds of species, whose ranges are contracting towards the southeast, including the rapidly declining Turtle Dove and Nightingale. Its location also makes it well-placed to receive new colonists and support birds at the limit of their European range. The most important habitats at a national and international scale are coastal ones, which support important populations of wintering and some breeding birds.
- Kent has 42 of Britain's 59 resident species of **butterfly**, including two of the rarest species – Heath Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy.
- When it comes to **dragonflies**, Kent is one of the most species-rich counties in the UK; the county currently hosts 36 species. The abundance and diversity of wetlands in Kent is a significant factor influencing the county's abundance and diversity of dragonflies.
- Kent has a rich variety of **flies**, with some 60% of the British species recorded. Key habitats for some of the rarer species include broad-leaved woodland, chalk grassland, coastal grasslands, grazing marshes and saltmarsh and private gardens.
- Kent has a rich assemblage of **fungi** with 859 species recorded in the county. Many common species are widespread across the county, with the rare or endangered species restricted to the county's unimproved chalk grasslands, meadows, ancient woodlands, traditional orchards, parkland with veteran trees, churchyards, and sand dunes.
- There are 25 species of bush-cricket, cricket, grasshopper, and groundhopper which are regularly recorded in Kent and Medway, around 5 species of cockroach found outdoors and 4 species of earwig. A number of species are rare or scarce nationally.
- Twenty-nine terrestrial **mammal** species are found in Kent, including the Water Vole, Hedgehog, Hazel Dormouse, Harvest Mouse and Eurasian Beaver.

Terrestrial mammals occupy all identified Kent priority key habitats. Not included in this number is the rich fauna of **bats**, with 17 of the UK's 18 species recorded in the last 10 years.

- Kent has abundant and varied **marine** wildlife, known to comprise of at least 700 species. The coast also hosts a moderately rich **seaweed** flora with 256 brown, green, and red algae of the 650 known in the British Isles. The Thanet, South Foreland to Dover, and Folkestone seashores are the most species rich.
- All key habitats in Kent hold at least one population of nationally important macro or micro **moth** species, with 750 macros recorded (about 80% of the UK moth species) and between 1,300 and 1,400 of micros. Important populations of rare moth species include Straw Belle and Black-veined Moth on the Kent Downs, the principally coastal species Bright Wave and Fiery Clearwing, and Fisher's Estuarine Moth around the Thames Estuary.
- The county's native **reptile** fauna includes two snakes, the Grass Snake and Adder, and two lizards, the Viviparous Lizard and the Slow Worm. Kent's reptiles use a range of habitats, of which chalk grassland and its associated low scrub is particularly important.
- 473 **spider** species are recorded, representing almost 71% of the total number recorded in the British Isles – six of these have only been recorded in Kent. Key habitats for these species are chalk grasslands, ancient woodlands, and coastal habitats.
- More than 2,500 taxa make up the Kent **vascular plants**. The county's rare plant register currently lists 333 species and includes the nationally rare plants of Wild Cabbage and Coralroot, both of which have significant Kent populations. In the last 10 years, four native species have been added and 14, previously thought to have been lost, have been re-found.

More detail on the county's species is provided within the corresponding species priority in Part 3.

3.3 More than facts and figures

It is all too easy to get fixated on the numbers when considering what makes Kent's nature so special but there's the other perspective of the cultural influence and identity it gives the county and, moreover, what it means to the people of Kent – who ultimately will be the ones that either deliver or demand (or both) the recovery of nature.

When asked "what do you love about Kent's nature" our residents not only demonstrated a passion and enthusiasm but also recounted personal memories and their connection with nature "I love it when the Blackthorn blossoms and when I get to pick blackberries", commented one respondent, "I love the timelessness of ancient woodland, the ebb and flow of birds on tidal mudflats..." commented another.

However, woven throughout the responses was a sense that our biodiversity was under threat and that perhaps our nature wasn't being valued highly enough. But there was hope that a collaborative vision for the future and better decision-making would offer Kent's nature the support to flourish.

What Kent loves about nature (online survey 2023)

4. A changing landscape

4.1 Changes in landcover

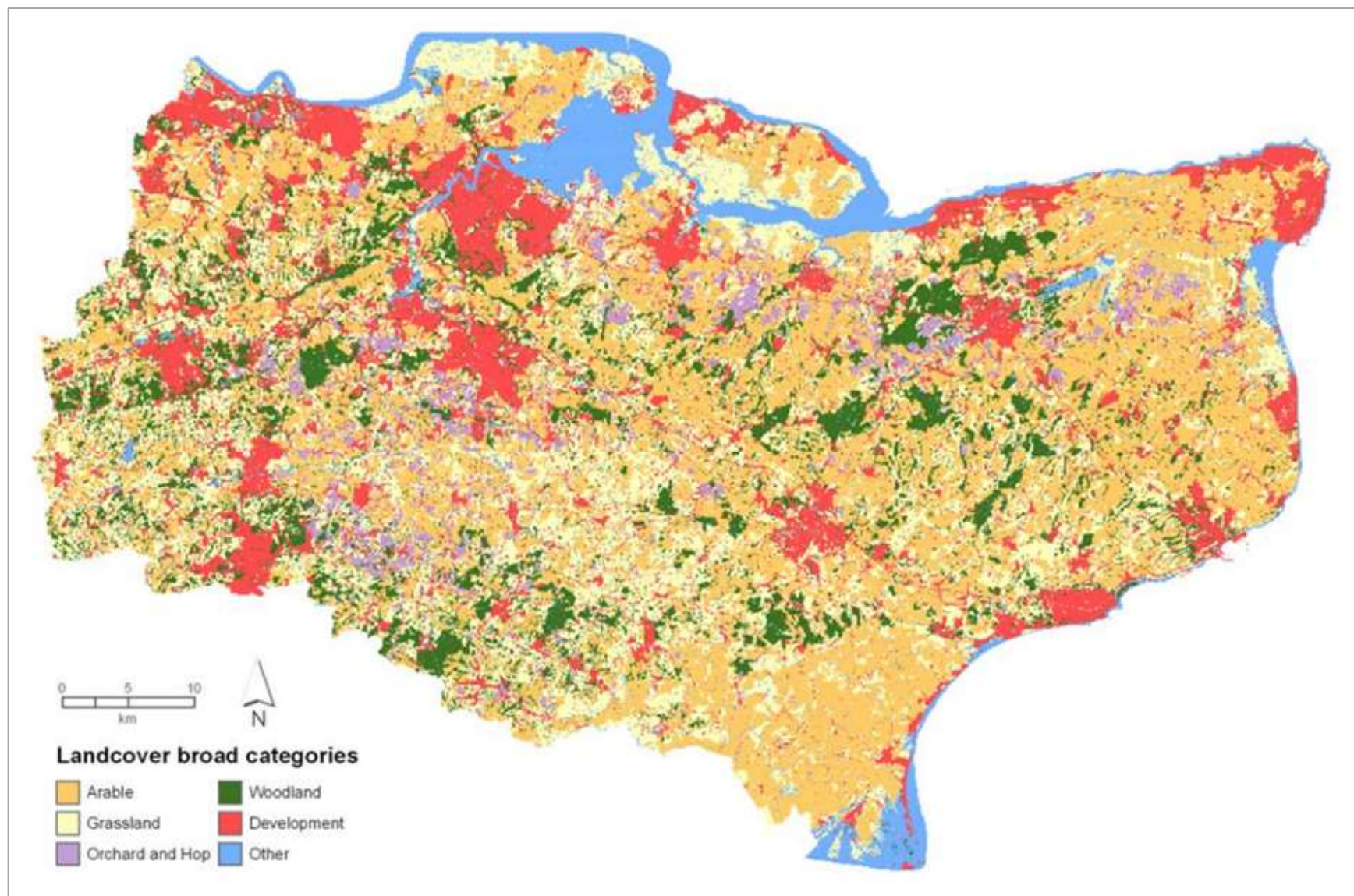
The 2012 Kent Habitat Survey undertook a land cover change analysis across the period of 1961 – 2008. Although concluded 16 years ago, this is still the most recent, comprehensive study of its kind for the county.

The map overleaf illustrates the broad landcover of the county. Arable has the greatest extent, followed by grassland, development and then woodland.

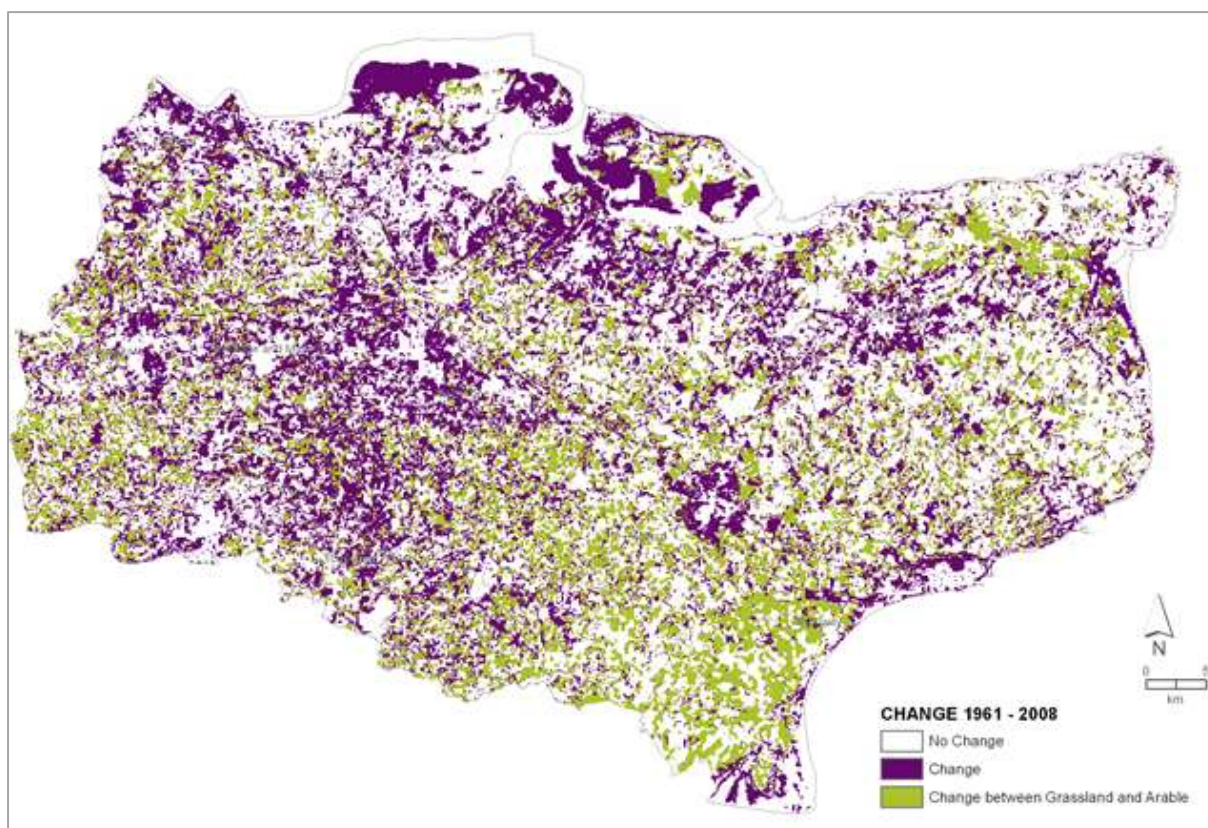
The change analysis showed that land covered by development had noticeably increased, from nearly 11% in 1961 to over 17% in 2008. This represented a total increase of 62% on the 1961 resource. Orchards and hop cover had declined the most, with a dramatic two-thirds of the resource lost since 1961. The extent of land covered by arable and grassland had changed very little, hovering around 60%.

The two maps overleaf illustrate the changes – the first since 1961 and the second for the last decade of the survey period. The change between arable and grassland does not necessarily represent a real or permanent change and is more a reflection of the agricultural economy fluctuation.

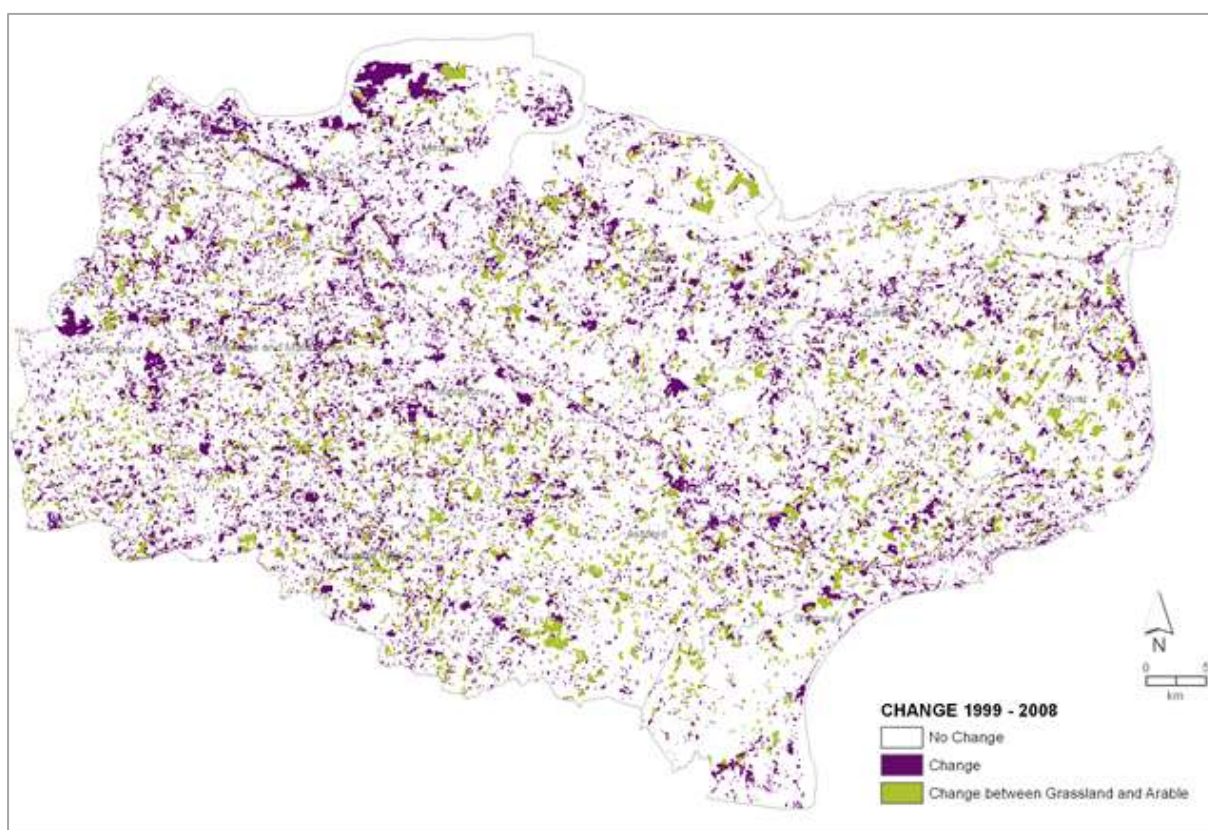




Map of broad landcover in Kent (2008)



Filtered change in landcover 1961 to 2008



Filtered change in landcover 1999 to 2008

4.2 Changes in the distribution and extent of habitats

The 2012 Kent Habitat Survey also undertook an analysis of habitat change, since the published survey 10 years previously.

The change from habitats in 2003 to other habitats in 2012 totalled an area of 37,870ha. The table below shows the broad habitats that accounted for 98% of the change. All other broad habitats present in Kent had less than 0.5% change, many much less, and only accounted in total for 2% of the total change. The change does not necessarily represent a loss of habitat overall but on a broad habitat basis does represent a loss of that specific habitat type.

Broad habitat	Percentage of broad habitat changed to another habitat type
Arable and horticulture	61.76%
Improved grassland	21.41%
Neutral grassland	5.28%
Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland	2.67%
Inland rock	2.25%
Built-up areas	1.91%
Standing open water and canals	0.97%
Calcareous grassland	0.85%
Traditional orchard	0.84%
Littoral sediment	0.68%

4.3 Changes in the distribution and extent of species

In 2022, trend analysis of changes in the distribution and extent of Kent species was published, written by the county's species specialists. Whilst this showed that there was positive news to report across most of the species groups thanks to conservation efforts, the national and global trend of species declined was mirrored, with species continuing to go extinct from the county and many more threatened, along with their habitats.

However, Kent was shown to be holding its own for insects, being one of the most species rich counties in the UK for dragonflies and damselflies and having 42 of Britain's 59 resident species of butterfly. The individual trends vary, but thanks to conservation efforts, some of the rarest butterfly species, such as Heath Fritillary are now on the increase in Kent.

While nationally the abundance of moths is in decline, trends in Kent over recent years are mixed, but more species show an increase than a decrease.

Kent's amphibian populations are thought to be reasonably stable, while all four native reptile species are thought to be in decline.

Unfortunately, downward trends are also to be found in Kent's birds, especially farmland and woodland species, and wintering waterfowl that previously were

increasing. Populations of most of Kent's bat species have also declined in recent decades.

Kent is also on the frontline for species colonising from Europe with cattle egret and black winged stilt arrival and establishment being linked to climate change. The downside of proximity to Europe is that airborne pathogens such as ash dieback are easily spread and this fungal disease is now firmly established in the county.

Some headlines from the State of Nature in Kent report (2022) are shown below, with more detail provided within the corresponding species priority in part 2.

Wins for Kent's species	Losses for Kent's species
✓ First Wasp Spider recorded in Kent (1997). ✓ Water-biter Bush-cricket reintroduced to Lydden Temple Ewell (1990s). ✓ Little Egret regularly breeding in Kent (2000). ✓ UK's first enclosed Beaver trial established at Ham Fen (2001). ✓ Brown Hairstreak recorded for the first time since 1971 (2016). ✓ Few-flowered Spike-Rush found at Ham Fen after a 142 year absence from the county (2018). ✓ Little Tern fledged at the Castle Coote area of South Swale reserve for the first time in 15 years (2019). ✓ Micro-moth <i>Hypercallia citrinalis</i> rediscovered in Kent having last been recorded in 1979 (2019). ✓ Greater Horseshoe Bat rediscovered in Kent (2019).	✗ Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly lost from Kent (1997). ✗ Frog Orchid last recorded in Kent (1998). ✗ Pearl-bordered Fritillary Butterfly lost from Kent (2002). ✗ Willow Tit last year of regular breeding in Kent (2005). ✗ Redstart ceased breeding in Kent (2016). ✗ Turtle Dove added to the Rare Breeding Birds Panel species list (2018). ✗ Bugs Matter survey finds 50% fewer insects in Kent than in 2004 (2019).



5. Pressures, threats and challenges for Kent and Medway's nature

Changes in Kent's habitats and species are influenced by a range of pressures, challenges, and drivers. It is important that any strategy to recover the county's nature takes these into account, addressing them directly where possible and acknowledging the limitations they may present where this is not possible.

Many of the pressures described here are linked to both climate change and the competing demands on land use – which together present the biggest problems facing Kent's habitats and species.

Through strategy workshops, Kent's stakeholders assisted in compiling the current and future pressures and challenges facing nature in the county.



PRESSURES

SOME OF THE PRESSURES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED FOR BIODIVERSITY IN KENT...



PRESSURES

SOME OF THE PRESSURES THAT WERE IDENTIFIED FOR BIODIVERSITY IN KENT...

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES



LAND MANAGEMENT



RECREATIONAL PRESSURES



DISEASES + INVASIVE + NON-INVASIVE SPECIES



LACK OF FUNDING + RESOURCES



5.1 Climate Change

The strategy area is on the frontline of climate change. Climate change impacts include warmer, wetter winters and drier summers; and it is considered that as a result of climate change, Kent and Medway has experienced some of the hottest UK temperatures in recent years.

Based on the Met Office's UK Climate Projections (UKCP) for the South-East, by 2080:

- summers are likely to be hotter by around 5°C to 6°C
- winters are likely to be warmer by around 3°C to 4°C
- summer rainfall is likely to decrease by 30% to 50%
- winter rainfall is likely to increase by 20% to 30%
- sea level rise is likely to increase by 0.8m

The impacts of climate change are likely to be felt acutely in Kent with its long, strategically important coastline, large number of properties at risk of flooding and warm summers compared with the rest of the United Kingdom.

Kent is facing immediate and urgent challenges relating to climate change, including new pests and diseases, sea level rise and coastal erosion. Both drought and flooding are affecting our water bodies and wetlands. Other impacts include water scarcity, wildfires soil erosion and poor air quality. Changes in species distribution and abundance, and changes in land management practice are also taking place.

Drought is a climate change impact that is being further compounded by a growing population and associated high demand for water – not just for people but also for the accompanying food production. As a result, Kent is now a water-stressed county, which in turn is impacting on where certain types of food production and development can take place.

With our landmass gradually dipping into the sea due to isostatic effects, habitats on the Kent and Medway coast are particularly vulnerable to sea-level rise. Furthermore, rising sea temperatures present an additional pressure on native habitats and species.

There is a rate of habitat condition change taking place because of climate change that many native species can't keep up with. Some species are moving north, and others are declining. Fragmentation of habitats and the wider landscape can restrict the ability of species to move in response to our changing climate.

Climate change is resulting in disruption for pollinating species, and in migratory patterns and life cycles for a range of other species. The decline in the insect populations has been linked to climate change, as well as other factors such as land management practices, including the use of pesticides.

Meanwhile species previously not found in Kent and Medway are migrating from further south as a result of climate change, with changing conditions also favouring

some less welcome invasive, non-native species, with negative effects on our endemic species.

Extreme climate events, including periods of intensive rainfall, are resulting in pollution from excessive nutrient run-off and erosion, reducing soil health. The invertebrates in our soil are often unable to cope with the impacts of water-logging and reduced oxygen in one season, and then a lack of sufficient water in another.

The county's wetland habitats are particularly vulnerable to these extremes of wetter winters and drier summers, while rare habitats such as chalk streams are susceptible to slower flow rates in summer and the increased build-up of pollutants caused by this. Other habitats, such as chalk downland, while generally more resilient to climate change, are also vulnerable to these extremes, with intense rainfall damaging or washing away the top layers of the soil.

Our approach to mitigating climate change and finding greener energy sources, can also create impacts on the natural environment in terms of where projects such as solar and wind farms, are located.

Whilst the causes of climate change are global and largely out of control of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the impacts of it are an overriding context for the Strategy. Consequently, many of the priorities and potential measures are looking to manage and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate and make our natural environment more resilient and adaptable. Some of the key considerations for climate change impacts when designing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy are outlined in the table overleaf.



Climate change impact	Key considerations
Drought	• Climate change impacts compounded by extra demand for water extraction – demand for water for food production, nature conservation and of course communities • River flow rates are reduced, resulting in a greater concentration of pollutants. • Riverbanks dry out, resulting in habitat loss for Water Voles, Kingfishers and Otters. • Soil health suffers - reduction in the number worms, slugs, snails available. • Vital areas for breeding wading birds, such as coastal grazing marsh which needs to stay wet all year, are drying up. • Saline lagoons' delicate salinity regime is vulnerable to drier summers (and wetter winters). • Difficulty in establishing newly planted trees. • Difficulty in establishing certain types of crops, a situation driving land use change/uncertainty over land use.
Extreme weather events	• Heatwaves in summer and heavier rainfall and increased flooding in winter. • Soil quality is impacted on a range of habitats. • Tidal flooding can result in saltwater encroachment on freshwater habitats. • Contamination of waterways, through the concentration of pollutants. • Risk of wildfires destroying some habitats.
Higher temperatures	• Biodiversity has optimum temperatures for a given habitat or species. • Rising freshwater water temperatures - reduces oxygen - loss in fauna. • Small changes in sea temperature are affecting fauna. • Less frost in winter to break up clay soils – decline in soil health. • Changes in seasonal patterns affecting life cycles.
Sea level rise and coastal squeeze	• Intertidal habitats such as saltmarsh and mudflat are gradually lost. • Loss of annual vegetative drift line, so vegetative shingle cannot replenish.

5.2 Pollution

5.2.1 Water pollution

Nutrient pollution remains one of the most pressing environmental challenges facing Kent's rivers, streams and groundwater. Phosphates and nitrates are the main pollutants; nitrates are particularly persistent in slow-moving groundwater. Most rivers in Kent—including all chalk streams—are fed by groundwater, making them

especially vulnerable to nutrient pollution. Once groundwater is contaminated, it can continue to pollute surface waters, creating a cycle of poor water quality that limits nature recovery unless directly addressed.

Agriculture is still the leading source of nitrate contamination in groundwater, followed by leaking sewers, private sewage systems, and historic waste. The State of Nature in Kent (2022) highlights widespread exceedances of safe nitrate levels, with long-term implications for drinking water and ecosystem health. Phosphorus pollution is driven primarily by treated sewage effluent, with agricultural run-off and private treatment systems also contributing. These sources fuel eutrophication, leading to algal blooms, oxygen depletion, and damage to aquatic ecosystems. Using too much fertiliser—particularly over-application or spreading during heavy rainfall—worsens the problem by washing nitrates and phosphates into rivers and lakes.

Surface water bodies are especially vulnerable during summer months, when low flows concentrate pollutants. Chalk streams, which are ecologically rare and hydrogeologically sensitive, are particularly at risk. While improvements in surface water quality may be achievable in the short term, groundwater recovery will take longer due to the legacy of historic nitrate use and the slow movement of water through the soil to the water table.

Pollution is not confined to inland waters. Coastal areas in Kent are increasingly affected by sewage discharges, storm overflow events, and illegal outflows. These are compounded by risks from petroleum pollution due to shipping. High phosphate levels and sewage pollution contribute to algal blooms that smother seagrass beds—vital nursery habitats for juvenile fish.

Other pollutants are also of concern. Metals, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, flea and other parasite treatments, industrial chemicals, plastics and silt, particularly from housing development sites, all contribute to the degradation of water quality. Microplastics and chemicals such as PFAS (“forever chemicals”) are pervasive in freshwater. They do not break down naturally and will take an extremely long time to remove.

The water quality information outlined above is based on the WFD classifications for 2019 and taken from the Kent State of Nature Report (2022). Interim classifications for ecological quality elements were produced for 2022 where suitable data was available. The next full set of classifications will be produced for 2025.



5.2.2 Air pollution

Air pollution sources include almost anything that involves fuel combustion. Air pollution can influence the quality of soil and water bodies by polluting rain and snow, which falls into water and soil environments. Of particular concern are small particulates in the atmosphere, as they remain suspended in the atmosphere for a long time and can be dispersed over a wide area. These particles can change the nutrient balance in water ecosystems, leading to species loss and damage to forests and crops. They also acidify water bodies.

Kent is going to see an increase in road freight, road building and road widening, which will have impacts in terms of air quality and biodiversity.

Atmospheric nitrogen is also having a significant impact on nature, with excessive levels of nitrogen causing loss of sensitive species, changes to habitat structure and function, reduction in biodiversity, changes in soil chemistry, and increased sensitivity to climate change and pests. Ground level ozone can reduce plant growth, flowering and crop yields.

A recent study of atmospheric fine particulates suggested that, across Kent, atmospheric levels were double the World Health Organization's recommended annual average maximum limit. The impact on wildlife and biodiversity can be significant, leading to health problems for animal species, including reproductive failure and birth effects when exposed to high levels of pollutants.

Ammonia from agricultural activity, including fertiliser application and intensive livestock production, also produces additional nitrogen air pollution. Where deposited in soils and vegetation, it can acidify soil and over-fertilise sensitive ecosystems; it also acts as a fertiliser, making conditions too rich for many wild fungi and plants. In 63% of Special Areas of Conservation – our best wildlife sites – nitrogen levels are already too high, with dire consequences for animals, including pollinating insects, which depend on wild fungi and plants for food, nutrients and shelter.

Nitrogen dioxide can negatively impact on insect biomass (Campbell & Vallano, 2018) or directly impair the fitness of birds via inhalation exposure (Sanderfoot & Holloway, 2017). When leached into water, it leads to eutrophication, where elevated concentrations of nutrients stimulate the blooming of aquatic algae, which can cause an imbalance in the diversity of fish and ultimately high numbers of fish deaths.

Ongoing analysis in the Countryside Survey has clearly demonstrated that over the last 30-40 years, roadside verges have seen significant decline in once common wildflowers such as Comfrey, Lady's Smock, White Dead-nettle, Garlic Mustard, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Ox-eye Daisy, and Early Purple Orchid. At the same time, Cow Parsley, nettle species and some grasses have flourished because it has been fertilised into excessive growth by nitrogen compounds from car exhausts, especially diesel ones.

Deposited directly from the air and in rain, the nitrogen enriches the soil, creates acidic conditions and causes direct damage to our flora. More than two thirds of our wildflowers, including plants like Harebell and Betony, require low or medium levels

of nitrogen. Only robust species, such as Common Nettle, Cleavers and Hemlock thrive in nutrient enriched soils. Woodlands, grasslands, heaths and bogs have all become colonised by nitrogen-loving plants, with knock-on effects for all our wildlife.

5.2.3 Soil pollution

A key factor for the health of many species in the agricultural landscape begins with the soil, but good soil health is essential for all habitats.

Across Kent, conventional farming and agrochemical inputs for improved pasture, arable and in top fruit, have reduced the soil biology, leading to a break in the food chain. In extreme cases excessive nutrients from certain agricultural activities, along with sewage effluent, are contributing to soil pollution; the polluted soil is then very restrictive in terms of the biodiversity it can support.

5.3 Water demand and management

Water resources and scarcity is an issue in Kent & Medway, with increasing demands from an ever-growing population, including food production, being compounded by climate change.

The county is faced with the challenge of too much water in the wrong places and too little where it is needed. Increased hard standing from urbanisation and developed areas, along with more erratic weather and intense rainfall, has resulted in increased surface flooding risks. Climate change impacts, including higher temperatures have increased the need for more water, while drought reduces the natural supply, in these circumstances over-abstraction compounds these issues.

Surface water drainage, particularly in urban areas, can have significant impacts on nature, both positive and negative. Improper drainage can lead to flooding, erosion, and pollution, harming ecosystems and wildlife. However, sustainable drainage systems can mitigate these negative impacts and even offer benefits like improved water quality, enhanced biodiversity, and flood risk reduction.

Sufficient water is critical for many of our habitats. For instance, freshwater grazing marsh relies on a good supply of water, and this is often not available in sufficient amounts during spring and summer when the wildlife that rely on this water supply, such as Lapwing and Redshank, are present. Further to this, low river flows in the summer months results in concentrated pollutants, leading to the contamination of waterways which in extreme cases, can prove fatal for the associated wildlife.

As well as the demands we place on water, we are also dealing with the consequences of centuries of man-made river modifications. This has included the straightening of rivers, with barriers such as weirs and other structures being established. The impact of this is reduced flow variation for fish and amphibians to spawn and prevention passage for fish and eel migration.

Some wetlands have been infilled and, where wetlands do remain, there can be poorly maintained infrastructure and insufficient management. In addition, water is often drained from catchments too quickly for wildlife to cope.

As a result, there is loss and degradation of floodplain and riparian habitats, with many rivers and wetlands no longer acting in a natural way. Ultimately this has resulted in reduced connectivity within our catchments and an overall reduction in biodiversity.

5.4 Human pressures

5.4.1 Access

There are often inequalities in access to nature, with some areas having neither sufficient access routes nor natural greenspace close to where they live. The societal and health impact of this is compounded further, given that many of these areas are all areas of deprivation and low health. And where access does exist, there can be tensions between the needs of nature and the need for public use of the land, particularly on more sensitive wildlife sites. Our coastal sites are particularly vulnerable to this, where recreational disturbance impacts on breeding, passage and wintering waterbirds can render large areas of otherwise suitable habitat effectively unusable by these species.

The county's Public Rights of Way network plays a vital role in providing access to nature, but in some cases disturbance of wildlife is an issue. Many people will stick to Public Rights of Way and other appropriate pathways and routes, but in some cases, veering off these results in wildlife disturbance and trampling of vegetation, soil and sensitive habitats. In other cases, where there is no public access, people still use land for recreation, resulting in risk to not just wildlife but livestock and crops, plus antisocial behaviour such as littering and vandalism.

In urban areas, the type of green space provided and its management, is also often pressurising nature. Sometimes there is an aversion to having areas that are seen as "overgrown" but would actually provide better habitat for wildlife. This is often accompanied by an ingrained intent to maintain tidiness – also to the detriment of wildlife.



Disturbance of wildlife by people and dogs often takes the form of ground nesting birds, such as skylarks, being put up from their nests. Livestock can also be disturbed, not only potentially harming the animals themselves but also resulting in the trampling of nests. In some areas, dog attacks on animals used in conservation grazing have made it near impossible to manage these sites for wildlife. Disturbance to feeding birds, particularly on our coasts is also an issue. Many of our sites are designated for overwintering wildfowl and wading bird species and the disturbance of these birds through leisure activities, including dog walking, is putting a serious strain on the bird's ability to feed, rest and survive the winter and spring migration back to their nesting sites.

5.4.2 Criminal and antisocial activity

Criminal activity relating to wildlife and nature can take many forms. Fly-tipping is a common problem which is both unsightly and can result in soil contamination and harm to wildlife. Illegal waste disposal causes pollution. Litter has direct impacts on wildlife, getting into the food chain and killing animals, causing injuries or contaminating water bodies.

Vandalism can cause problems to our wild areas such as destruction of newly planted trees, removal of nest boxes or monitoring equipment, or burning of grassland and heathland sites.

Illegal hare coursing still takes places in some areas of the county, and there are also reports of poaching and the shooting of a range of wildlife.

5.4.3 Wildlife removal

Whilst sustainable foraging is a perfectly legitimate activity which connects people with nature, excessive foraging for fungi, fruit and other flora and fauna can have a negative impact. Collecting orchids, other rare plants and birds' eggs is not the problem it once was, but incidents are still reported and pose a risk to our rarer species.

5.4.4 Disconnect with nature

There are many people that strongly value their local wildlife, and are even acting for nature through community groups, volunteering etc. Where apathy towards nature does exist, it can result in a lack of motivation to take personal responsibility for nature recovery or to provide a voice for nature. Apathy also means that the health and wellbeing benefits of nature are not always realised. This is self-perpetuating, as a lack of connection can further the apathy.

Disconnect with nature can be particularly prevalent in urban populations, where in some cases there is limited opportunity to experience nature. But it can also happen in rural locations, where barriers might be more psychological, such as fear of nature or remote places.

Disconnect with nature means that people do not value nature, however placing a financial value on nature doesn't always result in the right outcomes. If society only sees nature for the economic value it has, rather than the inherent value it has in its own right, some of the less tangible benefits that it brings may be overlooked and further damage done. It is also suggested that the loss of nature can be compensated for if enough money is spent. Whilst recognising the value of nature may result in important finance, if the sole value placed on nature is financial, then nature and society will ultimately lose out.

5.4.5 Lack of knowledge and understanding

Apathy that stems from simply not understanding or having knowledge can equally prevent a person from striving to better understand. When people lack understanding, they are also often unaware of how their actions and behaviour impacts wildlife. This can result in unintentional damage to or mismanagement and use of the natural environment.

By contrast, although public interest in more charismatic mammal and bird species is helpful, it can mean that there is a lack of appreciation of species, such as invertebrates, that underpin the wider ecosystem. Having a better understanding is important, since "everyday" wildlife is where most people can make a difference, through approaches such as nature-friendly gardening practices, bird and bat boxes and maintaining wildlife corridors.

5.5 Built up areas

The public built and managed estate – parks, gardens, schools, sports facilities – are not always used to their potential for nature. This itself presents an opportunity to support nature recovery through improvements to land management.

While some amenity spaces such as sports fields need to be closely mown and have limited wildlife value, they are still part of a network of green spaces and if managed well this wider network provides vital green lungs in urban areas and connectivity for wildlife between the town and the wider countryside.

Many green spaces are not managed for nature however and are over-mown, with plant species not allowed to flower and tree planting does not always focus on native and climate resilient species. Weed control through use of pesticides (mainly herbicides) in public space management, also restricts biodiversity.

Some nature friendly land management practices, such as cut and collect, can be more costly at the outset and are sometimes simply not accessible as a result.

Greenspace is also lost as a result of front gardens being paved over for parking and grass replaced with artificial grass, paving stones, gravel and impermeable plastic layers. This also results in a reduction in soil health, increased surface water run-off and potentially pollution of water bodies.

A growing population requires housing and infrastructure – not only does this result in land take but also fragments the landscape and reduces connectivity. People also need somewhere to recreate – as the population increases so does their impact, with human disturbance of wildlife a frequent problem and particularly acute where development is close to fragile habitats. The green infrastructure provided for new developments is vital for alleviating pressure on more sensitive wildlife sites. A further impact of an increasing population is the associated number of pets causing disturbance to, and predation on, wildlife.

Roads result in a fragmented natural environment, direct mortalities from vehicles and air, noise and light pollution. Kent is going to see an increase in road freight, road building and road widening, which will impact biodiversity.

Light pollution is not just from roads but urban street lighting and other sources. It has a range of mainly negative impacts on nature, including interfering with biological rhythms and influencing behaviours. Insect populations can be particularly disoriented, with moth species being disproportionately preyed on by bats for example. In turn, bats also suffer from disruption of navigation and roosting behaviours because of light pollution.

Improved water management is vital to ensure pollutants from wastewater are not reaching the natural environment, this is not just phosphates from sewage, but flea and other parasite treatments for pets, detergents and various microplastics.

All new development can present opportunities for nature when delivered well if wildlife connectivity into and through sites is properly designed. This can range from hedges, planted verges and trees, to fencing which allows hedgehog and other wildlife movements. New building designs and maintenance practices have led to a loss of nest and roosting sites in buildings for urban birds and bats but this is easily addressed through the use of bird and bat boxes on new developments - however inclusion of this, alongside native planting in landscaping, is not always common practice. Nature in urban environments also allows for connection with nature and provides regulatory services such as improving air quality and mitigating noise.

The pressure for growth across Kent is already significant but is likely to increase further as a result of renewed housing targets in 2025. Whilst the Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not preclude development it will play an important role in shaping the future growth of Kent and maximising benefits for nature.

5.6 Agricultural practices

High input farming has been a feature of post war agriculture and the move to bigger farms, bigger machinery and monocultures has resulted in the removal of hedges and reduction of field margins. Horticulture, once common to Kent such as traditional orchard management, has been on the decline for decades, being found by many growers to be economically unviable. Changes to the way in which the land is used not only results in it visually transforming but also has significant impacts for the quality of the environment and wildlife.

Intensive approaches have contributed to soil health degradation, a decline in pollinators, eutrophication of water and bioaccumulation of harmful chemicals up through the food chain.

There has been an accompanying decline in farmland birds, such as Yellowhammer and Turtle Dove, and general bee and butterfly populations. Species once common on farmland such as the Lapwing, are now pushed to the coastal margins.

Loss of traditional land management techniques and skills, such as ditch management, hedge laying and coppicing, means that there is not always the expertise ready to hand to implement land management more sensitive to nature.

In some cases, lack of livestock and graziers, is due to insufficient or expensive fencing and a lack of local abattoirs. This is to the detriment not only of the viability of this type of farming, but also to the habitat and species it supports – freshwater marshes and wading birds being a good example.

Regenerative farming practices, which focus on soil health rather than chemicals, and other nature-friendly farming practices are now on the rise, but the move to such practices is not always easy, especially if the initial transition is more costly. Concerns over impacts on yield and associated incomes means that there can be a reluctance to move away from herbicides, pesticides and synthetic fertiliser and these are all still being widely used, sometimes excessively.

Financial drivers and new demands, such as the need for biofuels and produce outside of their growing season, is seen to be driving intensification in new ways. The use of polytunnels is increasing in some areas, resulting in habitat loss and can also have other environmental impacts, such as increased run-off and soil degradation.

Economic pressures could lead to a prioritising of survival, maximising land use and income, over sustainable practices. Competing demands on land is the biggest problem facing the landscape.

New types of land use such as vineyards are also becoming more common in Kent, as annual temperatures rise and because our chalk geology is suitable. When carried out with nature in mind, this could be a positive trend, as vineyards tend to not use all the land, but there are concerns about areas of chalk grassland being taken over and the sustainability of some practices.



5.7 Land management practices

Most of our woodlands need some sort of management for wildlife to thrive and traditional practices such as coppicing, which have declined over the years, have helped to provide that management.

Wood lotting or the dividing up of woodland for sale results in inconsistent management and fragmentation, while close linear planting is not good for wildlife and results in woodland with little understory for flowers and butterflies and no deadwood for invertebrates.

Deer are increasingly becoming a destructive pest in some woodland habitats, stopping natural regeneration by eating saplings and damaging woodland through bark stripping.

A lack of grazing on chalk, neutral, acid and maritime grasslands has meant that many areas have been lost to successional scrub habitats. Despite scrub not being welcome on these grassland habitats, it is in itself an important habitat but one that is often underappreciated and overlooked in terms of the wildlife value it provides. Although a lack of management is responsible for a lot of degraded habitats in the county, over-management and a leaning towards “tidy” has meant that road verges, sea walls and amenity areas have been intensively mowed and cleared of “messy” scrub, where these areas could be providing habitat for wildlife.

5.8 Game hunting, wildfowling, game fishing and coarse fishing

The hunting and shooting of animals can be a contentious issue within nature conservation circles, but as shown by a 2020 Natural England review of gamebird releases and shoots, the impacts of this activity can be both positive and negative and the picture is often quite complex.

Within Kent, gamebird shooting and wildfowling are two common sporting pursuits, with the former mainly relating to the shooting of Pheasants and Red-legged Partridges, normally reared under captive conditions before being released in woodland and on farmland. Released gamebirds themselves have effects on the fauna and flora of the habitats into which they are released, and their release is accompanied by habitat and other management activities which also have a range of effects on habitats and wildlife.

The Natural England review found that the consequences of associated land management was largely positive, typically accompanied by increases in numbers or diversity of plants, invertebrates and non-game vertebrates. Most of the negative impacts come from the released birds themselves with impacts including soil disturbance, nutrient enrichment of soil and water, reductions in non-woody plants and reduction in abundance and/or diversity of some invertebrates. There is also evidence of negative effects on reptiles and sensitive lichens, but these occurred in very specific conflicts with nature conservation interests.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the negative impacts are most greatly observed as the density of released birds is increased. As with most activities in the natural environment, when operated to best practice, negative impacts can be ameliorated and positive outcomes enhanced.

The other opportunity for nature from land management is related to wildfowling. The shooting of wild duck, geese and certain wading birds is an affiliated activity that also occurs in Kent, with areas of wetland managed for this purpose to provide habitat such as marsh land and reedbed.

Despite the potential benefits to nature, there still remain concerns in the UK – particularly in relation to unsustainable and illegal management practices. Conservation charities have raised concerns regarding the illegal killing of birds of prey, the use of lead ammunition and the release of millions of non-native species into the natural environment. With the overall impact of game hunting and wildfowling unclear, it is important to note the potential pressures and challenges this may place on nature recovery in the county whilst recognising, and not missing, the opportunities the activity may also present to deliver gains.

Game fishing for eating and coarse fishing, where species are typically returned to the water, are popular activities with generally a low impact on nature. However, when best practice is not followed, discarded or lost recreational fishing gear (including lines, fishing tackle, nets, and traps) remain in the environment for years.

In addition, the fencing of water bodies used for fishing; to exclude humans and predators, can have an impact on the movement of animals, including waterfowl.

5.9 Diseases and invasive and non-native species

As a gateway to Europe – resulting from both geography and infrastructure – Kent is the first stop for many invasive species and diseases from Europe and further afield. This can include species from across the globe, transported in food produce or in ballast water in hulls of ships, which become truly invasive, outcompeting native wildlife or causing disease in native species and in humans. Or can simply be through species making their own passage. Not unique to Kent, but still an issue, is the use of non-native plants in landscaping, which then spread to natural areas.

Ash dieback is a prime example, which has had a huge impact on the native population of ash trees in Kent and Medway, changing the landscape of the county and a habitat so many species depended on. Dutch Elm disease is another example of a tree disease that saw vast numbers of elm trees wiped out across the county over the past 50 years.

Kent's waterways have been impacted by a number of invasive species including the plants Himalayan Balsam, Floating Pennywort and Giant and Japanese Knotweed. Invasive animals include Signal Crayfish and American Mink. On our coastline, there are issues with the Carpet Sea Squirt, Brushed Clawed Crabs and Pacific Oyster, all of which outcompete and displace native species, altering the structure and function of our coastal ecosystems.

Non-native plants have also affected terrestrial habitats, with Rhododendron taking over areas of native woodlands and Cotoneaster spreading on chalk grassland.

Various management and monitoring programmes are in place within the county, but the threat of new invasives and non-natives is always a risk given the Kent and Medway geography.

However not all migrant species will be unwelcome and as a result of a changing climate, we will see new species move into the county. The challenge for nature recovery is determining which will add and enhance our ecosystems and which will cause harm.

5.10 Lack of funding and resources

The lack of funding and resources has a big influence on nature recovery and is, in fact, a driver for nature degradation. Even protected sites are not always afforded that protection, because of insufficient management, enforcement and policing – linked to insufficient funding and resources.

Many of our most valued sites are in unfavourable condition and for those that are protected, it may be questionable if they are still managing to fully support the features they were originally designated for. This is not because of lack of care or interest on the part of the landowner. Habitat management can be costly and time consuming – and often that investment will not generate any economic returns that can be reinvested. Management is also complex – one size does not fit all and often approaches need adjustments depending on the time of year, the environmental conditions or the response of the habitat and species. It is something that requires specialist knowledge and input.

Funding for nature restoration, enhancement or creation is often associated with a time-limited project and whilst the achievements of such projects can be significant, they can be short-lived if there is no onward investment to manage and maintain the gains. Funding is also regularly targeted towards capital works and does not always provide for the personnel needed to support, coordinate and deliver the nature recovery action.

Central investment in the natural environment can be short-term as well, designed to fit around current policy and priorities which can change from one government term to another. Any uncertainty relating to financing and grants can be a big deterrent to a landowner considering entering into agreements for nature recovery.

Green financing and investment approaches are welcomed but they are not necessarily the quick fix to problem of under-funding. Markets are developing and there is a wariness about approaches, often borne out of a lack of knowledge and understanding. And the lack of regulation and standards, that would ensure that the environment remains the core consideration, is also seen as a barrier.

Delivering nature recovery alongside nature-based solutions, and drawing investment from sources that might not otherwise be open to such actions, may prove an effective approach. However, this still relies on there being the public money available for these public services. Many public services are struggling to deliver the infrastructure they are required to within the grants received, so additional biodiversity gains alongside these can be difficult.

Whilst this pressure is not something that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy can directly address, by targeting action to where it is most needed, where it will deliver the greatest benefit and where there may be the potential to deliver nature-based solutions, it does mean that the best is made with what little resources there may be. And the county is ready to take advantage of any investment that might be forthcoming, for the benefit of nature recovery.

5.11 Lack of data, evidence and understanding

There are various gaps in the data for certain habitats and species, and data can go out of date quickly. This was a point commonly raised by stakeholders during development of the Strategy and an issue that is picked up in various sections.

The impact of a lack of data means that issues are not always identified, the evidence for action and funding is, in some cases, insufficient and we don't always have a reliable baseline on which to measure progress.

Sometimes important decisions are held back due to a lack of data. For instance, species reintroductions, which could aid the development of functional ecosystems being blocked on this basis. An evidence base on the impacts of reintroductions is essential, but often there is no policy and funding support linked to this.



6. Strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy sits within a framework of national and local strategies, plans and regulations. Understanding these, and considering them within the development of our priorities for nature, ensures our priorities for nature are consistent across the county and joined-up, our ambitions are framed within existing delivery mechanisms and opportunities for mutual support of priorities and delivery of measures are identified.

6.1 Local strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy – local plans

The National Planning Policy Framework requires local plans to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment – consequently, the county’s local planning authorities already have identified priorities and plans for biodiversity.

In setting the criteria for what the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy would include as its priorities, it was agreed that one of the considerations should be the alignment to common and consistent priorities from existing and emerging local plans across the county.

In addition, where ambitions within local plans and associated strategies went into more detail, this also provided outline action on which potential measures could be framed.

Consideration of the county’s local plans in this regard would help find the balance between producing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy that was not only ambitious but also deliverable, working with existing local policy frameworks and the delivery mechanisms for nature recovery that they provide. It was also an opportunity to identify opportunities for collaborative and focussed action, where priorities aligned. A thorough review of the Strategy area’s local plans and other relevant strategies was undertaken. The full details of the review can be found in Appendix 2.1 and a summary is provided below.

6.1.1 Opportunities to address shared pressures, threats and challenges at the local level

All areas have growth and development targets, which results in development pressures. Alongside this is the need to provide the infrastructure to support this growth. Whilst development aims to be sustainable and minimise environmental impacts, land take, habitat fragmentation and other residual environmental impact is inevitable. Without significant mitigation and compensation measures being secured, habitats and ecosystem services will be significantly degraded.

Flood risk is another significant threat across all the county – whether that be coastal, fluvial or surface water – and this risk increases with climate change bringing more extreme weather. With Kent being a coastal county, it is not surprising that coastal changes, erosion, land loss and flooding are a challenge for many local planning authorities in the county.

Water quality and quantity is another challenge shared by all, with issues with both security of supply and pollution a concern. The impacts of climate change and the effect this has on the population's health, wellbeing, and risks to living conditions are also a threat.

The other pressures, threats and challenges discussed in the section above are experienced by more than one, and sometimes the majority of the district or borough.

Many of the pressures, threats and challenges felt at the local level occur on a landscape scale and often across administrative boundaries. Flood risk management, water supply and pollution and habitat fragmentation are just some of the challenges best addressed on a scale that goes beyond one district. Hence the Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides the shared vision and framework to enable this collaboration and address matters in a functional way, especially where nature-based solutions can offer multiple benefits to multiple districts when implemented at a strategic level.

6.1.2 Opportunities to collaboratively restore, enhance and create habitats

All districts refer to and endorse the aims and objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020, demonstrating an aspiration to maintain, restore and create habitats that are thriving with wildlife and plants, and ensure the county's terrestrial, freshwater, intertidal and marine environments regain and retain good health. Whilst framed slightly differently, the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be aiming to achieve the same and provides an updated and spatially framed collaborative approach for nature recovery.

All districts place the same importance of retaining their green and blue infrastructure networks and using management and implementation plans to do so. The majority have a green infrastructure strategy of some form underpinning this, with plans and mapping for how and where these networks can be restored and enhanced. This provides useful evidence for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy in determining where urban greening can provide mutual benefits to both nature and people. The protection of trees and woodlands are a priority shared by most districts and boroughs as well as safeguarding the green gaps between settlements or districts. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will not only support such aspirations but by framing the important role of green and blue infrastructure in supporting nature recovery, may also open up opportunities for funding and investment to support the enhancement and extension of such natural assets. Further to retention, the county's authorities also aim to create habitat to further strengthen their green and blue infrastructure networks. For many, woodland creation and tree planting is a top priority for habitat creation.

The importance of development integrating green and blue infrastructure is evident throughout the local plans. Incorporating biodiversity into new developments, enhancing the green and blue infrastructure corridors, the use of urban greening, the retention of original trees and hedgerows and new open space provision are some shared approaches. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy can assist these authorities in targeting and focussing such actions on what will deliver the greatest gains for nature and wider benefits for their existing and new local communities.

Plans also recognise the need for development to provide surface water management, water quality and quantity management, and adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts. Where such challenges are restricting necessary housing development, working with nature may provide a solution that also delivers benefits to the local wildlife as well.

Biodiversity Net Gain provides a mechanism by which development can support nature recovery. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy will have a critical role in ensuring that the gains derived through this new, mandatory requirement make a meaningful contribution to the local biodiversity and are directed to where this contribution is most needed. Recognising the potential of Biodiversity Net Gain, several district and boroughs have ambitions to deliver beyond the mandatory 10%; to make the most of this opportunity the strategy must ensure it is fit for the purposes of informing net gain.



6.1.3 Opportunities to support wider environmental goals through nature recovery

Kent and Medway's districts and boroughs all share priorities relating to wider environmental benefits, the most common being good air quality, clean and plentiful water, climate change mitigation and adaptation, enhancement of the natural environment and built heritage, health and wellbeing and access to, and engagement with, the natural environment. They all also have net zero commitments.

Working with nature, and using nature-based solutions, these priorities can be addressed.

6.2 Local strategic context for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy – other relevant spatial plans in Kent and Medway

In addition to local plans, there are a lot of other strategies, plans and policies in place that were considered in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. In the same way as local plans, these provided a steer on other environmental priorities in the county that the Strategy should work with and potentially align to; and also provided possible actions to be used as a basis for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy potential measures.

Further, where these strategies and plans are also spatially framed, this has provided evidence to inform the mapping of the Strategy's potential measures.

The intention is to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy that would be deliverable within the county's existing strategic frameworks and identify opportunities for collaborative and focussed action, where priorities aligned.

The strategies, plans and policies that have been reviewed are:

- Catchment Flood Management Plans for North Kent, River Stour, River Medway River Darent & Cray and River Rother
- High Weald and Kent Downs National Landscape Management Plans
- Kent Biodiversity Strategy
- Kent Climate Change Adaption Plan
- Kent County Parks Strategy
- Kent District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts Strategy
- Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy
- Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Kent Local Transport Plan
- Kent Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan
- Kent Plan Bee
- Kent Plan Tree
- Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Local green infrastructure strategies

- Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Medway Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- NHS Kent and Medway Green Plan
- Preliminary flood risk assessment for Kent
- Preliminary flood risk assessment for Medway
- River Basin Management Plan for South-East
- Shoreline Management Plans for River Medway and Swale Estuary; Isle of Grain to South Foreland; and South Foreland to Beachy Head
- Surface water management plans

Appendix 2.3 provides more detail on how they have informed the Strategy.

6.3 National Strategic context for the Kent and Medway LNRS

As well as considering the local strategic priorities and policies, the future priorities of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy were also developed in consideration of the contribution they could make to the national targets and ambitions for nature recovery. An overview of those that informed the selection of Kent and Medway's priorities is provided below.

6.3.1 Environment Act 2021 and Environmental Improvement Plan 2023

The Environment Act 2021 sets national targets that all 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies are expected to contribute to. These include:

Environmental Act 2021 nature recovery targets:

- Restore or create in excess of 500,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitat outside protected sites by 2042, compared to 2022 levels.
- Halt the decline of species abundance by 2030. Ensure that species abundance in 2042 is greater than in 2022, and at least 10% greater than 2030.
- Reduce the risk of species' extinction by 2042, when compared to the risk of species' extinction in 2022.
- Increase total tree and woodland cover from 14.5% of land area now to 16.5% by 2050.
- Reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, compared to a 2018 baseline.

The Environmental Improvement Plan 2023 makes further commitments, again that should be supported by the Local Nature Recovery Strategies:

- Work to ensure that everyone in England lives within 15 minutes' walk of a green or blue space.
- Restore approximately 280,000 hectares of peatland in England by 2050.
- Restore 75% of our water bodies to good ecological status.
- Protect 30% of land and of sea in the UK for nature's recovery by 2030.

- Support farmers to create or restore 30,000 miles of hedgerows by 2037 and 45,000 miles of hedgerows by 2050.
- Manage our woodlands for biodiversity, climate and sustainable forestry.
- Restore 75% of Sites of Special Scientific Interest to favourable condition by 2042. By 31 January 2028 50% of SSSIs will have actions on track to achieve favourable condition.
- Ensure delivery & management of actions & policies that contribute towards our 25 Year Environmental Plan goals are suitable & adaptive to a changing climate.
- Make sure Local Nature Recovery Strategies include proposals for Nature-based Solutions which improve flood risk management where appropriate.
- Achieve Good Environmental Status for our seas.
- Reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides by 73% and ammonia by 16% by 2030 relative to 2005 levels.
- Reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of invasive non-native species by at least 50%, by 2030.

6.3.2 Delivering 30by30 on land in England 2023

In 2020, the government committed to protecting 30% of the UK's land by 2030 (30by30) – it will deliver this by:

- Strengthening: ensure effective policy and statutory safeguards and powers are in place to improve management for nature, prevent degradation and ensure appropriate access for people.
- Extending and creating: designate new protected areas and restore or create wildlife rich habitat outside of these.
- Investing: invest in habitat restoration across our protected areas and beyond.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify opportunities to create and improve wildlife-rich habitat which could, where protection or agreements for ongoing management are in place, contribute to meeting the 30by30 goal.

6.3.3 Nature Recovery Network

The Nature Recovery Network is a growing national network of wildlife-rich places, stretching from our cities to countryside, mountains to coast. It is supported by green and blue spaces that buffer and connect these wildlife-rich sites.

Growing the network involves prioritising and mapping actions, with Local Nature Recovery Strategies at the centre of this. The Local Nature Recovery Strategy's spatially-framed proposed actions, when implemented, will contribute to expanding the Nature Recovery Network. And the Local Nature Recovery Strategy partnership framework will facilitate and lead the collaboration necessary to deliver this growth

6.3.4 Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework

The Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework sets out targets for National Parks and National Landscapes aimed at supporting Protected Landscapes meet their huge potential for nature, climate, people and place.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are noted as an important evidence base to aid effective planning for nature recovery activities as part of the Protected Landscapes' management plans. These activities within National Landscapes should be working towards the following targets, which aim to deliver thriving plants and wildlife:

1. Restore or create more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).
2. Bring 80% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.
3. For 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.
4. Continuing favourable management of all existing priority habitat already in favourable condition outside of SSSIs (from a 2022 baseline) and increasing to include all newly restored or created habitat through Agri-environment schemes by 2042.
5. Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.

6.3.5 Other national strategies and policies

There are a plethora of other national strategies and policies relating to wider environmental improvements that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy can, and should, make a contribution. This could be directly, for instance aligning the priorities for our rivers and streams to support the ambitions of the Chalk Stream Strategy; or could indirectly support, through the benefits provided by nature-based solutions, such as supporting the targets of the Clean Air Strategy.

There are other strategies and policies that need to be considered so that the priorities for nature recovery in Kent and Medway do not unintentionally undermine or cause issue for. For instance, in mapping our potential measures we do not conflict with other land use priorities, such as food security.

All national strategies considered in preparation of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy are outlined in Appendix 2.2.

6.4 Other influences for the Strategy

Recognising the potential of Local Nature Recovery Strategies to provide for specific species and habitats, a number of nature conservation and species charities and

groups have produced guidance for responsible authorities. These have been reviewed in the preparation of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Not only have these informed the priorities, particularly in regard to the priority species, but they were also used to develop a long list of possible actions from which the Strategy's potential measures were informed.

Species and habitat focused guidance considered in the preparation of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy:

- Plantlife – How to Design your Local Nature Recovery Strategy to Deliver for Plants and Fungi.
- Buglife – Delivering for Invertebrates in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation – Design your Local Nature Recovery Strategy to Deliver for Amphibians and Reptiles.
- Bat Conservation Trust – Taking bats into account in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- Floodplain Meadows Partnership – Floodplain Meadows in Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Bumblebee Conservation Trust – Local Nature Recovery Strategies: a guide to help bumblebees thrive.
- People's Trust for Endangered Species – Our guidance for designing Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- Freshwater Habitats Trust – Incorporating small freshwater habitats into your Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- Big Chalk – Big Chalk and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.



7. Nature recovery opportunities in Kent and Medway

7.1 Building on a solid platform of action for nature

The 2022 State of Nature in Kent report showed that when action is joined up, with all organisations playing a role, the outcomes for nature have been dramatic.

The report also found that Kent has an extraordinary breadth and depth of skills and experience across the public and third sectors that is at the disposal of nature recovery actions in the county.

This resource has been critical to the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, with the Strategy now providing a framework for collaboration and an opportunity to engage the public, private and third sectors in a dynamic way, to leverage funding from all into delivering nature recovery at a scale commensurate with the crisis. This represents not only the most challenging time the conservation of nature has faced in the UK, but also the greatest opportunity, to work differently and bring new resourcing to bear in a way which has not been done before.

Whilst the Local Nature Recovery Strategy provides a renewed focus and new approach to delivering nature recovery in the county, we are not starting from ground zero and there have been many achievements in the county to build on and learn from.

7.1.1 Restoring landscapes

Over the last decade we have seen the conservation community across Kent embrace, and begin to implement, the Lawton principles (2010) through their collective work to drive forward nature's recovery at a landscape-scale. At the heart of the most significant and successful landscape-scale schemes that have been conceived and subsequently delivered in the county over the last decade, has been an understanding of the value of working collectively and a demonstrable willingness to collaborate.

An example of this can be seen across the Kent Downs landscape, in which a significant proportion of globally-rare chalk grassland resource can be found. Here a suite of landscape-scale partnership projects has been conceived and delivered to reinstate management, and consequently restore and reconnect these nature-rich, chalk grassland habitats. In less than 15 years, projects have collectively restored more than 341 ha of chalk grassland.

Agri-environment schemes have also proved a valuable mechanism for delivering landscape-scale restoration across the farmed landscape. In the East Kent Downs, where, over the last decade, continued engagement of farmers with their local Natural England advisor has resulted in the transformation of 900 ha of formerly arable or species-poor grassland. Through natural regeneration, green hay

spreading and the sowing of native wildflower mixtures, these areas are now wildflower-rich habitats.

Supporting land-use change in the farmed landscape remains integral to promoting nature's recovery across the county. The Farmers Cluster model advocated in Kent continues to grow to enable and support collective action from farmers and land managers in discrete geographical areas. An example of this is the Marden Cluster, who are working together to restore and extend lowland meadow, a species-rich but depleted habitat in Kent, across the Low Weald.

Larger conservation organisations in the county have delineated focus areas to create bigger, better, and more resilient landscapes for people and wildlife. Such working between these land owning organisations has allowed the joining of habitats into functionally-linked networks, as has been seen in the newly established North Kent Downs and Woods National Nature Reserve, and also the Blean complex where Kent Wildlife Trust and RSPB have worked together.

7.1.2 Increasing nature in urban areas

Since 1994, Kent Wildlife Trust and Kent Highways have been working together to create a network of Roadside Nature Reserves across the county. There are now around 150 Roadside Nature Reserves in Kent and Medway, with around 89 km of roadside protected and managed by volunteers across the county, supporting important species and habitats, and providing are also valuable wildlife corridors.

Local initiatives also encourage nature friendly gardening, with advice, support and awards used to encourage action.

There is also a wealth of community, friends of and voluntary groups working tirelessly to manage urban greenspaces for the benefit of both wildlife and people. These groups represent a massive army of support on the ground for the delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy potential measures.



7.1.3 Improving environmental quality

Conservation efforts such as Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming Scheme, are helping to improve water quality by reducing nutrients entering water courses through the planting of buffer strips, fencing livestock, and improving farming practices. Such projects, together with improvements at sewage treatment works and regulation changes, have seen 16 rivers in Kent improve their phosphate classifications since 2015.

This reduction in nutrient loading means the impact from lower river flows on water quality will be reduced, which in turn improves river species' ability to withstand the seasonal extremes associated with climate change.

7.1.4 Species

Most nature conservation in the British Isles is focused on the management of habitats, based on the adage 'build it and they will come'. This is certainly true in Kent where much of the county's conservation work has focused on the management of habitats to improve, enhance and/or extend. Although this provides better and more habitat, this action alone is not always sufficient to prevent threatened species decline or restore populations to their former ranges.

Common habitat manipulation practices including scrub removal, flood management, and creation of islands or floating rafts, coupled with predator management have been successfully applied in Kent to see increases in nesting success of Little Terns at Sandwich Bay and Castle Coote, and Lapwing on the South Sheppey Marshes.

Kent has also seen the translocation of several threatened species that has resulted in improvements in their local conservation status, including Great Crested Newt, European Water Vole, European Beaver, Sand Lizard, Monkey Orchid and the Silver Spotted Skipper.

At a more local scale, the provision of artificial hibernacula, refugia, and nest sites for birds, bats, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians is widely implemented to mitigate some of the habitat and nest site deficiencies.

7.1.5 Coastal and marine

Some of the most effective Kent and Medway projects and initiatives of the last ten years or so, have been around reducing wildlife disturbance or destruction at the coast.

Bird Wise is an initiative to manage wildlife disturbance along the coast in North and East Kent. A team of officer's, funded through housing tariffs, work on the coast to engage and meet people, promote the codes of conduct and advise on bird disturbance.

Another success story is “Coastbusters”. Launched in 2012, this volunteer task force was trained and kitted out to tackle the invasive Pacific Oyster and Japanese Wireweed. As a result of their efforts, the Pacific Oyster population at the National Nature Reserve at Pegwell Bay has been reduced and stabilised, and reef formation has been prevented. In addition, the loss of an important intertidal mussel bed has been avoided, further establishment has not occurred, and the protected chalk substrate is maintained.

7.1.6 Community Groups

Across the county, community groups are making a considerable contribution to nature recovery. Operating in a largely voluntary capacity, these groups rely on dedicated individuals committing time and energy to improving and safeguarding the natural environment in their local area. In Thanet, Dane Valley Woods was established in 2003 on a 12-acre former landfill site, with the ambition of increasing tree numbers in an area with very low canopy cover. Today, Dane Valley Woods is home to 6450 trees of 36 different species, as well as 265 species of birds, mammals, invertebrates, reptiles and amphibians, and provides much needed greenspace to local residents.

On the other side of Kent, High Weald Swifts work with local schools and residents to install nesting boxes for Swifts, helping to bolster their numbers in the face of habitat loss and reduced insect populations.

The Canterbury Biodiversity Network was established during the lockdown of 2020, with the aim of bringing together projects that were working to support local biodiversity and enabling volunteers to become involved in conservation projects in the area.

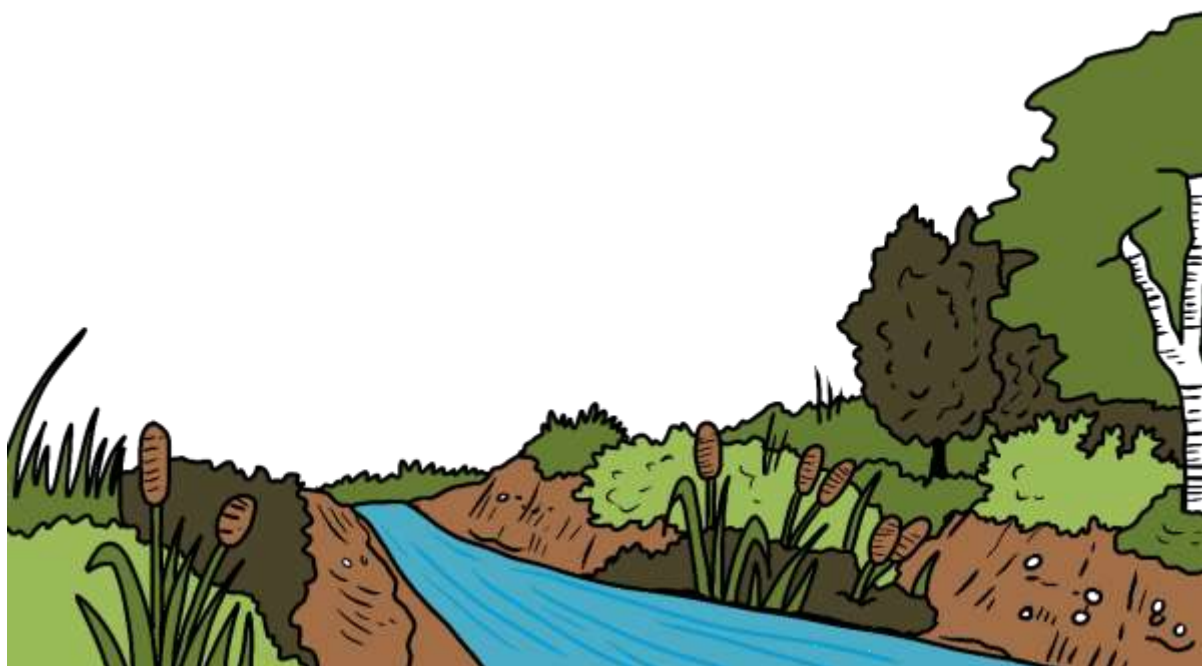
These are just a few examples of hundreds of community initiatives that are active in Kent, whose combined work is vital to nature recovery on a landscape scale in the county.



7.2 Realising the opportunities for recovering nature in Kent and Medway

The Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy presents an opportunity to build on these gains and provide a framework for the collaborative and landscape-scale action needed to recover nature in the county. It will:

- Consider the landscape character, the catchment functions and ecosystem links across the county.
- Focus on addressing the most significant impacts arising from the pressures and challenges facing nature.
- Ensure our most significant and important habitats, locally and nationally, remain the target of efforts.
- Concentrate on habitats that are threatened in extent and degraded in quality or are at risk from climate change.
- For the first time in Kent, give detailed consideration to the needs of threatened species within habitat management, identifying bespoke interventions needed and ensuring that any management considers species requirements within the habitats they're associated with.
- Look at how it can support both the local and national priorities and ambitions for nature, green and blue infrastructure and the wider environment.
- Identify the actions and delivery mechanisms needed to achieve the priorities for the county's nature, and target these to the areas of the county that are in most need of action and/or wider benefits can be delivered.
- Maximise opportunities for delivering nature-based solutions by directing action to where the design of nature recovery action can also deliver environmental improvements that are needed in that area.



Part 3

Statement of Biodiversity Priorities



Better, bigger, more and joined up – the overarching principles for nature recovery in Kent and Medway

In order for the county's nature to respond and adapt to the increasing challenges of climate change, as well as the other pressures and challenges it faces, we need to ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway is applying the principles of Lawton. We are building on these and reframing them slightly to provide a hierarchy for action; that being – better, bigger, more and joined up.

In applying these principles across the Strategy, we will not only support the recovery of nature but also ensure that our habitats and species have the ability and space to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change, by enabling dynamic habitats and increasing resilience. It also means that there is room for nature, alongside the many competing demands for land in our county, and that the many pressures facing nature are tackled in a more strategic and ecosystem-led approach.

The overarching principles of the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy are:

- **Better** – improve the quality of our existing habitats and ensure they are in a healthy and functioning state, by applying and resourcing better and appropriate management. We also need to better conserve and safeguard what we already have.
- **Bigger** – increase the size of our most valuable and important habitat sites, not only extending but buffering, to protect them from the pressures of human influences.
- **More** – through habitat restoration and creation, establish new, nature-rich sites that not only provide more space for nature but also provide connectivity between existing core sites.
- **Joined up** – enhance connections between, and join up, sites, through improving the quality of the land that exists between, creating new physical corridors, and establishing 'stepping stones'.
- **Nature-based solutions** – work with nature and use natural processes to tackle some of the socio-economic challenges our county faces, maximising the benefits of nature recovery.
- **Land management and land use** – increase the number landowners, land managers and farmers utilising nature friendly and habitat sensitive land management and land use practices, recognising the crucial role they have to play in helping to deliver a better, more coherent and resilient wildlife network across the county.

PRINCIPLES

OF THE LNRS

BETTER

WHAT WE NEED TO DO **BETTER** TO MANAGE THE EXISTING HABITATS WE ALREADY HAVE TO ENSURE THEY ARE **FUNCTIONAL, High Quality** & **SAFEGUARDED** FROM THREATS + PRESSURES...



BIGGER

HOW WE CAN BUILD ON EXISTING RESOURCES BY **EXTENDING** & **BUFFERING** HABITATS, SO THERE IS A **BIGGER** EXTENT



MORE

WHERE WE CAN **RESTORE** OR *Create NEW* HABITATS, SO WE HAVE **MORE** QUALITY HABITAT FOR NATURE...



JOINED UP

WHAT **CONNECTIVITY** IS NEEDED, TO ENSURE THE **bigger, better + more** HABITAT IS **FUNCTIONALLY LINKED**...



NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS

HOW CAN WE MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS OF THIS *Healthy + FUNCTIONING* NATURAL ENVIRONMENT + DELIVER **NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS** TO SOME OF THE COUNTY'S CHALLENGES...



LAND MANAGEMENT + LAND USE

THE CRITICAL **LAND MANAGEMENT + LAND USE** CONSIDERATIONS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO UNDERPIN DELIVERY FOR THE PRIORITY...



The building blocks of nature recovery

As our areas of particular importance for biodiversity shows, we already have significant areas of the county that are of immense value and significance for the counties, and in fact England's, natural heritage.

On top of this we also have a wealth of other areas whose management, whether through public sector organisations, voluntary groups, charities, farmers and landowners, is contributing to the protection and enhancement of Kent and Medway's habitats and species.

It is therefore important to understand that the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy is not starting from scratch nor from a point of inaction. But we're also not starting from a point of perfection. We know that many of our protected sites are in unfavourable condition, that our wildlife is declining, and our habitats are degraded. This is why our principles start with better – improving and safeguarding what we already have. There is little point creating new habitat to extend or connect poor quality, unhealthy and non-functioning existing habitat.

And it is why we have chosen to map our areas that could become of importance for biodiversity on the basis of connectivity and buffering and/or linking of areas of particular importance with the wider landscape. In doing so, we give nature the space and resilience it needs to recover.



Kent and Medway's Vision for Nature Recovery

The Kent and Medway Nature Recovery Strategy has ten ambitions for nature recovery, that our more detailed priorities and potential measures are structured around. The first three of these expand further on the overarching principles, expressing the outcomes for connectivity, nature-based solutions and land management and land use.

Following these are six ambitions that focus on broad habitat groupings and the aspirations we have for our grassland, successional, wooded, freshwater, urban and coastal ecosystems. The tenth ambition relates to the Strategy area's priority species and their recovery.

1. **Connectivity** – High quality habitats are connected at both a county and local scale, providing more linked natural space for nature to thrive in and a landscape that wildlife can move through and adapt to change in.
2. **Nature-based solutions** – Through safeguarding, management and restoration of the county's ecosystems, we enhance our resilience to climate change, deliver environmental improvements, address health and societal inequalities, and promote well-being, whilst advancing nature recovery.
3. **Land management and land use** – Land management and land use throughout Kent and Medway not only meets the economic and social needs of the county but also delivers nature recovery gains.
4. **Grasslands** – Our existing grasslands are conserved, with appropriate management returned to restore, connect and extend these habitats to deliver high quality, species-rich areas across the county.
5. **Successional habitats** – The structural diversity of open mosaic (brownfield) habitat found on previously developed land and low-level scrub is safeguarded from loss and damage, for the benefit of species that rely on early successional habitats.
6. **Woodland, trees and hedgerows** – Kent and Medway's native woodland, trees and hedgerows are safeguarded from loss and under appropriate and active management, delivering robust ground flora and soil structures. A mixture of natural regeneration and new establishment, improves connectivity and provides an even greater contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.
7. **Freshwater** – Our freshwater habitats are clean, sufficient and stable, in a healthy and good ecological state that supports an abundance and diversity of species. Catchments' functions are restored to deliver a connected mosaic of wet habitats, improving water quality and managing flood risk across the county.
8. **Urban** – Nature plays a central role in shaping the county's built-up environments, with wildlife provided for in a network of connected green and blue

spaces, which are also designed and managed to provide nature-based solutions to the challenges facing those living in urban areas.

9. **Coast** – Coastal and estuarine areas are allowed to evolve, with natural processes and progression restored, to enable adaption and resilience to climate change. Management of habitat succession is delivered strategically and holistically, to minimise loss and support a range of high functioning, connected coastal habitats.
10. **Species** – Habitat management, restoration, extension or creation is specifically targeted to halt the decline, and support the recovery, of the Strategy's priority and threatened species and in doing so, reduces the risk of losing species through extinction from the county.



AMBITIONS + PRIORITIES

AMBITION FOR CONNECTIVITY IN KENT + MEDWAY

HIGH QUALITY HABITATS are FUNCTIONALLY CONNECTED at BOTH a COUNTRY + LOCAL SCALE, PROVIDING MORE LINKED NATURAL SPACE for NATURE to THRIVE in a LANDSCAPE that WILDLIFE can MOVE THROUGH + ADAPT to CHANGE IN



PRIORITY CON 1

Country's key wildlife sites better connected by addressing the fragmentation + barriers preventing movement + species



PRIORITY CON 2

Fragmentation caused by arterial roads, railway + other major infrastructure retrospectively addressed, reconnecting habitats + wildlife pathways



PRIORITY CON 3

Habitats functionally connected at both a county + local scale, delivering bigger, better, more + joined up with no important wildlife habitats, or species populations, left completely isolated



PRIORITY CON 4

Management of habitats + wilding approaches to deliver a connected mosaic of habitats at a large scale, where nature can flourish, + species requirements are considered



PRIORITY CON 5

Landscape scale management, with partners beyond the county, to address habitat change + species migration as a result of climate change

AMBITION FOR NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN KENT

THROUGH ACTIONS to SAFEGUARD, MANAGE + RESTORE the COUNTRY'S ECOSYSTEMS WE MAXIMISE OUR RESILIENCE to the CHALLENGES of CLIMATE CHANGE, TACKLE HEALTH + SOCIETAL INEQUALITY + DELIVER WELL-BEING BENEFITS, WHILST SIMULTANEOUSLY RECOVERING NATURE



PRIORITY NBS1

Increase the extent of carbon sequestering habitats in the county, which are purposefully managed to function as a carbon store whilst prioritising a nature recovery

PRIORITY NBS2

Safeguard from loss + increase the functionality + extent of, habitats delivering critical ecosystem services in the county



PRIORITY NBS3

Improve soil health + structure by enhanced + improved soil management, so that it is delivering better for invertebrates, carbon sequestration, water retention + management + production + provisioning services

AMBITION FOR LAND MANAGEMENT + LAND USE IN KENT + MEDWAY

LAND MANAGEMENT + LAND USE THROUGHOUT KENT + MEDWAY COUNTY NOT ONLY MEETS the ECONOMIC + SOCIAL NEEDS of the COUNTY, but ALSO DELIVERS NATURE RECOVERY GAIN



PRIORITY LM1

Increase the number of farms employing nature friendly farming practices, sensitive land management + delivering targeted action for nature recovery, resulting in farmland across the county that is rich in wildlife



PRIORITY LM2

Farmland responding to climate change induced pressures with the help of nature



PRIORITY LM3

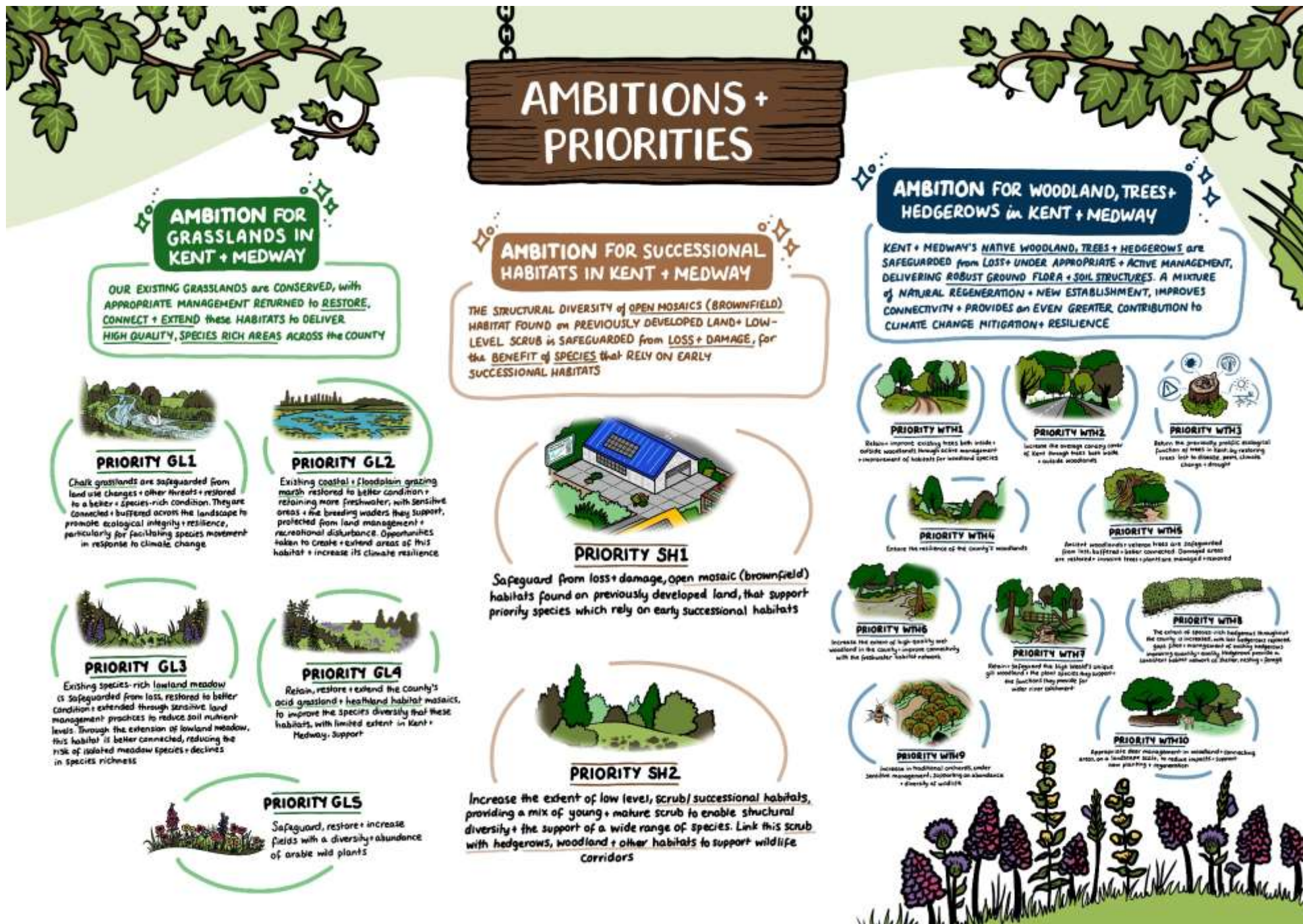
Prevent agricultural diffuse pollution of freshwater habitats + groundwater bodies in farmland



PRIORITY LM4

Publicly accessible open spaces managed to deliver benefits for wildlife, as well as the people that use them





AMBITIONS + PRIORITIES

AMBIITION FOR FRESHWATER HABITAT IN KENT + MEDWAY

OUR FRESHWATER HABITATS are CLEAN, SUFFICIENT + STABLE, in a HEALTHY + GOOD ECOLOGICAL STATE that SUPPORTS an ABUNDANCE + DIVERSITY of SPECIES. CATCHMENTS' FUNCTIONS are RESTORED to DELIVER a CONNECTED MOSAIC of WET HABITATS, IMPROVING WATER QUALITY + MANAGING FLOOD RISK ACROSS the COUNTY

AMBIITION FOR URBAN HABITAT IN KENT + MEDWAY

NATURE PLAYS a CENTRAL ROLE in SHAPING the COUNTY'S BUILT-UP ENVIRONMENTS, with WILDLIFE PROVIDED for in a NETWORK of CONNECTED GREEN, BLUE + GREY SPACES, which are ALSO DESIGNED + MANAGED to PROVIDE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS to the CHALLENGES FACING THOSE LIVING in URBAN AREAS

AMBIITION FOR COSTAL HABITAT IN KENT + MEDWAY

COSTAL + ESTUARINE AREAS ARE ALLOWED to EVOLVE, with NATURAL PROCESSES + PROGRESSION RESTORED, to ENABLE ADAPTATION + RESILIENCE to CLIMATE CHANGE. MANAGEMENT of HABITAT SUCCESSION is DELIVERED STRATEGICALLY + HOLISTICALLY, to MINIMISE LOSS + SUPPORT a RANGE of HIGH FUNCTIONING, CONNECTED + COASTAL HABITATS

PRIORITY FW1

All rivers, streams + floodplains have a natural form, free from modifications + barriers - supporting good ecological status, natural processes + diverse native flora.

PRIORITY FW2

Freshwater habitats + groundwater bodies are supplied with clean water, safeguarded from, + able to withstand the impact of pollution

PRIORITY FW3

Freshwater habitats + groundwater bodies are supplied with sufficient water + resilient flows, supporting their natural hydrological + hydrogeological regime

PRIORITY FW4

Rivers, streams + springs + associated waterbodies have wide, more natural buffer strips with a diverse vegetation structure, allowing natural processes, light + shade balance, mosaics of wetlands + safeguard from pollution + drought

PRIORITY FW5

Headwater streams have natural forms + processes, functioning as part of a mosaic of (seasonally) wet habitats including grassland + woodlands, providing resilient flows to rivers + supporting a wide range of wildlife

PRIORITY FW6

Chalk streams reach good ecological status, provide high quality river habitats, support characteristic flora, + fauna, natural + resilient flows, safeguarded water quality + quantity

PRIORITY FW7

Clay rivers have a more natural channel form + processes, without physical modifications + the impacts of historic alterations + are connected to a mosaic of wetland habitats along the floodplain + headwater streams

PRIORITY FW8

Ponds are maintained + enhanced with high ecological value, or that need restoration. Enhance lakes + create new ponds, especially as part of mosaic habitats. Safeguard ponds from run-off pollutants + invasive species + new habitat creation

PRIORITY FW9

Lowland, mire sites (peat + valley mires) + lowland peat habitats are well managed + enhanced, with the provision of buffers to allow the habitat extent to increase

PRIORITY FW10

High quality natural reedbeds across Kent are increased + existing reedbeds are in appropriate management

PRIORITY FW11

Enhance + restore wildlife-rich + functioning freshwater wetlands across the county, providing not only shelter, nurseries + breeding grounds but also carbon sinks + water management

PRIORITY FW12

Restore + enhance semi-natural lowland drains + associated marshlands through integrated water level management + habitat restoration to reduce flood risk, mitigate drought impacts + promote biodiversity

PRIORITY URB1

Address habitat fragmentation of the urban environment, ensuring urban species can freely move about + developed areas + infrastructures do not impede passage

PRIORITY URB2

Deliver benefits for wildlife through urban public green spaces + land management

PRIORITY URB3

Safeguard + increase the extent of greenspace, trees + hedgerows within urban areas. Providing habitat, urban cooling, air + noise pollution regulation + surface water management

PRIORITY CL1

Sustainable + strategic management of (flooded) salt marsh to create functioning + linked coastal habitats that enable restoration, adaptation, resilience + to minimise the loss of wetland habitat

PRIORITY CL2

Reduce small scale loss, improve condition + network connectivity of saltmarsh habitats, providing functioning ecosystems that are integrated from non-tidal disturbance

PRIORITY CL3

Reverses the decline in largest salt of Kent's (and to be integrated into important habitat for marine species + their breeding ground + nurseries, + to promote its function as a blue carbon store

PRIORITY CL4

Chalk cliffs + reef communities thrive in their natural state + are safeguarded from change from vegetation + nature activities, development + other policy methods

PRIORITY CL5

Sustainable management of water cycle (bays) to allow them to reach their habitat building potential

PRIORITY CL6

Saline lagoons are appropriately safeguarded + managed to increase their resilience + adaptation to climate change + secure their ecological functions, including the role they will play as non-tidal habitats

PRIORITY CL7

Safeguard + restore eggshells shingle, ensuring there is no unavoidable loss + areas remain in, or are returned to a favourable condition

PRIORITY CL8

Reduction in coastal wildlife disturbance, resulting from future protection of coast

Understanding the priorities and measures – how to deliver against the principles of better, bigger, more and joined up

The ten ambitions are delivered by a number of priorities - the priorities are the outcomes we want to see for nature.

Sitting under these priorities are potential measures and wider measures. These are the actions that are required to realise the outcomes and ambitions we've identified for Kent and Medway's nature.

These measures have been framed around the Strategy's overarching principles by considering:

- What we need to do to **better** to manage the existing habitats we already have, to ensure they are functional, of high quality and safeguarded from threats and pressures.
- How we can build on this existing resource, by extending and buffering habitats, so there is a **bigger** extent.
- Where we can restore or create new habitat, so we have **more** quality habitat for nature.
- What **connectivity** is needed, to ensure the better, bigger and more habitat is functionally linked.
- How we can maximise the benefits of this healthy and functioning natural environment and deliver **nature-based solutions** to some of the county's challenges.
- What are the critical **land management and land use** considerations that are required to underpin delivery for the priority.



The priority and measures page layout

Identifying linked ambitions, priorities and measures

Each priority has a reference number, so you can link the priority to the overarching ambition, and the priority to its associated measures.

Prefix	Ambition to which priority and measure relates
CON	Connectivity
NBS	Nature-based solutions
LM	Land management and land use
GL	Grassland habitats
SH	Successional habitats
WTH	Woodland, trees and hedgerows
FW	Freshwater habitats
URB	Urban environments
CL	Coastal habitats

The prefixes for the Strategy's priority habitats are detailed in the table overleaf.

Each measure has a reference number, so you can link the measure to its overarching priority, and the measure to its associated map. Example -

Ambition	Priority reference number	Potential measure reference number
GL - <i>Grassland habitats</i>	GL3 - <i>Lowland meadows</i>	GL3.2 - <i>Create new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites.</i>

Ambition habitat grouping	Prefix	Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority habitat	Prefix
Grassland	GL	Chalk grasslands	GL1
		Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	GL2
		Lowland meadow	GL3
		Acid grassland and heathland	GL4
		Arable field margins	GL5
Successional habitats	SH	Open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield)	SH1
		Scrub	SH2
Woodland, trees and hedgerows	WTH	Existing woodland, including wood pasture and parkland	WTH1
		New woodland	WTH2
		Lost woodland	WTH3
		Woodland resilience	WTH4
		Ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees	WTH5
		Wet woodland	WTH6
		Gill woodland	WTH7
		Hedgerow	WTH8
		Traditional orchards	WTH9
Freshwater	FW	Rivers and streams, including chalk and clay rivers (naturalised)	FW1
		Rivers and streams, including chalk and clay rivers (clean)	FW2
		Rivers and streams, including chalk and clay rivers (supply)	FW3
		Rivers and streams, including chalk and clay rivers (buffered)	FW4
		Headwater streams	FW5
		Ponds and lakes	FW6
		Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires)	FW7
		Reedbeds	FW8
		Freshwater wetland	FW9
		Semi-natural lowland drains and marshlands	FW10

Ambition habitat grouping	Prefix	Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority habitat	Prefix
Urban	URB	Urban (fragmented)	URB1
		Urban greenspace	URB2
		Urban greenspace (nature-based solutions)	URB3
Coastal	CL	Estuary and open coast	CL1
		Saltmarsh and mudflats	CL2
		Seagrass	CL3
		Chalk cliffs and reefs	CL4
		Native Oyster and Blue Mussel reefs	CL5
		Saline lagoons	CL6
		Vegetated shingle	CL7
		Sand dunes	CL8

Identifying linked measures and Strategy principles

For each priority, the measures are set out against the relevant Strategy principle, denoted by the following symbols.



Measures which improve the quality of our existing habitats, through improved management and safeguarding – delivering **better**.



Measures which extend or buffer existing habitats – delivering **bigger**.



Measures which restore or create new habitat – delivering **more**.



Measures which focus on connectivity – delivering **joined up**.



Measures which deliver **nature-based solutions**.

Measures are identified as either a potential measure or wider measure:

- **Potential measures** identify where the action determined as necessary for our nature recovery priorities should be strategically targeted to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity and deliver the widest environmental benefits.
- **Wider measures** are proposed actions which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas, or it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action.

Identifying associated Strategy priority species

Each nature recovery priority also notes the priority species that will benefit from its delivery. Some priority species require action that are covered by the potential measures identified for the habitat priority; these are identified separately to the priority species that are associated with the habitat in question but require bespoke measures. Bespoke measures for the Strategy's priority species can be found in Appendix X.

Other information included with each priority

In developing the Strategy, a number of other requirements for the recovery of the habitat or achievement of the priority were identified that could not be mapped or fell outside the definition of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy potential measure:

- **Land management and land use principles** – in effect, these are best practice and/or recommended approaches that should underpin any action taken for the

delivery of the priority. These are not exhaustive – rather they are indicative of the principles that should be applied.

- **Supporting measures** – these largely relate to supporting mechanisms, processes and functions that are considered critical to the delivery of the identified potential measures for habitats and species, and without these being addressed those measures will be limited in their success.
- **Data, evidence and mapping needs** – identifies what is needed to better inform the priority's delivery and/or will allow improved mapping during the next iteration of the Strategy.

Supporting measures and further data/evidence/mapping, sit outside the regulatory scope of Local Nature Recovery Strategy. However, it is important to acknowledge and recognise these in the context of the priority they relate to and are therefore detailed. Only those considered critical to the achievement of the priority have been included.

How to use the potential measures and mapping to inform nature recovery

A note on the Strategy's potential measures mapping and its limitations

Before using the Strategy mapping it is important to note the following:

- Mapping indicates areas where the potential measures could be delivered. In some instances, these are wide ranging areas, in others they are specific areas depending on the mapping capability. In all cases, the mapped areas are indicative.
- The strategic nature of this document means that some measures may not be relevant or appropriate when considered in detail at the local level.
- The desk-based approach means the mapping is theoretical and not based on actual known site condition. Site assessments, and other permissions and pre-requisites, will inform the appropriateness of the action to that location.
- Inclusion of a site in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy does not preclude that action from any necessary permissions, site assessments and other pre-requisites before it is implemented.
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and National Nature Reserves are statutory national and international designations. Measures have been mapped to these sites to maintain the integrity of the connectivity approach taken in creating a nature recovery network for the Strategy area. The potential measures also present future considerations for the site. However, the mapped potential measures do not override or replace existing management associated with the designation nor do they negate the need for any requisite consents or approvals. It is essential that the existing designated features and the legal processes and guidance are checked and followed prior to delivery of the suggested measure.
- Mapping is based on existing known data – consequently, other sites may hold potential interest or relevance to a potential measure but may not be mapped as there is no pre-existing data available.
- The Strategy and associated maps do not dictate actions, nor instruct their implementation – they are a guide for how landowners and managers could use or manage the land, or approach their operations, in a way that could support the recovery of nature.
- Mapping of an area to a potential measure, wider measure or areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity does not offer any formal, or otherwise, protection which can only be provided through statutory designations

or local planning policy. It also does not preclude any uses of the land or operations.

- Although mapping indicates where this action may be most needed or result in the greatest gains, the introduction of this action can be applied outside of the target area – nature recovery action does not need to be limited to the areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity.
- A potential measure may have value locally, that is not reflected when considered strategically at a county scale – therefore its exclusion from the mapping does not indicate that the action is not applicable.
- The Strategy notes a number of management measures to increase the functionality or biodiversity of a habitat – some have been mapped, some not. These management measures apply to all the county and although mapping indicates where this management may be most needed or result in the greatest gains, the introduction of appropriate management will deliver benefits wherever it is applied.



Identifying action to recover nature

The Strategy mapping provides a spatial context to the wide number of priorities set out in the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy. It takes what could be seen as an overwhelming list of actions and sets a county-wide plan for where these actions would best be delivered.

As such, the mapping is a key part of the Strategy – it breaks down what we need to do, and crucially where, to recover nature in Kent and Medway. How you use the maps will be dependent on what you are wanting to know.

Further instruction on using the Strategy maps is provided alongside the online mapping tool.

Where are the priority areas for a specific habitat type?

You may be interesting in knowing where in the county has been identified as the key areas for a specific habitat type – this might be a broad habitat group, like grasslands, or a specific habitat like lowland meadows.

You can view these on the map by selecting all the potential measures that start with the relevant prefix. Continuing the example, this would be looking at mapped measures that start with GL, if your interest is all grasslands, or GL3 if your interest is specifically lowland meadows.

This will show you where in the county the Strategy has identified action should be targeted for that broad habitat group and/or specific habitats. The habitat prefixes can be found in the table below. When viewing the maps, you may find that more than one potential measure is identified for an area – see below for guidance on prioritising measures.

Prefix	Ambition to which priority and measure relates
CON	Connectivity
NBS	Nature-based solutions
LM	Land management and land use
GL	Grassland habitats
SH	Successional habitats
WTH	Woodland, trees and hedgerows
FW	Freshwater habitats
URB	Urban environments
CL	Coastal habitats

Where should specific action be targeted?

You may be interested in knowing where in the county has been identified as the key areas for a particular action – this might be actions that relate to one of the Strategy principles, for instance “more”, or a particular action you’ve seen identified against a priority.

You can view these by selecting the specific measure, using the reference number. If you wanted to see where actions delivering “better” for lowland meadow had been mapped, you would select the map for GL3.1. If you wanted to see where the potential measure “increase the extent of high quality, connected lowland meadow by creating new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites” had been mapped, you would select the map for GL3.2.

You can view more than one potential measure at a time. When doing so, you may find that more than one potential measure is identified for an area – see below for guidance on prioritising measures. The reference numbers for each measure are provided in the priorities’ potential measures tables.

What should be done at a specific location?

You may be interested in knowing if any action has been identified at a specific location – whether that be land you own or manage, land you volunteer on or land that is of particular interest to you.

In viewing the map at that particular location, you can view whether potential measures have been mapped to that area. If there are no potential measures identified, you should also look at the wider measures mapping – whilst these are not a constitute part of the areas that could become of particular importance to biodiversity, they have been identified as offering a wider opportunity for nature recovery.

If the area of land you are interested in has a statutory national or international designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and National Nature Reserves), you may still find potential measures mapped. These do not override any existing management for the site, and it is essential that the existing designated features and the legal processes and guidance are checked and followed prior to delivery of the suggested measure.

If there are neither potential measures nor wider measures mapped to the area of interest, this does not mean that it holds no value for biodiversity, nor does it not offer any opportunity to support the recovery of nature. It is simply that, within the requirements of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy potential measures mapping, it has not been identified as significant at a strategic-county scale.

When viewing the maps, you may find that more than one potential measure is identified for an area – see below for guidance on prioritising measures.

Where should action for the Strategy priority species be targeted?

Mapping of potential measures for the Strategy’s priority species has not been developed, due to the complex nature of the bespoke action required.

To aid locating where action could be taken, priority species heat maps have been developed for a range of habitat assemblages. These maps identify the areas considered to offer the most benefits for priority species, using the density of priority

species for that habitat assemblage as a proxy. These maps are indicative and are intended to provide additional and supporting information for delivery. They should be used in consultation with species experts, when delivering action for priority species.

The priority species habitat assemblage maps produced for the Strategy are detailed in the table below.

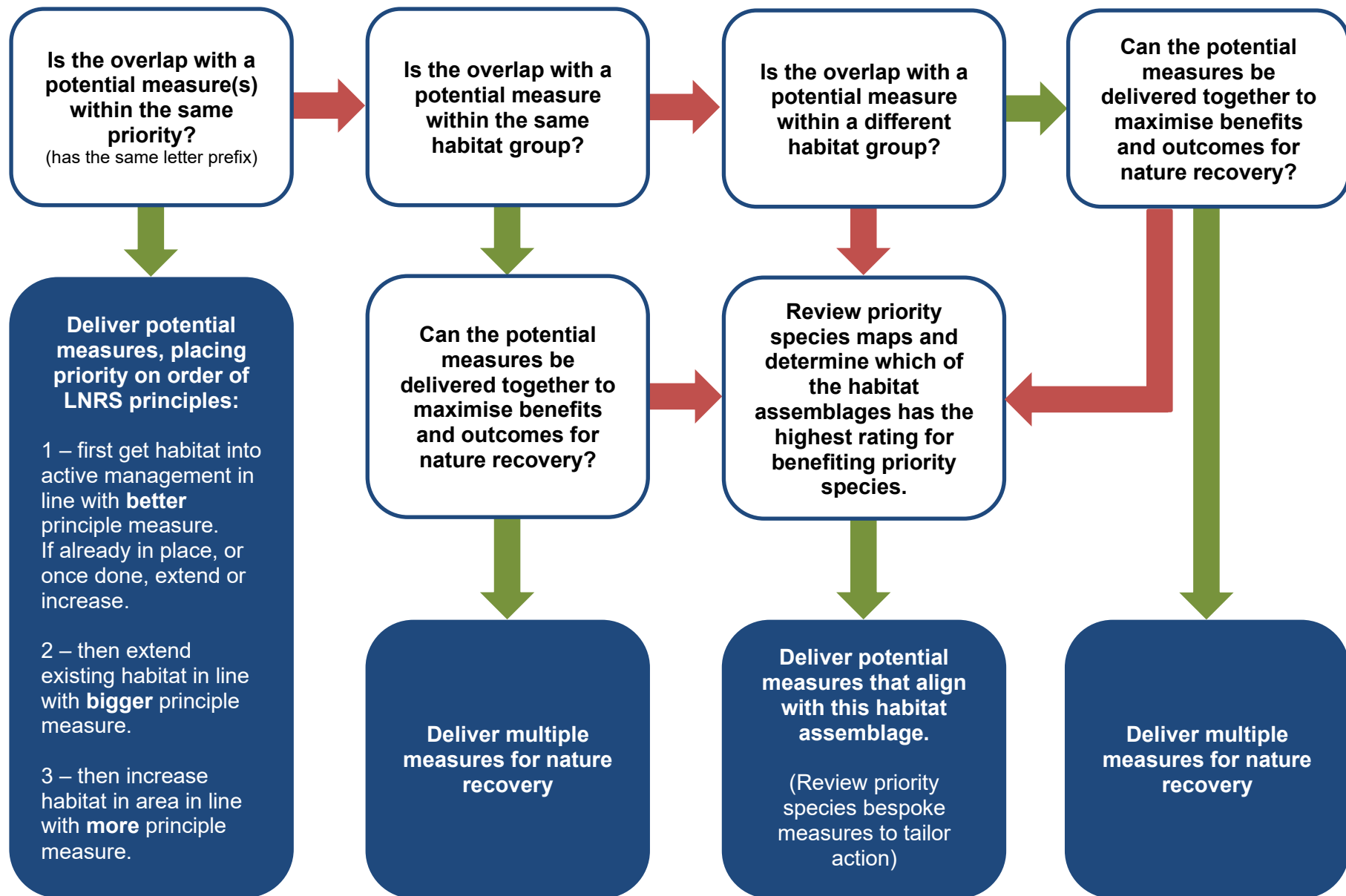
Strategy habitat group	Priority species habitat assemblage maps
Grassland habitats	- Arable. - Chalk grassland. - Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. - Heathland. - Lowland meadows.
Successional habitats	- Scrub and open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (brownfield).
Woodland, trees and hedgerows	- Woodlands. - Ancient woodland, wood pasture and parkland and traditional orchard.
Freshwater	- Rivers and streams. - Standing open water. - Swamp, reedbed and wet woodland.
Urban	- Urban.
Coastal	- Littoral sediment. - Maritime cliff and slope. - Sand dunes and vegetated shingle.

Prioritising action when more than one potential measure is mapped to the same location

In some locations, more than one potential measure is identified. This is to ensure that no opportunity for nature recovery is missed and that broad areas consider a range of habitats, to create the mosaic of habitats that nature recovery needs.

Where the most appropriate measure, based on the site, is not clear following a local site assessment, the approach overleaf is recommended to aid the selection of the most appropriate measure to deliver. It is advised that professional advice is sought from a land advisor, nature conservation body or another appropriately qualified source.





White space – using the wider measures mapping

Users of the Strategy and its mapping may be concerned about the ‘white space’, in the local habitat map, which indicates that the areas is not mapped as being – or could become – of particular importance for biodiversity.

Every area has a biodiversity value and is important in the recovery of nature. This Strategy was developed under the project title *Making Space for Nature*, and that is absolutely what we need to do in every bit of the county’s landscape, if our wildlife is to have the room it needs to return to a thriving state.

However, as noted by the Local Nature Recovery Strategy guidance, indiscriminate or widespread mapping of areas will not aid the targeting of available resources. Therefore, the Strategy is required to determine and map the areas that will have the greatest impact on achieving the priorities.

An unmapped area does not mean that no action should be taken – and there are measures that can be taken indiscriminately across the county. A number of the priorities have mapped wider measures – these are measures identified as valuable to the recovery of a particular habitat but could only be mapped to the extent of that habitat, rather than prioritised areas. Whilst these do not feature in the Strategy’s Local Habitat Map, they play an important role in directing broad action across the whole of the Strategy area and collectively fill in much of the “white space”.

In addition, under many of the priorities, there are land management and land use principles, which can be applied to that habitat. These principles can be applied to that particular habitat anywhere in the county – it does not need to be habitat mapped in the Local Habitat Map.

Informing delivery of biodiversity net gain

The potential measures mapping has an important role in the delivery of meaningful biodiversity net gain. Biodiversity net gain is a mandatory requirement that aims to make sure that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity. This “gain” is calculated using a standardised metric, which identifies the biodiversity value of the land lost and the biodiversity gained.

The 2025 updated planning guidance notes that Local Nature Recovery Strategies will identify areas where habitat creation, restoration or enhancement would be most beneficial for nature recovery and wider environmental outcomes and that the Strategies can play a critical role in supporting offsite gains to be delivered in a way that maximises biodiversity benefits, when these are required to achieve a development’s biodiversity gain objective. This can help to support bigger and more joined-up areas in which our wildlife can thrive.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies are designed to promote the delivery of offsite biodiversity gain in the right places, where offsite provision is needed to meet the biodiversity gain condition for a development and it cannot be met in full through onsite habitat enhancements.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy can be used as a key source of information regarding strategic approaches to off-site biodiversity net gain delivery and connections to existing habitat, when local planning authorities are carrying out their functions in respect of biodiversity net gain.

The statutory biodiversity metric formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat's size, condition, type and strategic significance. Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type. Where a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published, high strategic significance (and the associated score) is applied when:

- the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of the Strategy; and
- the proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the habitat parcel.

Protecting nature

The purpose of the Strategy is to provide a framework for nature recovery, directing action to where it is most needed and where it will deliver the greatest gains. It does not offer any formal, or otherwise, protection which can only be provided through statutory designations or local planning policy.

Throughout the document the term safeguard is used. In the context of this Strategy, this does not imply a formal protection nor prevention of potentially impactful activities, unless already identified within an existing and adopted local plan or an already established legal protection. Safeguarding may be delivered by setting aside the land but also refers to the use of active management that prevents loss and damage, the use of buffers to minimise human impacts and connecting habitats to increase resilience. Where measures refer to safeguarding areas, this does not mean that nothing can happen in these areas; rather that appropriate action should be taken within these areas to support the habitats and species they are notable for.

Local authorities may choose to use the Strategy to help identify land that should be set aside for the purposes of nature recovery but there is no requirement on them to do so. The Strategy is there to offer direction and proposed measures that can assist public bodies in meeting their duties relating to the recovery of nature.



Connectivity priorities and potential measures

Ambition for connectivity in Kent and Medway - High quality habitats are functionally connected at both a county and local scale, providing more linked natural space for nature to thrive in and a landscape that wildlife can move through and adapt to change in.

An overview of habitat fragmentation and the importance of improving connectivity

Habitat fragmentation results when large areas of connected habitat become broken up as a result of use of the land or natural processes. The main causes of habitat fragmentation in Kent and Medway are urbanisation and associated infrastructure, agricultural changes or expansion and removal of habitat, such as deforestation. As a coastal county, sea level rise, coastal erosion and salt and freshwater flooding can also temporarily and permanently fragment habitats.

Habitat fragmentation negatively impacts wildlife in several ways. A perhaps obvious consequence is the loss of total habitat area. This loss means less space for species to find what they need in terms of food, shelter and breeding.

When a habitat is fragmented, it not only reduces the quantity but also the quality – what is known as the edge effect. In a functioning and healthy environment, the “edge”, where two different habitats meet, is often a diverse area of varying structures and can in fact be critical to species which require different habitats for their life cycle and/or feeding and breeding. But conditions of these edge habitats are also quite different to the interior of the adjoining habitat and are often unsuitable for the survival of habitat specialists. As habitats become broken up and smaller, the proportion of edge habitat increases, and species not suited to these areas struggle to survive.

Fragmentation also impedes the movement and mobility of species. This impacts wildlife in two ways: Firstly, populations of species become isolated, resulting in inbreeding and a reduction in genetic diversity. This makes the population more vulnerable to disease and has consequences its long-term health; and ultimately, puts it at greater risk of extinction. Secondly, fragmentation will limit a species' ability to respond to climate change impacts, whether that be redistributing because of climate shifts or because habitats have changed, been degraded or lost.

Habitat fragmentation may be a significant driver of nature loss, however it is one that can be addressed and even reversed through habitat management, extension and creation.

Connectivity priorities and potential measures

The majority of the county's connectivity priorities relate to the specific needs of individual habitats and the functional links that need to be made within or between these. Consequently, the majority of the connectivity potential measures for the Strategy area are detailed with the relevant habitat. In addition to these habitat-based measures for connectivity, the Strategy also promotes a number of overarching priorities and potential measures to be applied across the county.

Priority CON1 - County's key wildlife sites better connected by addressing the fragmentation and barriers preventing movement of species

	Wider measure CON1.1 Improve functional connectivity corridors between the designated and protected sites of the Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and safeguard these areas.

Land use and land management principles for better connectivity of county's key wildlife sites:

- Safeguarding to be delivered through setting aside land and/or putting in place active management that prevents loss of, or damage to, the habitat.

Supporting measure for better connectivity of county's key wildlife sites:

- Land use planning to support the safeguarding of areas that are strategically important in reducing habitat fragmentation and addressing bottlenecks for species movement by setting aside land and/or putting in place land use restrictions and management that prevents loss and damage.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for better connectivity of county's key wildlife sites:

- Identify areas of county that are strategically important in reducing habitat fragmentation and addressing bottlenecks for species movement.

Priority CON2 – Fragmentation caused by arterial roads, railway and other major infrastructure retrospectively addressed, reconnecting habitats and wildlife pathways.

	Potential measure CON2.1 Installation of green bridges, wildlife crossings, tunnels and other appropriate structures, alongside retrofitting existing structures, to address historic fragmentation caused by major infrastructure.

Supporting measure for addressing fragmentation caused by major infrastructure:

- All new infrastructure to consider fragmentation impacts and design connectivity mitigation into the scheme from the start.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for addressing fragmentation caused by major infrastructure:

- Maintain a register of habitat fragmentation caused by major infrastructure to enable a pipeline of projects for funding and investment.

Priority CON3 – Habitat management and wilding approaches delivering a mosaic of habitats at a large scale, that are functionally connected and nature can flourish, with no important habitats or species populations left completely isolated.

	Wider measure CON3.1 Set aside and/or put in place active management to prevent loss of, or damage to, areas of importance for functional connectivity.
	Wider measure CON3.2 Enhance habitats alongside the county's highway, railway, cycleway, pathway and Public Right of Way networks and National Trails to become functional networks for wildlife movements and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.
	Wider measure CON3.3 Maximise opportunities to restore wildflower habitat on road verges to contribute to a county network of wildlife-friendly habitat corridors.
	Wider measure CON3.4 Implement broad buffer zones and connecting strips between habitat areas designated or managed for their biodiversity value.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for connected habitats:

- Develop better understanding, and map, priorities areas for road and verges that need improved management for the benefit of functional connectivity.
- Identify and map migration routes for priority species, identifying any existing barriers to movement.

Priority CON4 - Landscape scale management, with partners beyond the county, to address habitat change and species migration as a result of climate change.

Supporting measures for regional action:

- Work with responsible authorities to the north and west of the county to ensure they are identifying species migrating from Kent as a result of climate change dispersal.
- Utilise existing regional initiatives and partnerships, and develop new where required, to support and facilitate cross boundary working across the south-east.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for regional action:

- Increase understanding of likely species movement and habitat change to improve ability to identify which counties to work with.



Nature-based solutions priorities and potential measures

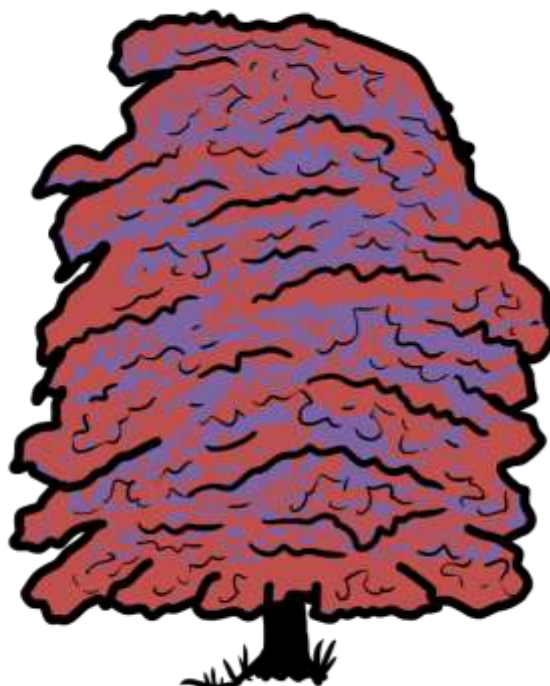
Ambition for nature-based solutions in Kent - Through safeguarding, management and restoration of the county's ecosystems, we enhance our resilience to climate change, deliver environmental improvements, address health and societal inequalities, and promote well-being, whilst advancing nature recovery.

An overview of nature-based solutions and the opportunities in Kent and Medway

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) address societal challenges through actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems, benefiting people and nature at the same time. They target major challenges like climate change, disaster risk reduction, food and water security, biodiversity loss and human health, and are critical to sustainable development.

Through the many habitats within the county, we are presented with the opportunity to not only recover nature through our interventions but also deliver some other significant benefits, including:

- Carbon sequestration.
- Soil quality improvements.
- Air quality improvements.
- Water quality improvements.
- Water resource management.
- Flood management.
- Coastal erosion management.
- Temperature regulation.



Our six habitat priorities, offer the following potential benefits:

	Grasslands	Successional habitats	Woodland, trees and hedgerows	Freshwater	Urban (green infrastructure)	Coastal
Carbon sequestration	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Soil quality	☒		☒			
Air quality			☒		☒	
Water quality	☒			☒	☒	
Water supply				☒	☒	
Flood management	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☒
Coastal erosion	☒					☒
Temperature regulation			☒	☒	☒	

Natural Solutions to Climate Change in Kent (2021) identified a number of opportunities for nature-based solutions within the county, which would deliver the above benefits. These are discussed below.

Biodiverse grassland

Approximately 8% of the county is biodiverse grassland. Biodiverse grassland, also known as species-rich grassland, is an area dominated by grasses that supports a wide variety of plant and animal life, offering numerous benefits for ecosystems and human well-being. Nature-based solutions come from the protection and restoration of grassland, road verge naturalisation and an increase in sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agriculture could significantly increase the benefits offered by grassland, by reverting some of the improved grassland which covers 30% of the county.

The challenges faced with nature-based solutions from grassland are land availability, buy-in of the agricultural sector and intensive management requirements.

Woodland, Trees and Hedgerows

Woodland is the most abundant semi-natural habitat in Kent and Medway, with broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland covering 11% of the county. Active woodland management is regarded as the quickest win in terms of nature-based solutions, with expansion and creation of woodland and hedgerow delivering further in the longer term. This is embedded in the county's tree establishment strategy, Plan Tree, which aims to better manage existing woodland, tree and hedgerow resources and to establish a further 1.5 million trees, increasing average canopy cover across the county to 19%.

The challenges to these opportunities are exacerbating drought conditions in the county putting existing and new trees at risk, the lack of, and costs of, active woodland management and land availability for regeneration and new woodlands, trees and hedgerows.

Freshwater

Rivers and streams cover 1.7% of the county and standing water, open water and canals cover 1.2%. Fen, marsh and swamp wetland habitats account for just 0.2% which means this is a limited habitat.

In the first instance, the retention and safeguarding of this county's inland wetlands would preserve the beneficial qualities offered by existing habitats. Greater opportunities exist through the restoration of natural river channels, extension and creation of wetlands and the reinstatement of historic ponds and creation of new ponds.

Land availability, length of time for the habitat to become 'functional', associated flood risks and trading of habitats may pose challenges to these solutions.

Urban

With 16% of the county built or urban habitats, it is important to look for opportunities for nature-based solutions in these areas. Especially so as this is where the majority of the population live and work and therefore where the societal challenges that can be addressed by nature-based solution are most keenly felt.

Opportunities include green walls and roofs, better management of and increase in urban green space, naturalising road verges, street trees and use of sustainable urban drainage. These not only provide the benefits outlined above but also are important in respect of delivering health and well-being benefits and providing opportunities to connect with nature within the urban environment.

Coastal wetlands and other habitats

Kent has one of the longest coastlines in the country, with a wide variety of different habitats including coastal grazing marsh, saltmarsh, native oyster beds, seagrass beds, sand dunes, vegetated shingle and mudflats. With such a notable resource, opportunities begin with improved management, restoration and retention to continue

to benefit from the services that all these habitats provide. Extension of this habitat is another opportunity, but one that is perhaps harder to deliver given the need to find suitable sites for managed realignment of defences and the effects of coastal squeeze reducing the existing habitat. Extension of the habitat also poses the challenge of habitat trading and therefore needs to be part of a wider, strategic approach.

Opportunities to extend coastal sites and benefit habitats can be considered for the reuse of dredged sediment taken from ports and harbours around the coastline.

Nature-based solutions priorities and potential measures

In delivering the habitat-based priorities and their associated measures, opportunities to realise the benefits these bring in terms of nature-based solutions will be maximised. Where relevant, potential measures have specifically been mapped to where these benefits are most needed – that is focussing on areas of flood risk, poor water quality and supply, poor air quality, urban heating and where the benefits of increasing and improving access to greenspace would be most keenly felt.

In addition to these habitat-based priorities for nature-based solutions, the Strategy also promotes a number of overarching priorities and wider measures to be applied across the county.



Priority NBS1 - Increase the extent of carbon sequestering habitats in the county (woodlands, saltmarshes, heathlands and grasslands), which are purposefully managed to function as a carbon store whilst prioritising a nature recovery function.

Priority NBS2 - Safeguard from loss, and increase the functionality and extent of, habitats delivering critical ecosystem services in the county.

Priority NBS3 - Improve soil health and structure by enhanced and increased soil management, so that it is delivering better for invertebrates, carbon sequestration, water retention and management, and production and provisioning services.

Land management and land use principles to support nature-based solutions:

- Increase the extent of agricultural land that is also managed for carbon sequestration, focusing on soil health and biomass production.
- Prioritise soil restoration where soil degradation is impacting food production and other provisioning services.
- Plant and restore hedgerows across open landscapes, at appropriate locations and taking account of historic field boundaries, to capture water and minimise run-off, reducing scour and siltation.
- Adopt principles of agroforestry and permaculture to improve soil management.
- Apply conservation grazing practices to develop stronger grassland root structures and adaptive multi paddock grazing, with long rests to restore soil health.
- Reduce use of pesticides, herbicides and fertiliser and use of insecticides and wormers in livestock.
- Use regenerative practices: reduced inputs, reduced cultivation, no/minimum till, deeper rooting, stronger rooted swards, over wintering stubble, cover crops, minimise compaction, plough along contour, maintain invertebrates and bacteria.
- Safeguarding to be delivered through setting aside land and/or putting in place active management that prevents loss of, or damage to, the habitat.

Supporting measures to support nature-based solutions:

- Land use planning to support the safeguarding of areas that are important for carbon sequestration by setting aside land and/or putting in place land use restrictions and management that prevents loss and damage.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for nature-based solutions:

- Identify the county's most valuable carbon sequestering habitats and potential measures to maximise their function, in order to support landowners and managers to recognise and realise the carbon sequestration opportunities of their land.
- Identify areas of Kent where critical nature-based solutions are being delivered.
- Baseline mapping of soil health, determined on areas rather than point data, so a wider collaborative management approach can be employed.

Land management and land use priorities and potential measures

Ambition for land management and land use in Kent and Medway - Land management and land use throughout Kent and Medway not only meets the economic and social needs of the county, but also seeks opportunities to deliver nature recovery gains across a wide range of land uses, from commercial to recreational.

An overview of land management and land use and the opportunities in Kent and Medway

Kent and Medway's agricultural landscape

The county of Kent is known as the Garden of England for good reason. 62% of the land in Kent and Medway is used for agriculture and 14.7% for forestry and woodland. The Defra 2021 census reported that, in total, there are over 13,000 farmers, growers and farm workers across 2,825 farms in the county, covering 222,540ha of land. Over 40% of agricultural grassland is used for grazing livestock and 16% serves a horticultural purpose. Over 50% of land farmed in the county is under arable production.

Farmers, growers and producers in Kent and Medway contribute significantly to the UK's food security, providing 40% of horticultural goods (vegetables, leafy greens, salad products) consumed domestically, and 80% of the top fruit (apples and pears). Viticulture is a fast-growing use of land in Kent and Medway, with over 50 vineyards now in the county.

Agricultural business encompasses a wide range of landowners including large private estates, institutional landowners, large commercial operations, family farms and small holdings.

Opportunities through collaboration, innovation and nature-friendly farming

There are many leading regenerative farmers in Kent and Medway, who are applying skilled and innovative regenerative practices to their land, focused on protecting and restoring soil health. Five key principles of regenerative practices inform and guide a suite of farming techniques:

1. Minimise soil disturbance.
2. Maximise species diversity.
3. Keep the soil covered year-round and build soil organic matter.
4. Maintain living roots all year round.
5. Integrate livestock.

The impact of nature-friendly, regenerative practices is boosted when farmers work together, turning individual efforts into action on a landscape scale. Within Kent and Medway, we are fortunate to have several farmers clusters working together at landscape scale. These farmer-led groups are working with local communities, water companies, wildlife charities, and town, parish and local councils. They are demonstrating how business, environment and food security can be linked together whilst protecting and restoring a remarkable range of wildlife habitats and species whilst responding to the pressures of climate change.

Collectively, farmer clusters cover over 52,606ha of farmed land across the county (about a quarter of the agricultural land). Together, some 315 members are collaboratively working across a variety of landscapes, soil and habitat types to support vital species recovery and habitat management, restoration and creation. All whilst growing food and managing livestock. These clusters are:

- Boxley
- Darent Valley
- East Kent Arable
- East Kent Valleys
- East Stour
- Eden
- Greensand
- Hoo
- Marden
- North Kent Downs and Medway Gap
- North-East Kent
- Stour Valley to Stone Street
- Swale
- Upper Beult
- 1066

The way that land is managed has a strong influence on the health of our waterways; run-off from agricultural inputs can cause eutrophic pollution which is damaging to biodiversity and negatively impacts our water quality, whilst soil health and intensive farming practices can increase risks from flooding or drought.

Catchment Partnerships bring together the local knowledge and expertise of environmental NGOs, water companies, local authorities, government agencies, landowners, angling clubs, farmers, academia and businesses. These Partnerships undertake integrated management of land and water, addressing each river catchment as a whole and delivering crosscutting practical interventions on the ground.

Many of the nature-friendly farming practices that are so important for supporting the recovery of biodiversity are enabled through Environmental Land Management (ELM) grants from DEFRA. These schemes are comprised of three distinct funding streams:

1. The Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI) scheme pays farmers and land managers to take up or maintain sustainable farming and land management practices that: protect and benefit the environment; support food production; and improve productivity.
2. Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) pays farmers and land managers to manage land in a way that: protects, restores or enhances the environment; and mitigates the effects of climate change. CSHT can be done on woodland, farmed land, land managed for nature or a combination of these.
3. Landscape Recovery pays groups of farmers and land managers to do long-term, large-scale projects together. The Landscape Recovery scheme supports net zero carbon emissions; protected sites; and wildlife-rich habitat.

Seeking opportunities to recover nature through sensitive land management is a key principle of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. However, there must also remain an awareness of potential impacts on productivity and food security that can result from nature recovery actions. For instance, wide field margins may reduce the parcel size available for production and reduce yield. For this reason, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy ambition for land management maintains a focus on economic and social priorities, whilst also striving to see nature recovery coincide happily with farming practices.

Non-agricultural land use and management

There are many non-agricultural landowners in the county, which are either currently employing, or present the opportunity for, management practices that support habitats and wildlife. Such landholdings in Kent and Medway include, but are not limited to:

- Amenity greenspace, playparks, country parks.
- Charity owned land such as Kent Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Plantlife, Woodland Trust, National Trust and English Heritage.
- Privately owned natural and historic sites, stately homes, historic and managed gardens, including Crown Estate.
- Golf courses, cricket fields, equestrian sites and other sports pitches
- Churches and cemeteries.
- Allotments.
- Public estate, including councils, National Highways, Network Rail, MoD, NHS, HM Prisons.
- Public and private schools, colleges, universities and other educational facilities.
- Parish and Town Councils.
- Ports.
- Water, power, gas and other infrastructure.
- Minerals and waste sites.
- Business parks, large retailers, developments, airfields and tourist attractions.
- Game shooting reserves/land (some of this can be found on farmland).

Land management and land use priorities and potential measures

Land management and land use undertaken sensitively and in consideration of the habitat, and wildlife that depends on it, poses a great opportunity to support the recovery of nature. The majority of these opportunities exist in landowners and managers delivering the Strategy's habitat-based potential measures.

In addition to these habitat-based measures, the Strategy also promotes a number of overarching priorities and potential measures for land management and land use to be applied across the county.



Priority LM1 - Increase in the number of farms employing nature friendly farming practices, sensitive land management and delivering targeted action for nature recovery, resulting in farmland across the county that is rich in wildlife.

	Wider measure LM1.1 New or extended farmers clusters in Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity not already covered.

Priority species requiring nature-friendly farming measures:

- Barn Owl
- Corn Bunting
- Linnet
- Yellow Wagtail
- Yellowhammer
- Brown Hare
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with farmland, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Shrill Carder Bee
- Omphalopion beuthini (Beetle)
- Brown Hairstreak Butterfly
- Brent Goose
- Lapwing
- Tree Sparrow
- Turtle Dove
- Adder
- Ground-pine

Land management and land use principles for nature-friendly farming:

- Application of regenerative principles of land management including limiting soil disturbance; maintaining soil cover; fostering agricultural diversity and rotations; keeping living roots in the soil; integrating livestock and arable systems
- Application of integrated pest management (IPM – use of biological, physical and cultural tools to control pest species) to develop a more natural approach to pest control, reducing reliance on plant protection products and livestock medications.
- Restore, create, expand and maintain headlands, margins, in-field strips and ponds.
- Management of buffers around arable fields for nature and other environmental benefits.
- Increase in habitat complexity on farmland, with mosaic habitats, and strategically considered field margins and hedgerows, providing connectivity across landscape. Utilise: wider, higher, bigger hedges; smaller fields, with grass margin buffers; more scrub, cover crops, arable wildflowers; more trees in hedgerows and worked fields; and ponds.
- Incorporate hedgerows into livestock management practices.
- Tackle insufficient livestock and graziers, for conservation grazing, by providing a “dating service” between those who need livestock on their land and of the graziers that might be available to move livestock into these areas.
- Creation of wide environmental buffer margins within linear water ways (ditches, streams, rivers) to reduce run-off from agricultural land and nitrogen enrichment.
- Creation of successional areas and scrub, and nesting plots for Skylarks and other declining farmland birds.
- Interventions to provide year-round food supply for Skylarks and other declining farmland bird species.

- Provision for, and safeguarding of, nesting sites for Swallows in farm buildings.
- Ensure any measures taken are in keeping with the local landscape setting and character.

Supporting measures for nature-friendly farming:

- Use existing and new clusters, and other means, to connect farmers with those already employing nature friendly farming.
- Development of conservation grazing support programme/network, to support measures requiring this intervention, which provides matching services, training and information and links to peers and the supply chain.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for nature-friendly farming:

- Identify farmland that is strategically important for linking natural habitats.



Priority LM2 - Farmland responding to climate change induced pressures with the help of nature.

	Wider measure LM2.1 Use of nature-based solutions to improve climate resilience of farmland.

Land management and land use principles for nature-based solutions for climate resilience in farming:

- More cover and catch crops to mitigate flooding and drought.
- Agroforestry – integrating trees into agricultural landscapes.
- Climate resilient food-crops.
- Use of trees to provide shade to livestock.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for nature-based solutions for climate resilience in farming:

- Identify farmland at greatest risk of climate change impacts and likely to benefit the most from nature-based solutions.

Priority LM3 - Prevent agricultural diffuse pollution of freshwater habitats and groundwater bodies in farmland, as a result of soil, nutrient or livestock management practices and physical modifications.

	Wider measure LM3.1 Increased water capture, rainwater harvesting, reservoirs, ponds, holding areas, leaky wood dams.

Land management and land use principles for water quality management in farming:

- Wet habitat creation designed to also be beneficial to wildlife.
- Adaptive and judicious grazing/better grazing practice to keep more soil carbon. More resilient grazing, livestock can stay out for longer, results in less slurry, less run-off/pollution.
- Create wide environmental buffer margins within linear water ways (ditches, streams, rivers) to reduce run-off from agricultural land and nitrogen enrichment.
- Reduce pressure from livestock access.
- Reduce livestock stocking density along clay rivers.

Supporting measures for water quality management in farming:

- Work with farmers and farmer clusters to address water on a whole farm basis and in the context of their catchment, improving soil health to hold and purify water, reduce need for fertilizer and pesticide use through integrated pest management.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for water quality management in farming:

- Identify rivers most sensitive to diffuse pollution and over-abstraction.

Priority LM4 - Publicly accessible open spaces managed to deliver benefits for wildlife, as well as the people that use them.



Potential measure LM4.1 Protection of habitats and species sensitive to disturbance by employing site management, and other measures, which support connection to, and experience of, wildlife but ensures our most sensitive sites remain undisturbed.

Land management and land use principles for delivering wildlife benefits alongside publicly accessible open space:

- Adopt principle of "least restrictive" management approach in publicly accessible areas, to enable nature and access to co-exist and thrive.
- Create sacrificial and honey pot public sites to reduce the impact of visitors on vulnerable sites.
- Tailor management to sensitive habitats.
- Provide a greater complexity of habitats – flowering plants, brambles, nettles, log piles, beetle banks, scrub – and increase variety in urban planting schemes, to provide year-round shelter, forage and food for wildlife.
- Vary topography in landscaping, including scrubby areas, low nutrient substrates and bare or low growing planting areas.
- Reduced use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Plant right trees, in the right place and with appropriate management to ensure their successful establishment.
- Use of herbaceous and perennial plants and shrubs in parks and gardens which are bee and pollinator friendly and use planting around the base of trees.
- Implement cut and collect to reduce nutrient loading and support wildflower establishment.
- Retain deciduous deadwood (standing, felled or fallen) where safe to do so.
- Ensure any measures taken are in keeping with the local landscape setting and character.
- Use restrictive buffers to prevent public and dog disturbance in sensitive areas.
- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of wildlife features and wild management.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for delivering wildlife benefits alongside publicly accessible open space:

- Identify sites most sensitive to public access impacts.
- Identify areas where sacrificial and honey pot sites could be established to reduced pressures on more sensitive sites.



Grassland habitat priorities and potential measures

Ambition for grasslands in Kent and Medway - Our existing grasslands are conserved, with appropriate management returned to restore, connect and extend these habitats to deliver high quality, species-rich areas across the county.

An overview of the county's grassland habitat, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat

Almost a third of the county (29.7%) is covered by improved grasslands. These are agricultural grasslands used for pasture, as well as grasslands of urban parks and gardens. Agriculturally improved grassland is highly productive, resulting from intensive management using fertilisers and/or herbicides. As a result of this improvement, the grasslands are species-poor, lacking many of the finer grasses and flowering plants found in semi-natural swards.

By contrast good quality semi-improved grassland is important for sustainable food production and biodiversity. Good examples are found in the High Weald National Landscape, which features lots of historic, small, irregularly shaped fields. Semi-improved grasslands within both a national and local context are becoming an increasingly pressured habitat. When managed as either meadows or permanent pasture, the soils are undisturbed, compared to temporary grassland or arable.

Although, semi-improved grasslands do not have the range and number of grass and wildflower species associated with unimproved species-rich grassland, they still support significant, and sometimes rare species and, under appropriate management, they hold considerable potential to return to species-rich grassland.

Unimproved species-rich grasslands are an extremely rare and threatened habitat, because of this it is imperative that the opportunities presented by semi-improved grasslands for nature recovery at both a site and a landscape scale are not lost.

Amenity grassland, such as many playing fields, urban parks and urban road verges are also intensively managed and have a limited range of plant species. Although these areas are species-poor, they do offer the opportunity to increase space for nature through the introduction of features that can increase its value to nature and can be important as potential connectivity corridors where they are situated between fragmented areas of species rich habitat.

For many people, chalk grassland, sometimes known as lowland calcareous grassland is what first comes to mind when thinking about grassland habitats within the county. Although this habitat covers just 0.5% of the county, this represents 5% of

the UK's chalk grassland resource and supports many rare species. Orchids and butterflies are particularly associated with this habitat. Chalk grassland has been the focus of nature conservation efforts in Kent for decades however retention of this restored habitat requires ongoing management to prevent scrub encroachment. Fragmentation also needs addressing and there are still further areas in need of restoration and enhancement.

Species-rich lowland meadow is an even rarer habitat. The 2012 Kent Habitat Survey recorded 28,531ha of neutral grassland, representing the largest of the grassland broad habitat types across the county. However, just 27.7ha, less than 0.1%, of this was recorded as lowland meadow. This small fraction of high quality grassland is a reflection of how these lowland meadows have been lost through agricultural improvement and the abandonment of traditional hay meadow management. These small, flower-rich fields support a plethora of wildflowers and insects many of which are rare and threatened. It is therefore important that we look to restore this lost habitat resource across the county by returning to more traditional and land sensitive management practices. This can begin by first focussing on field margins and the encouragement of arable wild plants.

A very different grassland habitat, particularly typical to the North Kent coast is coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, which is often found adjacent to saltmarsh and mudflats, but separated hydrologically by coastal infrastructure. Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is the county's greatest area of UK BAP habitat, covering 3.6% of the area. This habitat is vital for wading birds such as Lapwing and Redshank that nest in the tussocks of the grassland, as well as large wintering populations of wildfowl and waders. Pressures include a lack of sufficient grazing animals, but also climate breakdown resulting in droughts; it is an ongoing battle for landowners and managers of these habitats to keep water on the land during spring and summer. Recreational disturbance is an additional pressure, particularly for birds.

The geology of Kent means that acid grassland and heathland are rare habitats (just 512ha and 71.5ha respectively), but important patches can be found. Recreational disturbance and vandalism, including fire, are an issue for more urban sites.

Nature-based solution opportunities from grassland habitat

Grassland provides a fantastic variety of nature-based solution opportunities. Increased grassland areas, particularly alongside road verges and in arable fields provide vital refuges and foraging areas for pollinators. By reconnecting landscapes with native, pollinator-beneficial flowering plants and grasses, we can increase the diversity of our pollinating insects and therefore support crop production which relies on pollinators for success.

Different types of grassland store a different amount of carbon in their structures. Neutral grassland has been proven to store more carbon (100.5 tonnes CO₂/ha) in the top 30cm of soil than acid grassland (63.6 tonnes CO₂/ha) and chalk (92.01 tonnes CO₂/ha). Grassland recovery, particularly good quality and well-managed

neutral grassland restoration could contribute to carbon storage, therefore reducing the amount of carbon dioxide entering the atmosphere.

Well-managed grasslands in good condition can help combat some of the issues impacting water quality, while also providing other benefits such as water retention and slowing the rate at which rainfall reaches our watercourses. Buffer strips adjacent to watercourses can act as a safeguard, preventing pollutant run-off from adjacent fields.

Furthermore, species rich and well-managed grasslands lead to improved soil quality, which helps with flood mitigation. Stronger soils improve its water infiltration capability, so with more sustainable agricultural methods and rewilding of grasslands, we could reduce the risk of flooding and create a more climate-resilient landscape.

On the coast, grazing marsh is an incredibly important habitat for climate resilience. Coastal grazing marsh not only sequesters carbon in its unimproved soil structure, but it also has the capacity to hold fresh water as a floodplain, ensuring a year-round water supply as well as being a vital habitat for a range of species. It also provides a natural coastal defence, dissipating wave energy.

The balance of grazing animals used as a more organic way of managing grassland is important to achieve the balance of a productive and biodiverse landscape.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning grassland habitat

Grasslands are often the sort of open environments with nature and views that most appeal to people for walking – so the mental and physical health benefits are considerable where these areas are accessible.

When located close to urban populations and with access, grassland provides a crucial health role, particularly for deprived communities where health issues may be prevalent. Often there are psychological barriers to overcome for people to feel safe and welcome in these environments.



Priority GL1 - Chalk grasslands are safeguarded from land use changes and other threats and restored to a better, species-rich condition. They are connected and buffered across the landscape to promote ecological integrity and resilience, particularly for the purpose of facilitating species movement in response to climate change.

	Potential measure GL1.1 Maintain and enhance core, high quality and good condition chalk grassland sites through the application of conservation management sensitive to the existing and potential flora and fauna of the site.
	Potential measure GL1.2 Increase the extent of high quality, connected chalk grassland by bringing appropriate sites, adjacent to core/good condition sites, into conservation management.
	Potential measure GL1.3 Increase functional links between chalk grassland and other habitats to maximise nature-based solutions offered by improved connectivity.

Priority species requiring chalk grassland potential measures:

- Brown Hare

Priority species associated with chalk grassland, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Maidstone Mining Bee	- Noctule Bat
- Moss Carder Bee	- Serotine Bat
- Shrill Carder Bee	- Barred Tooth-striped Moth
- <i>Omphalopion beuthini</i> (Beetle)	- Black-veined Moth
- Adonis Blue Butterfly	- Forester Moth
- Chalk Hill Blue Butterfly	- Liquorice Piercer Moth
- Dark Green Fritillary Butterfly	- Milkwort Beauty Moth
- Dingy Skipper Butterfly	- Scabious Leaf-miner Moth
- Duke of Burgundy Butterfly	- Straw Belle Moth
- Grizzled Skipper Butterfly	- Sussex Emerald Moth
- Silver-spotted Skipper Butterfly	- Adder
- Small Blue Butterfly	- Bedstraw Broomrape
- Wall Butterfly	- Dwarf Milkwort
- <i>Porpolomopsis calyptriformis</i> (Fungi)	- Green-winged Orchid
- Rufous Grasshopper	- Ground-pine
- Wart-biter Bush Cricket	- Juniper
- Brown Long-eared Bat	- Lady Orchid
- Leisler's Bat	- Lizard Orchid
	- Musk Orchid

Land management and land use principles for chalk grassland:

- Extension and increase of chalk grassland flora to be delivered in first instance by allowing natural regeneration and colonisation. Where not possible, green hay should be the preferred next option. Use of local provenance seed or other plant material should only be used when other techniques are not practically possible.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for chalk grassland:

- Develop an improved evidence base of the county's core species-rich chalk grassland sites.



Priority GL2 - Existing coastal and floodplain grazing marsh restored to better condition and retaining more freshwater, with sensitive areas, and the breeding waders they support, protected from land management and recreational disturbance. Opportunities taken to create and extend areas of this habitat and increase its climate resilience.

	Potential measure GL2.1 Increase opportunities to store winter water on land adjacent to grazing marsh to increase opportunities for “wetting” during spring/summer.
	Potential measure GL2.2 Deliver grazing marsh habitat restoration, extension and creation where it will offer the greatest gains to support the county’s important grazing marsh flora and fauna and is designed to minimise recreational disturbance and reduce risk from predation.
	Potential measure GL2.3 Reconnect rivers with their former natural floodplain and improve the water storage ability of floodplain in order to protect against climate change impacts and drought.

Priority species requiring coastal and floodplain grazing marsh potential measures:

- Barn Owl	- Shoveler
- Corn Bunting	- Yellow Wagtail
- Yellow Wagtail	- European Eel
- Marsh Harrier	- Brown Hare
- Oystercatcher	- European Water Vole
- Pochard	- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Moss Carder Bee	- Rufous Grasshopper
- Shrill Carder Bee	- Noctule Bat
- Kentish Clown Beetle	- Fisher's Estuarine Moth
- Ophonus puncticollis (Beetle)	- Marsh Mallow Moth
- Pride of Kent Rove Beetle	- Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass
- <i>Haliphus variegatus</i> (Beetle)	- Slender Hare's-ear
- Brent Goose	- Least Lettuce
- Lapwing	- Greater Water-parsnip
- Redshank	

Data, evidence and mapping needs for coastal and floodplain grazing marsh:

- Identify priority areas for the reconnection of rivers with their former natural floodplain.
- Identify priority areas for the improvement of floodplain water storage ability.
- Identify potential areas where creation of new grazing marsh can be prioritised to sites which are likely to be most sustainable in the long term. Criteria for areas including: above predicted sea level impacts; adequate freshwater supply; minimal (or manageable) recreational disturbance.

Priority GL3 - Existing species-rich lowland meadow is safeguarded from loss, restored to better condition and extended through sensitive land management practices to reduce soil nutrient levels. Through the extension of lowland meadow, this habitat is better connected, reducing the risk of isolated meadow species and declines in species richness.

	Potential measure GL3.1 Maintain and enhance core, high quality and good condition lowland meadow sites through the application of grazing/cutting regimes sensitive to the existing and potential flora and fauna of the site.
	Potential measure GL3.2 Increase the extent of high quality, connected lowland meadow by creating new lowland meadow sites, in close proximity to core/good condition sites.
	Wider measure GL3.3 Increase connectivity of, and provision for wildlife in, lowland meadows by leaving field margins uncut, varied sward heights, hedgerows well-connected and integrate some bare patches or banks within the grassland site.
	Wider measure GL3.4 Establish neutral grasslands on floodplains, to create resilience to flooding and drought and protect water quality.

Priority species requiring lowland meadow potential measures:

- Barn Owl
- West European Hedgehog
- Brown Hare

Priority species associated with lowland meadow, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Great-crested newt
- Moss Carder Bee
- Shrill Carder Bee
- Dark Green Fritillary Butterfly
- Dingy Skipper Butterfly
- Grizzled Skipper Butterfly
- Wall Butterfly
- *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis* (Fungi)
- Rufous Grasshopper
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Serotine Bat
- Adder
- Green-winged Orchid

Land management and land use principles for lowland meadow:

- Extension and increase lowland meadow flora to be delivered in first instance by allowing natural regeneration and colonisation. Where not possible, green hay should be the preferred next option. Use of local provenance seed or other plant material should only be used when other techniques are not practically possible.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for lowland meadow:

- Develop an improved evidence base of the county's core species-rich lowland meadow sites.

Priority GL4 - Retain, restore and extend the county's acid grassland and heathland habitat mosaics, to improve the species diversity that these habitats, with limited extent in Kent and Medway, support.

	Potential measure GL4.1 Implement appropriately designed management that prevents succession into secondary woodland and scrub encroachment. Management ensures that acid grassland is maintained and retained but not at the expense of the mosaic's heathland resource. Grazing regime provides maximum diversity and a combination of larger open areas and smaller mosaic "glades" to provide habitat for breeding birds, reptiles and invertebrates. Climate resilience is built into management.
	Potential measure GL4.2 Create new acid grassland sites from improved grassland and former arable sites.

Priority species requiring acid grassland and heathland potential measures:

- Grasshopper Warbler
- Linnet
- Yellowhammer

Priority species associated with acid grassland and heathland, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Four-banded Weevil-wasp
- Moss Carder Bee
- *Anthicus bimaculatus* (Beetle)
- Nightjar
- *Porpolomopsis calyptriformis* (Fungi)
- Forester Moth
- Adder
- Heath Dog-violet

Land management and land use principles for acid grassland and heathland:

- Control/remove early successional species and invasive, over abundant or non-native species.
- Where sites were originally wood pasture but succession to secondary woodland has occurred, return to wood pasture habitat.
- Avoid nutrient enrichment by protecting sites from agricultural and road run-off.

Data, evidence and mapping needs

- Develop an improved evidence base of the county's core lowland heathland and acid grassland sites.
- Identify and map lowland heathland and acid grassland areas that have been neglected (and other potential areas), for connectivity and restoration.



Priority GL5 - Safeguard, restore and increase fields with a diversity and abundance of arable wild plants.

	Wider measure GL5.1 Management of field margins to provide graduated field edges, with wider and cultivated margins.
	Wider measure GL5.2 Management of fields, with mixed times of cultivation to encourage a diversity of arable wild plants.
	Potential measure GL5.3 Design and deliver location and soil appropriate projects, targeted in the richest arable plant areas and on a variety of soil types, to create new, large areas dedicated to the promotion of arable wild plant diversity and abundance.

Priority species requiring arable field margin potential measures:

- Barn Owl
- Corn Bunting
- Linnet
- Yellowhammer
- Brown Hare
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with arable field margin, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Great-crested newt
- Moss Carder Bee
- Shril Carder Bee
- *Omphalapion beuthini* (Beetle)
- Brent Goose
- Lapwing
- Linnet
- Marsh Harrier
- Tree Sparrow
- Turtle Dove
- Yellow Wagtail
- Serotine Bat
- Adder
- Ground-pine

Land management and land use principles for arable wild plants:

- Integrate grazing livestock into conservation arable farming, including grazing of over-winter cover crops.
- Removal of chemicals.
- Employ mixed timings for cultivating areas.

Data, evidence and mapping needs:

- Develop an improved evidence base of sites of arable wild plants.
- Map and identify priority species of arable wildflowers specific to soil types in Kent.



Successional habitat priorities and potential measures

Ambition for successional habitat in Kent and Medway - The structural diversity of open mosaic habitat found on previously developed land (brownfield) and low-level scrub is safeguarded from loss and damage, for the benefit of species that rely on early successional habitats.

An overview of the county's successional habitat, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat

Successional habitats are dynamic and change over time. An example of successional habitat is scrub, which is vital for nightingales and reptiles, but only at a certain height and structure, after which the value for particular species declines as scrub transitions to woodland.

Open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (also known as brownfield) often supports an extremely rich diversity of wildflowers and animals, including nationally scarce invertebrates. Often these areas are low in nutrients, which suits these species, but can also mean that scrub stabilises as a permanent rather than transitional habitat.

Often these valuable areas for wildlife are underappreciated or unprotected and can be at risk from development. Increasing the awareness of the importance of these sites and the need for their retention and management, to protect the important features that support some of our rarest and most threatened species is a crucial basis to any action.

Nature-based solution opportunities from successional habitat

Successional and mosaic habitats provide more resilience to climate change. The more varied the habitats and species are, the less the shock to the ecosystem will be in changes of temperatures, extreme weather events and new diseases. Allowing these habitats to naturally regenerate rather than forcibly 'improving' them, will allow habitats to adapt to our changing environment.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning successional habitat

This habitat is often close to, or amongst, urban populations so there are health and connection with nature benefits to maintaining and managing these areas.

This could range from the experience they provide (if accessible) to opportunities for community and volunteer groups to be involved in the management of these areas, through activities such as scrub management.

When located close to urban populations and with access, successional habitats provide a crucial health role, particularly for deprived communities where health issues may be prevalent. Often there are psychological barriers to overcome for people to feel safe and welcome in these environments.



Priority SH1 - Safeguard from loss and damage, open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield), that support priority species which rely on early successional habitats.

Better	Potential measure SH1.1 Appropriate management plans in place for key sites, with measures that support the succession of habitats to occur naturally, increase edge habitat, create a graded profile of mixed habitat and provide features that support the species of interest most strongly tied to open mosaic habitats and, in particular, any species that the particular site in question is notable for.

Priority species requiring open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield) potential measures:

- Barn Owl
- Brown Hare
- Hazel Dormouse
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield), requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Moss Carder Bee
- Shrill Carder Bee
- *Anthicus bimaculatus* (Beetle)
- House Martin
- Swift
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Serotine Bat
- Distinguished Jumping Spider
- Lizard Orchid

Land management and land use principles for open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield):

- Design enlargement and connectivity of open mosaic (brownfield) habitats to wider landscape by consideration of how important species associated with the site make use of other adjacent land.
- Maintain open areas through vegetative management.
- Preserve and create water features.
- Prevent recreational disturbance.
- Safeguarding to be delivered through setting aside land and/or putting in place active management that prevents loss of, or damage to, the habitat.

Supporting measures for open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield):

- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of successional habitats and the worth and vulnerability of open mosaic (brownfield) habitats found on previously developed land.
- Land use planning to support the safeguarding of the county's best and most significant open mosaic (brownfield) habitats found on previously developed land/brownfield sites by setting aside land and/or putting in place land use restrictions and management that prevents loss and damage.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for open mosaic habitats found on previously developed land (brownfield):

- Survey the county's open mosaic (brownfield) habitats found on previously developed land/brownfield sites to identify the county's best and most significant sites.
- Review abandoned railways as potential long corridors of open mosaic (brownfield) habitat.



Priority SH2 - Increase the extent of low level, scrub/successional habitat, providing a mix of young and mature scrub to enable structural diversity and the support of a wide range of species. Link this scrub habitat with hedgerows, woodland and other habitats to support wildlife corridors.

Better	Potential measure SH2.1 Selective conservation grazing of areas within the scrub to create open areas and allow for natural regeneration.
Connected	Potential measure SH2.2 Maintain and integrate areas of scrub within arable land, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and urban habitats to encourage successional habitats and provide wildlife corridors.
	Potential measure SH2.3 Put in place active scrub management that provides a mix of young and mature scrub, bare ground and links with surrounding habitat.

Priority species requiring scrub/successional habitat potential measures:

- Moss Carder Bee
- Oak Mining Bee
- Shrill Carder Bee
- Nightingale
- Turtle Dove
- Brown Hairstreak Butterfly
- White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly
- Liquorice Piercer Moth
- Adder

Priority species associated with scrub/successional habitat, requiring additional bespoke measures:

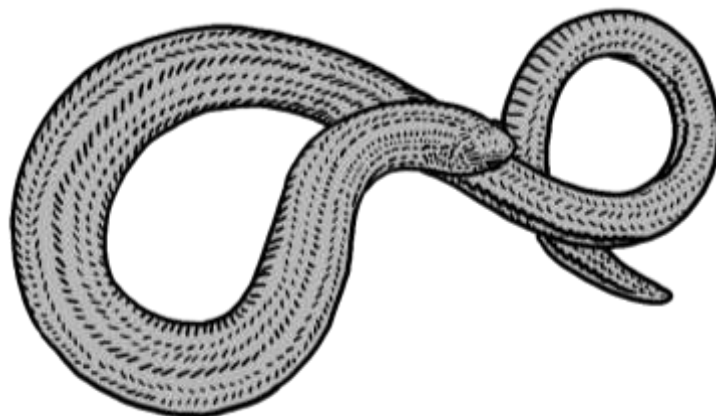
- Grasshopper Warbler
- Linnet
- Yellowhammer
- Hazel Dormouse
- West European Hedgehog

Land management and land use principle for scrub/successional habitat:

- Cut and removal when encroaching on other habitats.
- Preserve and create water features alongside scrub and foraging areas and ensure they are in close proximity.

Supporting measures for scrub/successional habitat:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of scrub habitats.



Woodland, trees and hedgerows priorities and potential measures

Ambition for woodland, trees and hedgerows in Kent and Medway - **Kent and Medway's native woodland, trees and hedgerows are safeguarded from loss and under appropriate and active management, delivering robust ground flora and soil structures. A mixture of natural regeneration and new establishment improves connectivity and provides an even greater contribution to climate change mitigation and resilience.**

An overview of the county's woodland, trees and hedgerows, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat

A recent tree canopy assessment (July 2023) calculated the county had 64,751ha of tree cover, with an average tree canopy cover of 17% and an urban tree cover average also at 17%. In terms of distribution across the county, west Kent districts have a far greater canopy cover (28-30%) than those in east Kent (4-9%). Areas such as Thanet and Romney Marsh have particularly low canopy cover.

Our two National Landscapes are heavily wooded. The High Weald has the most wooded landscape in the country with 28% woodland cover and is particularly important for Gill woodland, a rare habitat, scarce elsewhere in the south-east of England. The Kent Downs has 23% cover, with the majority of this, 70%, being irreplaceable ancient woodland.

Kent has 11% of England's ancient semi-natural woodland, with more ancient woodland than any other county in the UK. Ancient semi-natural woods have developed naturally. Most have been used by humans – often managed for timber and other industries over the centuries – but the woodland cover has persisted for over 400 years. Ancient woods are our richest and most complex land habitat in the UK and they are home to more threatened species than any other - it is the complex biodiversity which has accumulated over hundreds of years that classes these as irreplaceable. Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS) are ancient woods that have been felled and replanted with non-native species. Although damaged, they still have the complex soil of ancient woodland and are considered to contain remnants of the woodland specialist species which occurred before, offering restoration opportunities.

Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland is the county's largest semi-natural habitat, covering 44,490ha and 11% of Kent – over half of this can be found in the Kent Downs and High Weald National Landscapes.

The county also has areas of wet woodlands – the 2012 figure of 662.2ha was considered an underestimation because of survey difficulties. Wet woodland supports a range of uncommon species, with ground flora that require wet or humid conditions, such as mosses, liverworts, ferns and sedges. Dead wood within the woodland sites can be frequent, and its association with water provides specialist habitats not found in dry woodland.

In Kent, coniferous woodland is mostly plantation woodland, with non-native species grown for timber production – this covers just 0.9% of the county.

The county also has wood pasture and parkland, a mosaic of habitats comprising trees and scrub in grassland, where the trees are most often ancient or veteran. This habitat is not just important in terms of its natural heritage but also the landscape history associated with its creation.

Trees in hedgerows and trees outside woodland are an important part of the picture for trees in the county and hedgerows are recognised as a key habitat for many species, which can also help connect fragmented areas of woodland.

A history of fruit production has also left us with another habitat important for wildlife – traditional orchards. However, many of these orchards have been lost in the past half century and are now seen as unprofitable compared to commercial orchards and the 1,676ha of traditional orchards recorded in 2012 by the Kent Habitat Survey is now likely further reduced.

Our woodlands are home to a vast array of wildlife, including some nationally threatened woodland species. The county is one of a small handful of locations where the woodland butterfly, Heath Fritillary, is found and the increasingly rare and now threatened Duke of Burgundy. Our woodlands are also important for some rare moths and spiders, including the Heart Moth and Money Spider, with Blean Woods being the only site in Britain where the latter is found. Kent is also a stronghold for the Hazel Dormouse and our ancient broadleaved woodlands are hugely important for bats, with Kent's woodlands being home to one of the UK's rarest mammals, the Bechstein's Bat.

Most woodland requires some form of management, however many remain without. Traditional practices, such as coppicing, are considered unprofitable and the practice is declining to the detriment of wildlife.

Wood lotting (the dividing up of woodland for sale) has been a particular problem for the county, resulting in habitat fragmentation, inconsistent management and sometimes inappropriate use. Close linear planting is not good for wildlife, creating woodland with little understory for flowers and butterflies and no deadwood for invertebrates.

Deer are problematic for woodland habitats and are increasing in number across Kent. Their damaging activities include bark stripping and eating saplings in woodlands, preventing natural regeneration. They also destroy newly planted saplings, whips and feathers, requiring costly and wasteful tree guards. Grey

squirrels also pose a problem for our woodland. Not only has their presence resulted in the loss of the UK's only native squirrel species, the red squirrel, across the country but they can also affect the composition of native woodland by bark stripping and eating the seeds of certain trees.

Given its proximity to the continent, Kent is particularly vulnerable to invasive species and disease. Ash dieback, caused by a fungus which originated in Asia, is a prime example of how the county is often impacted by new pests and diseases first, with this disease having had a massive impact on ash trees in the county in recent years.

Climate change is another pressure on our trees and woodland, particularly for wet woodland, a rare and unique habitat, found in various sites across the country, but suffering the impacts of drought.

In recognition of the importance of woodland, trees and hedgerows to not only biodiversity but also the services they provide, the county adopted a target of extending tree cover by 1.5 million new trees and increasing the county's average canopy cover to 19%. Kent Plan Tree also aims to improve existing woodland and trees' health and safeguard it from degradation and loss. Underpinning woodland, tree and hedgerow expansion and creation in the county is the principle of "right tree, in the right place, for the right reason, with the right management and right monitoring".

Nature-based solution opportunities from woodland, trees and hedgerows

Increasing tree canopy cover in Kent would bring a variety of benefits. Woodland, trees and hedgerows are natural solutions to storing carbon, cleaning air, absorbing surface water and regulating temperatures in urban settings.

Woodlands are important for carbon storage, with broadleaf and mixed woodland sequestering the most carbon in their trunks, roots and leaves. Well-managed, biodiverse woodlands provide an opportunity to deliver many other benefits alongside a nature-based solution to carbon sequestration.

Efforts to improve air quality through nature-based solutions could target the 43 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) throughout the county and specific roads with high emissions, by establishing roadside woodland and hedgerows.

Woodland, trees and hedgerows give structure to soil and having these on higher land helps to absorb water and slow the flow of any run-off, preventing flooding downstream. Deep rooted trees allow for more stable soil with improved structure and quality, thus improving water retention and the climate resilience of the trees.

Wet woodland can play an important role in flood risk management if managed for this purpose, using a technique called slowing the flow – using cut timber to hold water across the woodland floor. Use of this nature-based solution presents an opportunity to extend this rare habitat.

In urban areas, trees provide a regulatory function, cleansing and cooling the air, but they also provide shelter and shade. In agriculture the establishment of the trees can also offer shade benefits for livestock.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning woodland, trees and hedgerows

In an urban setting, trees provide mental health benefits through the opportunity to connect with nature. They also provide physical health benefits by regulating the temperature and air quality.

When located close to urban populations and are accessible to people, woodland provides a crucial health role, particularly for deprived communities where health issues may be prevalent. People need to feel safe and welcome however and often there are psychological barriers to overcome.



Priority WTH1 - Retain the extent and improve the condition of existing woodland and trees outside woodland through active management, improving habitat provision for woodland species.

	Wider measure WTH1.1 Holistic management of woodlands and transitional open spaces to sensitively consider the understory, ground flora and soil; allow a variety of successional states and variety of species, developing to mature, providing different canopy layers; management of internal edge, including creation of glades and rides; preserve natural decay stages of woodland including old growth, dead and dead standing wood; where appropriate reinstate and increase coppicing as a management measure; deliver targeted management in order to provide habitats for vulnerable woodland species.
	Potential measure WTH1.2 Restoration and extension of lowland and upland wood pasture and parkland.
	Potential measure WTH1.3 Safeguard and enhance small pockets of woodland to provide key stepping stones for species movement and connect with hedgerows and scrub.

Priority species requiring woodland and trees potential measures:

- Barn Owl
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- Marsh Tit
- Hazel Dormouse

Priority species associated with woodland and trees, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Fringe-horned Mason Bee
- Oak Mining Bee
- Shining Guest Ant
- Click Beetle
- Noble Chafer Beetle
- Phoenix Clown Beetle
- *Pseudeuparius sepicola* (Beetle)
- Red-horned Cardinal Click Beetle
- Southern Oyster Mushroom Beetle
- Nightingale
- Nightjar
- Duke of Burgundy Butterfly
- Grizzled Skipper Butterfly
- Heath Fritillary Butterfly
- White Admiral Butterfly
- White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly
- *Tinodes pallidulus* (Caddisfly)
- Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly
- *Cortinarius osmophorus* (Fungi)
- *Cortinarius violaceus* (Fungi)
- *Sarcodontia crocea* (Fungi)
- *Enterographa elaborata* (lichen)
- Bechstein's Bat
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Serotine Bat
- Boring Millipede
- Aspen Knot-horn Moth
- Daisy Case-bearer Moth
- Drab Looper Moth
- Forester Moth
- Scarce Goldenrod Plume Moth
- White-spotted Sable Moth
- Lady Orchid

Land management and land use principles for woodland and trees active management:

- Management and/or removal of invasive and inappropriate non-native species, in accordance with the latest guidance and statutory requirements.
- No conversion of natural and semi-natural woodlands into intensive woodland plantations or monocultures.
- Removal of diseased trees and tree species targeted in disease control efforts.
- Control of damaging deer and grey squirrel populations at a landscape scale.
- Safeguarding to be delivered through setting aside land and/or putting in place active management that prevents loss of, or damage to, the habitat.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for woodland and trees:

- Identification of woodlands in need of improved management.



Priority WTH2 - Increase the average canopy cover of Kent through woodland and trees outside woodland.

	Potential measure WTH2.1 Extension of existing woodland through natural colonisation and planting.
	Potential measure WTH2.2 Conversion of unproductive land for arable into woodland.
	Wider measure WTH2.3 Plant more trees in hedgerows.
	Wider measure WTH2.4 Use tree and hedgerow establishment and scrub to increase connectivity, provide wildlife corridors and address fragmented areas of woodland.
	Potential measure WTH2.5 Plant more urban trees and create urban forests and orchards, ideally siting tree planting to where they will provide flood management, air quality and temperature regulation benefits.
	Wider measure (unmapped) Increase trees and hedgerows on agricultural land, siting to also provide additional benefit of increased shade for livestock.

See Priority WTH1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for increasing canopy cover:

- All tree establishment to follow the Kent Plan Tree principles of the right tree, in the right place, for the right reason, with the right management and right monitoring.
- Any action to increase canopy cover to consider existing habitats to ensure there is no detrimental impact to other high value habitats; appropriate soil types; a diversity of species; and landscape character.
- Retain, replace and plant more highway trees.
- Woodland creation to be species-rich and use resilient species.
- Active and long-term aftercare and monitoring to ensure planting sites survive.
- Greater integration of trees in worked landscapes – agroforestry and silvopasture.

Supporting measures for increasing canopy cover:

- Increase in the number of local tree nurseries.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for increasing canopy cover:

- Mapping to establish appropriate sites, and suitable trees, for woodland creation/expansion, to identify nature-based solution opportunities and to set tree targets at local level.

Priority WTH3 - Return the ecological function provided by native trees previously prolific in Kent, by restoring those lost to disease, pests, climate change and drought.

Priority species requiring native tree restoration potential measures:

- Hazel Dormouse

Priority species associated with native tree restoration, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Red-horned Cardinal Click Beetle	- Enterographa elaborata (Lichen)
- Southern Oyster Mushroom Beetle	- Bechstein's Bat
- White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly	- Aspen Knot-horn Moth

Land management and land use principles for native tree restoration:

- Replace trees as they are lost from woodlands and hedgerows with a diversity of resilient species, and planted appropriately and with the context carefully considered; to include: Aspen, Alder, Small-leaved Lime, Sessile Oak, Field Maple, Wild Cherry, Bird Cherry, Rowan, Buckthorn, Pedunculate Oak, Sycamore, Birch.
- Targeted and strategic establishment, and natural colonisation, of resilient tree species, with focus on Beech, Black Poplar, Hornbeams, Oaks, Juniper, disease resilient Ulmus cultivars (Elm), Ash, Wild Service and county varieties such as Kentish Cob.
- Careful procurement of tree stock, from local provenance where possible, and with consideration of biosecurity measures.
- If trees are succumbing to disease, it might be provident to source trees from elsewhere to increase the genetic diversity.
- Retain standing and lying dead wood.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for native tree restoration:

- Establish a better understanding of areas where restoration of lost trees should be targeted.



Priority WTH4 - Ensure the resilience of the county's woodlands.

	Wider measure WTH4.1 Management that facilitates and enables the natural regeneration of woodlands, by reducing grazing pressures.
	Potential measure WTH4.2 Where appropriate, promote the restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) sites to a more species rich woodland.
	Wider measure WTH4.3 Increase connectivity of woodland habitats by creating semi-natural habitat buffers strips, which reduce the gaps between patches and extend woodland edge habitats.
	Potential measure WTH4.4 Establish green bridges to connect woodlands fragmented by road and rail.

See Priority WTH1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for woodland resilience:

- When establishing new woodlands, and extending existing, use a diversity of appropriate tree species to safeguard against pest and diseases and include species that will be more resilient to climate impacts.
- Remove invasive species.



Priority WTH5 - Ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees, are safeguarded from loss, with damaged areas restored through natural processes, management and the removal of invasive trees and plants. Areas of ancient woodland are buffered and better connected.

	Wider measure WTH5.1 Appropriate and targeted management of ancient woodland, in order to retain and enhance specific features of ancient woodland and enhance biodiversity.
	Wider measure WTH5.2 Establishment of adequate buffer zones around ancient woodland that provide sufficient and suitable protection to the root system and other sensitive ecological features the ancient woodland supports. Buffers are linked to hedgerows and other appropriate habitats, to extend habitat connectivity.
	Potential measure WTH5.3 Solitary ancient and veteran trees buffered with open space, with further protections offered with establishment of neighbouring wood pasture and agroforestry of mixed habitats.
	Potential measure WTH5.4 Connectivity of ancient woodland improved by links to hedgerows, establishment of standard trees and increased standing deadwood.

Priority species requiring ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees potential measures:

- Marsh Tit
- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- Hazel Dormouse

Priority species associated with ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Click Beetle
- Noble Chafer Beetle
- Southern Oyster Mushroom Beetle
- Weevil
- *Cortinarius osmophorus* (Fungi)
- *Cortinarius violaceus* (Fungi)
- Bechstein's Bat

Land management and land use principles for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees:

- Management to include (as appropriate) coppicing, deer and grey squirrel management, retention of deadwood, veteranisation, succession techniques and removal of tree species that are subject to disease control measures, invasive or of low ecological value.
- Employ veteranisation techniques (the deliberate damaging or wounding of trees) on mature trees to accelerate the development of features, and their associated microhabitats, typical of veteran trees.
- Buffer strips to be provided by scrub or grasslands, ditches, or natural woodland regeneration; should not include built elements (including back gardens).

Data, evidence and mapping needs for ancient woodland and ancient and veteran trees:

- Detailed mapping and identification of all veteran and ancient trees, through combined efforts between landowners, community, local authorities and land managers.
- Map out potential future veteran trees.

Priority WTH6 - Increase the extent of high-quality wet woodland in the county and improve connectivity with the freshwater habitat network.

	Potential measure WTH6.1 Establish and implement long-term management plans for wet woodland and surrounding land, which ensures connectivity between waterways and woodland and incorporates nature-based water management solutions, such as leaky dams, felling, blocking drainage channels to allow for seasonal flooding.
	Potential measure WTH6.2 Create of ponds within woodlands, and naturally regenerated riparian zones.

Priority species requiring wet woodland potential measures:

- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker

Priority species associated with wet woodland, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Beaver
- Bechstein's Bat
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Serotine Bat
- Kentish Snake Millipede

Land management and land use principles for wet woodland:

- Consider downstream impacts when creating new wet woodlands.
- Take into consideration existing habitats to ensure there is no detrimental impact to other high value habitats and respect the landscape character.
- Where appropriate, use ecosystem engineers to maintain and enhance wet woodlands, ensuring these are combined with a clear communication, landowner engagement and management strategy before any action commences.

Priority WTH7 - Retain and safeguard the High Weald's unique gill woodland and the plant species they support and the important functions they provide for the wider river catchment.

	Potential measure WTH7.1 Create buffer zones around the gill woodland to ensure they remain largely undisturbed.

Land management and land use principles for gill woodland:

- Restore the natural function and geomorphology of gill streams that have been the subject of historical man-made interventions.
- Avoid management approaches that would harm the special character and species found in the woodland and its wetland features.
- Maintain the natural functioning and water quality of gill streams running through gill woodlands.
- Control of invasive species that may impact gill woodlands.

Priority WTH8 - The extent of species-rich hedgerows throughout the county is increased, with lost hedgerows replaced, gaps filled and management of existing hedgerows improving the quality as well as quantity. Hedgerows providing a coherent network of shelter, nesting and forage for wildlife across the landscape and allowing other habitats to be linked.

	Wider measure WTH8.1 Actively manage the county's hedgerows, fill gaps and remove invasive species; rejuvenate and restore hedgerows that have declined in structural condition. Increase the extent of hedge laying, coppicing and gapping up within this management.
	Wider measure WTH8.2 Buffer hedgerows with grass margins, scrub and headlands.
	Wider measure WTH8.3 Strategic siting of new and extended hedgerows to aid habitat connectivity and support species forage, shelter and movement; restore links to copse and woodland.

Priority species requiring hedgerow potential measures:

- Grasshopper Warbler
- Linnet
- Yellowhammer
- Hazel Dormouse
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with hedgerows, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Great-crested newt
- Nightingale
- Tree Sparrow
- Turtle Dove
- Brown Hairstreak Butterfly
- White-letter Hairstreak Butterfly
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Serotine Bat
- Lappet Moth
- Adder

Land management and land use principles for hedgerows:

- Preserve and restore ancient hedgerows along ancient field patterns, in association with ditches and banks.
- Maintain a varied structure so there are some taller, denser areas and emergent trees, with tree root systems contributing to soil health, mycorrhiza and biophytes.

Supporting measures for hedgerows:

- "Hedgeucation" to support all aspects of planting, managing and restoring hedgerows; the funding available; and the benefits of hedgerows.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for hedgerows:

- Map and survey existing hedgerows to determine condition and quality and better target management.
- Map historic hedgerows to identify lost hedgerows and potential areas for establishment.

Priority WTH9 - An increase in traditional orchards, under sensitive management, supporting an abundance and diversity of wildlife.

	Potential measure WTH9.1 Restore and bring established traditional orchards back into positive management, including long sward length, wildflower meadow strips between trees, limited or no spraying, sensitive pruning and dead wood/ dying trees retained.
	Potential measure WTH9.2 Establish new community orchards, in appropriate areas and with a focus on urban locations.

Priority species requiring traditional orchard potential measures:

- Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
- Brown Hare
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with traditional orchards, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Great-crested newt
- Leisler's Bat
- Noble Chafer Beetle
- Noctule Bat
- Turtle Dove
- Serotine Bat
- *Sarcodontia crocea* (Fungi)
- Adder

Data, evidence and mapping needs for traditional orchards:

- Identify areas for the establishment of new community and reestablishment of traditional orchards.

Priority WTH10 - Appropriate and coordinated deer management in woodland and connecting areas, on a landscape scale, to reduce impacts and support new planting and natural regeneration.

Land management and land use principles for deer management:

- Implement culling activity in priority control areas, to achieve and maintain populations to a level of acceptable impact on the natural landscape.
- Install fences and other physical barriers to prevent deer damaging ecologically sensitive areas.
- Cross landownership/landscape scale approach to deer control.
- Ensure any infrastructure installations to address habitat fragmentation (e.g. wildlife crossings) do not enable unintended increased movement of deer.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for deer management:

- Improve understanding of deer numbers and distribution in Kent with surveys and assessment of impact.
- Establish ongoing monitoring to develop a clear and up to date understanding and establish priority areas for control.

Freshwater habitat priorities and potential measures

Ambition for freshwater habitat in Kent and Medway - Our freshwater habitats are clean, sufficient and stable, in a healthy and good ecological state that supports an abundance and diversity of species. Catchments' functions are restored to deliver a connected mosaic of wet habitats, improving water quality and managing flood risk across the county.

An overview of the county's freshwater habitat, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat.

The county's freshwater catchments are wide and varied, featuring rivers and streams and their associated floodplains, and a range of habitats from groundwater-fed chalk streams and reedbeds, to fen and valley mires. These habitats are home to some specialist and iconic freshwater species, including Bullhead Fish, Kingfisher, Grey Wagtail and Water Vole.

The main freshwater rivers in Kent are the Medway, Stour, and Darent. The River Medway is a major tidal river and an east-west divide in mid-Kent. The River Stour is the major watercourse in East Kent, and the River Darent is a chalk stream. Chalk streams are a globally rare habitat, with only 250 in the world – approximately 65% of these are in England. Kent is particularly important due to its chalk geology, with chalk streams emerging from the North Downs and forming the source of the rivers Darent, Cray, Shuttle, Dour, Nailbourne and stretches of the Great Stour, Little Stour and North Stream. These rivers are typically characterized by their stable flow conditions, clear high-quality water and associated vegetation communities, as well as supporting wild brown trout populations.

Other important rivers in Kent include those on clay geology including the River Beult, the only riverine Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Kent. Despite this designation, it is in unfavourable condition due to water quality impacts and physical modification of the river channel.

Reedbed, whilst not extensive can be found across Kent, with 545ha in total. Fen is the county's rarest freshwater habitat, with just 12ha in the Strategy area.

Ponds are important still-water wildlife habitats that support a variety of wetland plants and animals, but many have been filled in to facilitate human land uses or neglected over decades and are much less common now. There is 4,628ha of standing open water in Kent, covering 1.2% of the county. This includes natural

systems of open water areas such as lakes, ponds and pools, as well as man-made water bodies such as ditches, canals, reservoirs, gravel pits and flooded mineral workings.

The pressures of water scarcity and water pollution are high in Kent, the impact of this is increased due to multiple pressures including climate change, a growing population, aging and over-burdened water and wastewater infrastructure, and increased water demand. Within the county, river channels and riparian areas including floodplains, have been heavily modified to support human activities, water use and infrastructure.

Water quality in Kent and Medway is chronically impacted by nutrient pollution, particularly from nitrates and phosphates, which are key contributors to the failure of many water bodies in the region to achieve good ecological status. This is especially true in areas dominated by agriculture and wastewater discharge. The River Darent is the only river in Kent that does not receive discharges from major wastewater treatment works and is one of the few that currently meets environmental standards for nutrients. However, it is still affected by smaller, permitted discharges from private sources.

With increasing summer droughts, nutrient levels in rivers are expected to rise due to reduced dilution. Elevated nutrients can lead to eutrophication, reducing biodiversity among aquatic plants, invertebrates, and fish. In severe cases, algal blooms can deplete oxygen levels, causing extreme declines or die-offs. Untreated sewage discharges add further pressure, with toxic levels of ammonia posing acute risks to aquatic life. Drought also dries out natural riverbank habitats, leading to habitat loss for water voles and other species.

To safeguard water supplies in Kent, it's essential to allow chalk aquifers to recharge naturally and to retain water in freshwater habitats such as nature reserves and protected wetlands. Over-abstraction—taking too much water from underground—prevents aquifers from refilling properly. This leads to low river flows in summer and less dilution of pollutants, making water quality worse.

Source Protection Zones (SPZs) are areas around groundwater sources—like wells and boreholes—used for drinking water. They help safeguard water quality by limiting nearby activities that could cause pollution, such as fuel storage or waste disposal. The Environment Agency uses SPZs to identify risks early and apply stricter controls closer to the source. In Kent, SPZs are commonly found over chalk aquifers in areas like Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, Ashford, and the Medway Valley—places where groundwater is a key source of public water supply. These zones often overlap with grassland habitats, which can help support water quality using nature-based solutions. Because groundwater moves slowly, pollution is difficult to clean up once it occurs, so preventing it at the source is essential for safeguarding public health and the environment

Because land in and around river catchments is managed by many different landowners, farmers, and organisations, a more joined-up approach is needed to tackle water quantity and quality. The Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) brings together local communities, environmental groups, and public bodies to improve

rivers and wetlands at a landscape scale. CaBA Catchment Partnerships are active across all river catchments in Kent and Medway, working to reduce pollution and restore natural flows.

A wide range of actions are needed. These include changing land use, restoring natural river channels, planting reedbeds to filter pollution, and removing barriers that block fish migration. These measures help build resilience to climate change and support biodiversity across Kent's water environments.

Nature-based solution opportunities from freshwater habitat

Nature-based solutions in freshwater habitats often provide multiple benefits, addressing a number of different issues and requiring little maintenance or operational resources, making them efficient and cost effective.

Naturalising rivers, where appropriate, and reinstating wetlands not only increases the quality and quantity of habitats available, but can also improve the water quality, slow the flow of water and trap sediment in the wetland vegetation, reducing the amount that is entering rivers.

Restoring wetlands allows water to be held within the landscape and released slowly over time, reducing downstream flooding and maintaining summer low flows. The Ramsar Convention considers that the conservation of wetlands should form part of drought management policies (RCS, 2015) due to the key role they play in harnessing water in the landscape and releasing it slowly into the natural groundwater system. With our climate changing to wetter winters and drier summers, it is important to consider these natural options to cope with extreme weather events.

Wetland and wet grassland habitat are also significant carbon stores. When arable and neutral grassland is turned into wetland through damming ditches and restoring historic floodplains, it can increase carbon sequestration by up to 120 tonnes CO₂/ha.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) can help to reduce flood risk. They intercept surface water and provide temporary water storage, which reduces water entering drains and increases water infiltration into the ground. Integrating SuDS into planning for new developments in urban areas will significantly improve Kent's resilience to climate change as surface water run-off will be decreased. SuDS can also be retrofitted into existing green infrastructure as a means of improving surface water management.

Restoration of urban wetlands have also been shown to help regulate temperatures, reducing ambient temperatures in the built environments that surround the wetlands. Creating SuDS, ponds and swales not only helps to mitigate water run-off built environments but helps to cool it too.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning freshwater habitat

In Kent 73% of our public water supply is taken from groundwater with the remainder from rivers or storage reservoirs. Chalk aquifers are key in terms of groundwater supply in Kent, and while demand and climate change may seem, beyond our control, healthy and functioning freshwater habitats above ground can have very positive effects on the health and well-being of the local population.

Nature rich rivers and streams in urban environments are vital in terms of the mental health benefits they bring, providing an opportunity to connect with nature. They are also the location of many recreational pursuits – a number of which rely on clean and healthy water.

When located close to urban populations and with access, freshwater habitats, provide a crucial health role, particularly for deprived communities where health issues may be prevalent.

However, often riverside access is poor and where it is provided, people need to feel safe and welcome and often there are other psychological barriers to overcome too.



Priority FW1 - All rivers and streams and their associated floodplains have a more natural form, free from physical modifications and barriers, allowing them to achieve at minimum good ecological status or potential and supporting natural processes. All freshwater habitats support a diverse native flora.

	Wider measure FW1.1 Monitor, manage, control expansion and remove invasive species from ponds, lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams and lowland drains.
	Potential measure FW1.2 Undo historical physical modifications which have disconnected rivers and floodplains and restore natural processes through a range of approaches including supply of woody material and allowing this to remain in the channel where not causing flood risk, restoring channel stage zero, restoration of historic meanders, bed raising, regrading banks to create shallow edges and establishing mosaics of water meadows, wet grasslands and wet woodlands, to allow inundation of floodplains above Q10 flows.
	Potential measure FW1.3 Restore more natural shape of channels by narrowing overwide channels, especially where siltation, uniform and low flows and lack of habitat diversity are a pressure.
	Potential measure FW1.4 Open up and daylight culverted rivers, streams and ditches including ephemeral/ seasonal streams where modification is redundant.
	Wider measure FW1.5 Increase longitudinal connectivity in rivers by removing redundant barriers and making remaining barriers passable for fish, riverine mammals and natural sediment.
	Wider measure FW1.6 Support the delivery of protected freshwater sites restoration plans, through addressing drought and water quality impacts across the wider catchment.

Priority species requiring rivers and streams potential measures:

- Grey Wagtail
- Kingfisher
- European Eel
- River Lamprey
- Sea Lamprey
- Smelt
- European Water Vole
- Opposite-leaved Pondweed
- True Fox-sedge

Priority species associated with rivers and streams, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Tern
- Tinodes pallidulus (Caddisfly)
- White-clawed Crayfish
- Beaver
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Leisler's Bat
- Noctule Bat

Land management and land use principles for naturalised rivers and streams:

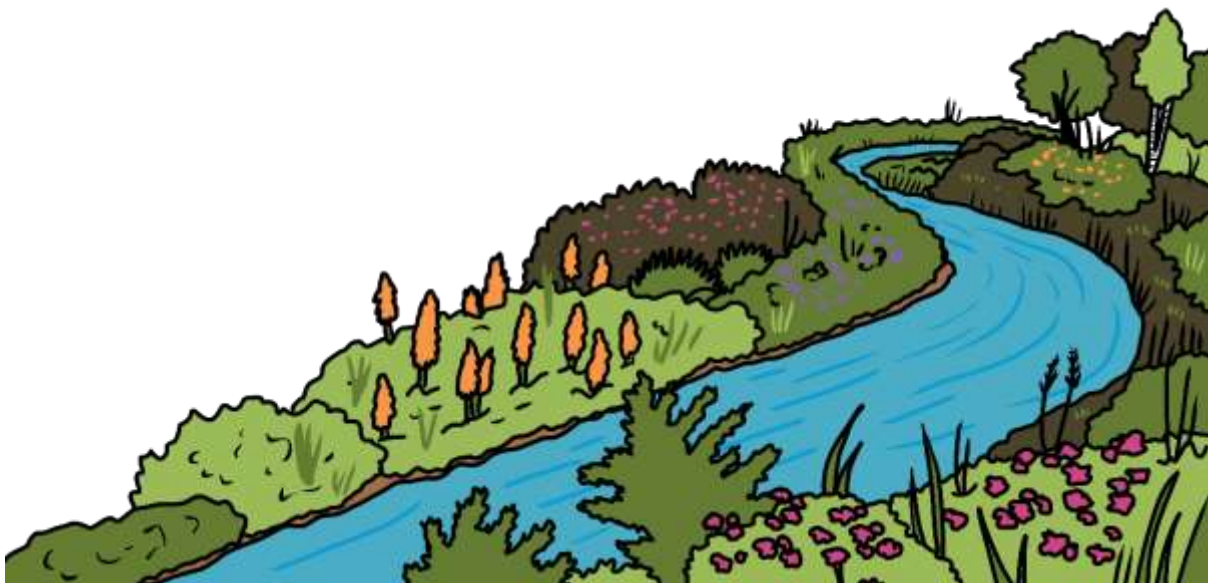
- Before the removal of any in-river structures, consideration should be given to the potential impact of that removal on the downstream ecology.
- Avoid removing downstream in-river structures where these are protecting White-clawed Crayfish from invasive Signal Crayfish and other non-native crayfish species.

Supporting measures for naturalised rivers and streams:

- County-wide/catchment-wide management strategy for freshwater invasives, including addressing distribution from headwaters and through vessels such as houseboats in the estuary.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for naturalised rivers and streams:

- Identify priority areas where channel shape needs restoration.
- Identify catchment areas where drought and water quality are impacting protected freshwater sites.



Priority FW2 - Ensure freshwater habitats and groundwater bodies are supplied with clean water, safeguarded from, and able to withstand, the impacts of pollution.

	Wider measure FW2.1 Discharge agricultural land drains into appropriate interception features in buffers, rather than the stream network.
	Wider measure FW2.2 Establish and manage functional buffer strips and other interception features for all flow pathways to hold run-off and remove pollutants including chemicals, nutrients and sediment, before it enters rivers and streams.
	Wider measure FW2.3 Reduce input of diffuse phosphate and nitrate pollution to surface and groundwater bodies through the use of integrated constructed wetlands and reedbeds in addition to hard engineered treatments.
	Potential measure FW2.4 Prevent road run-off entering rivers through the installation of SuDS or similar nature-based interception features on highways and local roads.
	Wider measure FW2.5 Reduce the risk of combined sewer overflows by reducing surface water entering the drainage system for example using SuDS, natural flood management measures or similar.

See Priority FW1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for clean water:

- Address water on a whole farm basis and in the context of the catchment.
- Establish good farming practices to reduce run-off, including cover crops, minimum till, infield buffer strips and green swales, restoration of hedges across slopes, woodland and pond restoration in fields.

Supporting measures for clean water:

- Protect reaches currently least affected by effluent from new discharge points.
- Provide a water toolkit for landowners and farmers and provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for clean water:

- Increase the extent of water quality monitoring across rivers (including those not included in the Water Framework Directive monitoring) and habitats.
- Clearly map source of pollution incidents including sewage, litter and pesticides to directly address issues at source.

Priority FW3 - Freshwater habitats and groundwater bodies are supplied with sufficient water and resilient flows, supporting their natural hydrological and hydrogeological regime.

	Wider measure FW3.1 Safeguard rivers and freshwater habitats in county most sensitive to low water levels through measures to reduce abstraction and water use in catchment
	Potential measure FW3.2 Retain and enhance habitats that support infiltration such as grasslands, woodland, reedbeds and lowland peat. Avoid reduction of infiltration in key recharge areas and around chalk stream winterbournes.
	Potential measure FW3.3 Slow the flow and store water in the catchment in areas of low agricultural productivity or where there is space in urban areas, working with natural processes, to implement natural flood management e.g. through installation of large woody material, creation of wet woodlands, lowland meadows, reedbeds, flood attenuation ponds and similar, especially where they can reduce flood risk and provide clean recharge to the groundwater body.
	Wider measure FW3.4 Hold and slow water in headwater streams through nature-based solutions (leaky woody dams and large woody debris, reedbeds, etc), and approaches such as stage zero to restore more natural channel shape and processes especially where this can provide flood risk benefits and improve stable flows.

See Priority FW1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for freshwater supply:

- Manage natural habitats and farmlands to maintain and restore infiltration ability by prioritising soil health and groundcover.

Supporting measures for freshwater supply:

- Reduce demand for water through increasing water efficiency measures, more sustainable use of water and use of alternative sources of water.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for freshwater supply:

- Identify and map drought and low flow hot spots.



Priority FW4 - Rivers, streams and springs and associated waterbodies have wide, more natural buffer strips with a diverse vegetation structure, which allow natural processes, provide a balance of light and shade, mosaics of wetland habitats, and safeguard from pollution and drought.

	Potential measure FW4.1 Establish and maintain wide areas of semi-natural, complex habitats along banks of rivers and streams (including seasonal and headwater reaches), allowing light grazing of wet grassland areas with a focus on native livestock breeds, and encouraging woodland particularly where there is need for more shading of rivers to provide cooler temperatures, increasing riparian tree cover to 30%. Allow natural regeneration of habitats and recolonisation.
	Potential measure FW4.2 Use re-development of old infrastructure as an opportunity to re-naturalise river corridors (e.g. old industrial sites).
	Potential measure FW4.3 Combine buffers with the use of nature-based solutions to hold water on floodplains and in areas upstream of communities at risk of flooding, and clean water. This could include for example large woody debris, sediment traps, floodplain wetlands.

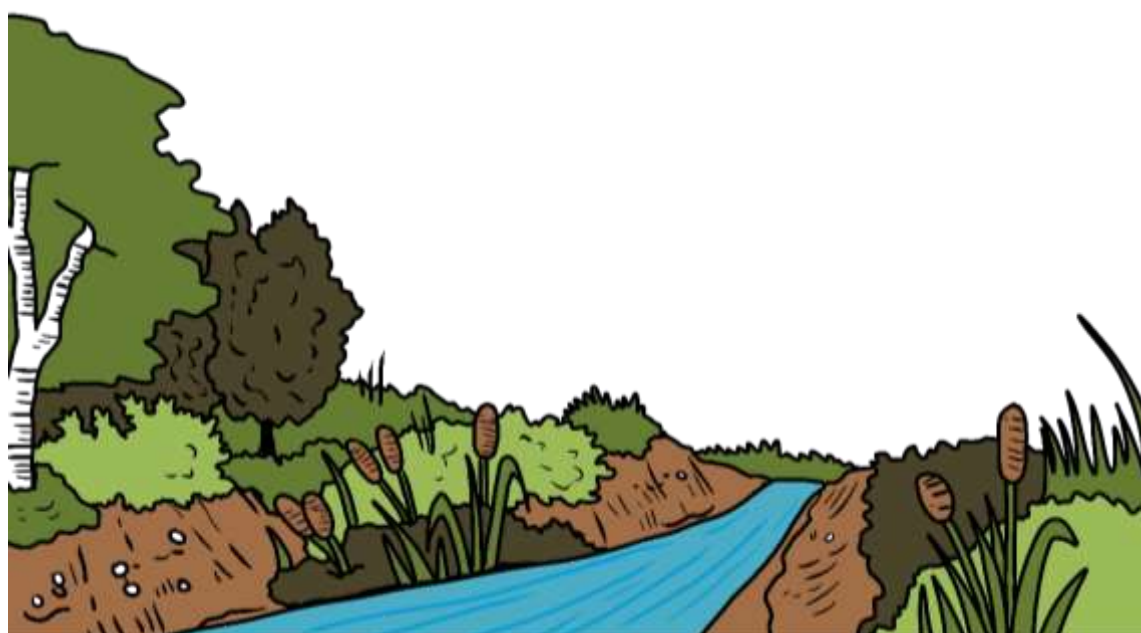
See Priority FW1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for buffered rivers and streams:

- Break field drains and block ditches where habitats next to the stream network can wet up permanently, ensuring agricultural land drainage is not impacted.
- Before the breaking of field drains and blocking ditches, consideration should be given to the potential impact of that action on the surrounding ecology.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for buffered rivers:

- Identify key sites which would benefit from permanent wetting.



Priority FW5 - Headwater streams have a natural form and natural processes, functioning as part of a mosaic of (seasonally) wet habitats including grasslands and woodlands, providing resilient flows to rivers and supporting a wide range of wildlife.

	Wider measure FW5.1 Safeguard headwater streams from agricultural pollution, erosion, and road run-off using semi-natural buffer strips and interception features.
	Potential measure FW5.2 Restore and establish wetlands in headwater areas and around natural springs, by reversing and preventing further drainage of springs and seepage areas.
	Potential measure FW5.3 Re-naturalise urban and modified sections of headwaters, including ephemeral streams such as winterbournes, (e.g. where they have been straightened and deepened to drain woodlands and agricultural land), including through approaches such as stage 0 restoration.

See Priority FW1 for relevant priority species.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for buffered rivers:

- Identify and map clearly, headwater streams and associated drainage areas.
- Identify and map sections of headwaters which require modifications to be reversed.
- Improve monitoring and understanding of the county's headwater systems and their water quality, flow and biodiversity.



Priority FW6 - Maintain and enhance ponds with high ecological value and restore those lost or degraded. Enhance lake habitats and create new ponds, especially as part of a mosaic of habitats. Safeguard all pond habitats from run-off pollutants and invasive species, while allowing successional habitats to develop where appropriate.

	Wider measure FW6.1 Restore ghost ponds, including restoration of dew ponds and dip slope ponds, hammer and furnace ponds.
	Wider measure FW6.2 Enhance lakes to include a mosaic of habitats and watercourses.

Priority species requiring pond and lake potential measures:

- *Haliphus variegatus* (Beetle)
- Kingfisher
- Pochard
- Shoveler
- European Eel
- European Water Vole
- True Fox-sedge

Priority species associated with ponds and lakes, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common toad
- Great crested newt
- Common Tern
- Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Shining Ram's-horn Snail
- Frogbit

Land management and land use principles for ponds and lakes:

- Connect ponds through associated habitats and ensure their connectivity in the landscape as part of a mosaic. Use this to reduce distance between waterbodies.
- Create ponds as nature-based solutions, including a treatment train for run-off and to capture rainfall events for example on farmland and in new developments to reduce flood risk.
- Restore native and appropriate plant and fish communities, considering removal of carp or planktivores.
- Safeguard ponds from agricultural run-off and road run-off by implementing and maintaining wide buffers around them, including consideration of livestock fencing.
- Manage entry of water by people and dogs.



Priority FW7 - Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) and lowland peat habitats are well managed and enhanced, with the provision of buffers to allow the habitat extent to increase.

	Potential measure FW7.1 Manage existing fen and bog sites to reduce encroachment, including through scrub management and appropriate grazing.
	Potential measure FW7.2 Create and maintain wide buffers around existing fen and bog sites to safeguard them from diffuse pollution.
	Potential measure FW7.3 Restore lowland peat habitats by reversing drainage and supporting re-wetting of areas.

Priority species requiring lowland mire sites potential measures:

- Black Night-runner Beetle
- Grasshopper Warbler
- Pochard
- Shoveler
- European Eel
- European Water Vole
- Opposite-leaved Pondweed

Priority species associated with lowland mire sites, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Moss Carder Bee
- Shrill Carder Bee
- *Haliphus variegatus* (Beetle)
- Bittern
- Redshank
- Beaver
- Kentish Snake Millipede
- Marsh Mallow Moth

Land management and land use principles for lowland mire sites:

- Maximise opportunities for water retention including through the creation of bunds and management of water levels in associated drainage systems.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for lowland mire sites:

- Confirm extent of existing fen habitat and identify suitable areas for opportunities to create.



Priority FW8 - High quality natural reedbeds across Kent are increased, and existing reedbeds are in appropriate management.



Wider measure FW8.1 Manage reedbeds to prevent encroachment of woodland, and by managing associated ditches and dykes, conservation grazing, minimal chemical interventions and consider management of saline flooding.

Priority species requiring natural reedbeds potential measures:

- Bearded Tit
- European Water Vole
- Marsh Harrier

Priority species associated with natural reedbeds, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Bittern
- Beaver

Land management and land use principles for natural reedbeds:

- Reedbed creation on lakesides with shallow edges, in disused quarry sites or similar open water sites.
- Create natural reedbeds along river corridors and integrate them with the wider landscape, allowing them to connect sites.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for natural reedbeds:

- Identify suitable project sites across the county for reedbed creation, including floodplains, industrial sites, quarries.



Priority FW9 - Enhance and restore wildlife-rich and functioning freshwater wetlands across the county, providing not only shelter, nurseries and breeding grounds but also carbon sinks and water management.

	Potential measure FW9.1 Enhance reservoirs and similar waterbodies to provide better wildlife habitat. Ensure any such water bodies include features that enable wildlife to get out of water.
	Wider measure FW9.2 Manage, restore and expand river valley wetlands, for example floodplain meadows, floodplain grazing marshes, reedbeds and mudflats.
More	Wider measure FW9.3 Provide opportunities for spring flooding (e.g. for waders) by creating water storage areas for winter rainfall.
Connected	Wider measure FW9.4 Connect existing wetlands through a mosaic of habitats.

Priority species requiring freshwater wetland potential measures:

- True Fox-sedge
- European Eel

Priority species associated with freshwater wetland, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Brown Long-eared Bat

Land management and land use principles for freshwater wetlands:

- Allow a mosaic of habitats to develop within wetlands.
- Design new wetlands to function as water storage and retention areas, retaining water in high flows and releasing it slowly in dry periods.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for freshwater wetlands:

- Identify freshwater wetland areas affected by saltwater intrusion and prioritise areas for action to restore freshwater habitats, while maintaining a balance between saltwater and freshwater marshes.



Priority FW10 - Restore and enhance semi-natural lowland drains and associated marshlands through integrated water level management and habitat restoration to reduce flood risk, mitigate drought impacts and promote biodiversity.

Priority species requiring semi-natural lowland drains and associated marshlands:

- True Fox-sedge
- European Eel

Land management and land use principles for naturalised rivers and streams:

- Manage more sensitively by following natural cycles, including consideration of retaining in-channel vegetation, woody material, and partial desilting to create shallow margins where possible.
- Adapt vegetation management in channels to account for species present, including reducing or delaying cutting regime, and implementing alternative bank cutting on priority reaches and leaving a marginal fringe.
- Enhance lowland drains by introducing meanders, backwaters and associated ponds.
- Remove redundant barriers and ensure passability of remaining structures for eels and other fish and riverine mammals.
- Allow floodplain reconnection without removing floodbanks where this is likely to cause issues.
- Before the removal of any barriers and structures, consideration should be given to the potential impact of that removal on the surrounding ecology.
- Avoid removing structures where these are protecting White-clawed Crayfish from invasive Signal Crayfish and other non-native crayfish species.



Urban and built environment priorities and potential measures

Ambition for urban habitat in Kent and Medway - Nature plays a central role in shaping the county's built-up environments, with wildlife provided for in a network of connected green, blue and grey spaces, which are also designed and managed to provide nature based solutions to the challenges facing those living in urban areas.

An overview of the county's urban and built environment, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat.

With 16% of the county covered by urban habitats, it's critical that any nature recovery work incorporates action for these areas. Habitats in the urban environment are varied and provide a lifeline for a range of wildlife, but many green spaces are not well managed for nature. They are often over-mown and manicured, with planting that offers no or little food source or shelter, and tree planting can be inappropriate and without the long term management needed to reach maturity.

Greenspace in residential areas is increasingly being lost to parking spaces, artificial grass, paving stones, decking, gravel and impermeable plastic layers. And often hedgerows are replaced with impenetrable fencing. This loss of "green" not only affects urban wildlife but also leads to a reduction in soil health and the increased pollution of water bodies. Further to this, new building designs and maintenance practices have led to a loss of nest and roosting sites in buildings for urban birds and bats.

However, developments present significant opportunities for nature through good design of green and blue infrastructure and careful consideration of the built aspect. This can range from hedges, planted verges and trees, to fencing which allows hedgehog and other wildlife movements to the installation of bird, bat and bee/bug boxes. And the mandatory requirement to leave more biodiversity than impacted, through Biodiversity Net Gain, also place new development as a key delivery mechanism for nature recovery.

Opportunities in existing urban areas largely relate to improving the management green space, linking together urban and rural green spaces to improve connectivity, addressing fragmentation across the urban landscape and increasing the amount of green space, trees and hedgerows.

In both scenarios the opportunities to provide enhancements for certain species, such as nest sites for swifts and access for hedgehogs, or approaches such as "No

Mow May” are considerable, and the public often respond very well to such initiatives.

Nature-based solution opportunities for urban and built environments

Within urban environments, there is a cross over with other habitat related nature-based solutions. For example, the previously mentioned planting of trees and hedgerows in urban areas and alongside major roads to tackle air quality, temperature regulation and carbon sequestration. Another opportunity for carbon capture and temperature and air quality regulation in urban spaces is provided by green walls, balconies and roofs, retrofitting to existing and designing into new developments.

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and swales are another freshwater management option which addresses water drainage issues in built environments. SuDS provides an effective way of alleviating flood and drainage issues for both existing urban areas and new developments, through the incorporation of swales, wetland and pond features. Green roofs can also offer water management benefits, absorbing rainwater and reducing run-off as well as neutralising acid rain. Permeable pavements and gardens are another way to reduce run-off and slow the amount of water entering combined sewerage systems.

Landscaping and planting can also provide nature corridors throughout built environments with the inclusion of grasses, wildflowers, trees and hedgerows. This provides forage and shelter and also increases opportunities for the migration of species, particularly pollinators, through the urban environment, increasing pollination for areas outside towns and cities as a result.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning urban and built environments

A healthy and functioning natural environment including clean and plentiful water, good air quality and suitable green and blue infrastructure, should be the first consideration before any housing development goes ahead, as these wider benefits are essential to providing good conditions for people as well as wildlife.

Biodiversity supports people’s health and wellbeing through day to day connection with nature, bringing benefits to mental and physical health, but also through the regulating services it provides – including contributing to clean air and temperature regulation. These wider benefits can reach people most readily in the urban environment, but only if nature is properly considered as part of infrastructure and the benefits of existing habitats and green spaces recognised.

Connection with nature and health and wellbeing benefits can be realised in urban environments with plenty of green space/wildlife corridors, but particularly when

habitats have been improved, increased, added to or joined up close to populations lacking in natural greenspace.

Opportunities to deliver for both people and wildlife include:

- Green transport routes, allowing both people and wildlife to navigate through the urban landscape.
- Access and stepping stone green sites give variety of experience of natural green space from town to countryside, with health and well-being benefits for people and habitat provision for wildlife.
- Allotments and orchards provide healthy activity for people and connection with nature.
- Community projects focused on improving green areas for nature offer health benefits and combat loneliness and isolation, whilst also benefiting wildlife.
- Gardens, parks, verges, window boxes, SuDS, tree planting, green roofs all help to bring nature close to people in urban environments.



Priority URB1 – Address habitat fragmentation of the urban and built environment, ensuring urban species can freely move about and developed areas and infrastructure does not impede passage.

	Wider measure URB1.1 Employ conservation cuts, minimise mowing and leave wild strips, buffers and corners on verges and grass areas in areas known to be of importance for pollinators connectivity.
	Wider measure URB1.2 Enhance and safeguard existing greenspace and trees that provide key stepping stones between larger natural spaces that are either within or at the edge of urban areas.
	Wider measure URB1.3 Establish wildlife corridors and provide habitat stepping stones across urban and developed landscapes by enhancing, extending and creating new green spaces, ponds, tree cover, green roofs and walls and wild verges/swathes.

Priority species requiring urban environment connectivity potential measures:

- Barn Owl
- Hazel Dormouse
- West European Hedgehog

Priority species associated with urban environment, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Common Toad
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Moss Carder Bee
- Leisler's Bat
- Shrill Carder Bee
- Noctule Bat
- House Martin
- Serotine Bat
- Swift

Land management and land use principles for addressing habitat fragmentation in the urban and built environment:

- New builds to minimise impact on species mobility by ensuring any boundary features are passable and that landscaping provides wildlife corridors and passage across the development site, with connections out to wider landscape, including natural grass lawns, shared green space with dedicated wildlife areas, native, uninterrupted hedgerows and tree canopy.
- Establish native mixed hedgerow and street trees to link urban greenspaces and to connect these areas to the wider landscape and rural fringes.
- Use green roofs, walls and other features at bus shelters, bus and train stations and bridges to extend the wildlife network.
- Green bridges and tunnels installed (or existing crossings modified) to traverse new and existing barriers to wildlife movement in the urban environment.
- Safeguarding to be delivered through setting aside land and/or putting in place active management that prevents loss of, or damage to, the habitat.

Supporting measures for addressing habitat fragmentation in the urban and built environment:

- Incorporation of measures to address habitat fragmentation made standard practice for all new builds across the county.
- Land use planning to support the safeguarding of areas that are strategically important in reducing habitat fragmentation in the urban environment by setting aside land and/or putting in place land use restrictions and management that prevents loss and damage.
- Mobilise the population of Kent to help support connectivity through wildlife friendly gardening measures, retention of grass, hedgerows and trees, and ensuring any boundary features are passable.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for addressing habitat fragmentation in the urban and built environment:

- Identify and map existing barriers to wildlife movement in the county's major towns.



Priority URB2 - Deliver benefits for wildlife and support its recovery and growth in the urban environment through greenspace, building and land management.

	Potential measure URB2.1 Areas of urban greenspace managed to maximise provision for nature in urban areas, providing a greater complexity of habitats, with year round shelter, forage and food.
	Potential measure URB2.2 Naturalise urban river corridors, by removing river obstacles where appropriate and replacing hard river banks with native buffer verges and riverside trees.
	Potential measure URB2.3 Target tree establishment to areas of low canopy cover.

See Priority URB1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for supporting wildlife recovery in the urban environment:

- Integrate year round wildlife habitat, shelter, forage and food in new and existing development by designing in, and retrofitting, features and landscaping that are appropriate to local species, maintainable and sustainable. Particular priority should be given to Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species associated with the urban environment, where the population is locally significant or species known to be declining. General consideration should also be given to typically urban species seeing a decline in numbers, such as House Sparrows and Starlings. Such features include swift bricks, house martin artificial nest cups, nest boxes, bat tiles, hedgehog highways, bug hotels, reptile refugia (all installed in accordance with best practice guidance). Landscaping includes food plants, structural features for hibernation and overwintering, a mosaic of habitats and varied landforms and water features.
- Use green roofs, walls and other features at bus shelters, bus and train stations and bridges to provide additional areas of shelter, forage and food within built up areas.
- Minimal, and if possible, no use of pesticides and herbicides.
- Plant the right trees, in the right place and with appropriate management to ensure their successful establishment.
- Before the removal of any in-river structures, consideration should be given to the potential impact of that removal on the downstream ecology.
- Avoid removing downstream in-river structures where these are protecting White-clawed Crayfish from invasive Signal Crayfish and other non-native crayfish species.
- Ensure any measures taken are in keeping with the local landscape setting and character.

Supporting measures for supporting wildlife recovery in the urban environment:

- Incorporation of ecological features as standard practice for all new builds across the county.
- Safeguard existing nest sites for building- dependent species, such as Swifts and House Martins. Mitigation to be provided where these cannot be safeguarded.

- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of wildlife features and wild management.



Priority URB3 - Safeguard and increase the extent of green space, trees and hedgerows within urban areas to not only provide more habitat for wildlife but also deliver other benefits including urban cooling, air and noise pollution regulation and surface water management.

	Wider measure URB3.1 Trees and hedgerows specifically planted to deliver air quality, temperature regulation/cooling and surface water management benefits and targeted to areas where it is most needed and will deliver the greatest impact.
	Wider measure URB3.2 Prioritise the use of natural flood management/nature-based solutions over engineered, hard solutions, to manage areas at high risk from surface water flooding.
	Wider measure URB3.3 New and retrofitted green walls and roofs to enhance biodiversity, whilst also providing temperature regulation in settings most at risk from urban heat island effects.
	Wider measure URB3.4 Increased green and blue infrastructure, and more natural space, is targeted to communities where it is most needed to deliver health and wellbeing benefits and greater connection with nature.

See Priority URB1 for relevant priority species.

Land management and land use principles for nature-based solutions in the urban environment:

- Ensure any measures taken are in keeping with the local landscape setting and character.

Supporting measures for nature-based solutions in the urban environment:

- Use of interpretation/public information to increase understanding of how nature is being used to deliver services and benefits.
- Nature-based solutions installed with long term management in place that ensures the retention and maintenance of the benefiting features.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for nature-based solutions in the urban environment:

- Identify and map priority areas that have severe heat stress, in order to target the use of green infrastructure.



Coastal priorities and potential measures

Ambition for coastal habitat in Kent and Medway - Coastal and estuarine areas are allowed to evolve, with natural processes and progression restored, to enable adaption and resilience to climate change. Management of habitat succession is delivered strategically and holistically, to minimise loss and support a range of high functioning, connected coastal habitats.

An overview of the county's coastal habitat, pressures and threats, and the importance of, and opportunities for, recovering this habitat.

The Kent and Medway marine, intertidal and coastal area is extensive and rich in biodiversity, with habitats ranging from blue mussel beds and ross worm reefs to saltmarsh, mudflats, chalk reefs, sand dunes and vegetated shingle. This contributes to the wider UK marine environment, which has the widest range of marine habitats of any coastal waters in Europe.

The intertidal area, exposed as the tide moves in and out, often takes the form of mudflats around the Kent coast and in particular across North Kent. Mudflats have a high biological productivity with abundant invertebrates such as Ragworms, Lugworms, Sandhoppers, Cockles and *Hydrobia* Snails that provide food for internationally important populations of migrant and wintering wading birds. Coastal saltmarsh is another habitat of the intertidal area, again mainly found around the North Kent and east Kent. It is rich in rare and scarce plant assemblages, but it is also an important resting and feeding area for wading birds. Over 80% of the intertidal area in Kent is designated and protected.

Across the North Kent Marshes, there is an association between the intertidal habitats and freshwater grazing marsh behind the sea walls – with wildfowl and wading birds commuting between the two areas, depending on the state of the daily tides.

Saline lagoons are a rare and restricted habitat. Cliffe Pools near Gravesend, managed by the RSPB, is the most notable example in the county but there are other smaller, isolated sites which all together make up the 286ha of resource. These sites are important for an assemblage of specialist lagoon invertebrates, breeding terns, Avocets and wintering wildfowl and waders.

Seagrass beds are a rare habitat nationally – the 2012 Kent Habitat Survey recorded just 29.4ha, with more than half of this found in water off Medway. Seagrass need good levels of light to photosynthesise, so they grow in shallow waters and sheltered areas, such as estuaries, bays and inlets. Seagrass is the food plant of the Brent Goose which winters in Kent.

Native oysters fuse together as they grow, forming rock-like reefs that provide another habitat for other marine animals and plants. Native oyster reefs are mainly found in the Thames estuary.

Sand dunes occur mostly on the south and east coast of Kent in small areas such as Sandwich Bay and Greatstone Beach. Sand dunes are ever changing structures, but provide important homes for a variety of unique flora and fauna.

Generally vegetated shingle occurs mainly in small, narrow strips at various locations along the Kent coastline. Narrow bands of shingle may support annual vegetation of drift lines, and in some places, perennial vegetation of shingle may develop. At Dungeness, however, an extensive cuspid shingle foreland has been formed by the action of storms over many centuries. This extensive area of around 2,000ha, supports a unique series of habitats and is the UK's largest shingle structure (there are only five other structures over 100 ha in extent in the UK) making it both nationally and internationally important. A variety of rare invertebrates and plants are dependent on vegetated shingle, their concentrations varying dependent on the extent to which the normal tide limit reaches these areas, but the whole habitat is dependent on dynamic coastal processes.

Chalk defines a lot of Kent geology and ecology and for the coast this is no exception, with both maritime chalk cliffs and chalk reef providing important habitat.

There is 415ha of intertidal chalk around the coastline of Kent, accounting for 56% of England's chalk coastline. The Thanet coast has the second largest unbroken stretch of chalk reef in the UK, at 23km, which offers up a large area of intertidal and subtidal habitats, including chalk caves that are home to unique algal species. The diverse substrates – ranging from sand and coarse sediments to chalk rock, support a variety of marine life including the rare Stalked Jellyfish.

Kent has a number of other marine habitats including, clay, greensand, intertidal rock, offshore sandbanks, Blue Mussel beds and Ross Worm reefs.

The Kent coast and marine area is facing a range of pressures. Sea levels in England have risen by 16cm since 1900. For Kent, the sea level is expected to rise by up to 30cm by 2040 and 80cm by 2080. The impact of sea level rise is exacerbated for habitats such as saltmarsh and mudflat, which are gradually lost as they are squeezed against the man-made walls that are put in place to prevent inundation by the sea. In certain areas, sea walls can be removed as part of a managed realignment, so saltmarsh and mudflat can migrate landward. The impacts on habitats such as freshwater grazing marsh and saline lagoons on the landward side of sea walls also need to be managed.

Another effect of the urban coast and man-made/hard infrastructure is that habitats cannot always act in a natural dynamically functioning way. Vegetated shingle requires longshore drift to replenish itself, a process which is disrupted by our coastal infrastructure.

Increased sea temperature and reduced oxygen levels have a significant impact on a range of species, including cold water fish, while acidification negatively affects

calciferous species. Increasing temperatures may also create a more hospitable environment for pests, diseases and invasive non-native species. The latter, such as the Carpet Sea Squirt, have colonised, at the expense of some native species, in areas where they were previously unable to survive.

Coastal waters in Kent are polluted by a number of factors, including agriculture, land management, sewage and fuel and other spillages from shipping.

The human population in Kent is considerable and growing and the coast is an obvious place for recreation, both on land and water. This is having a negative impact on wildlife in some areas, particularly for birds which are easily disturbed. Disturbance reduces the birds' feeding opportunities, meaning they may have insufficient energy to survive the winter or to complete their migratory journey to their breeding sites, leading to a reduction in the bird populations.

Nature-based solution opportunities from coastal habitat

Our coastal habitats are the first line of defence for the effects of climate change. Coastal saltmarshes can help buffer increased storminess, by absorbing the energy of powerful waves. Studies that have modelled the benefits of saltmarsh habitat to reduce wave impacts, suggest that up to 50% of wave energy can be attenuated in the first 10-20 metres of vegetated saltmarsh, which in turn would reduce the scale of artificial defences needed on the landward side.

Saltmarshes, seagrass, sand dune grasses and kelp beds, as well as coastal grazing marsh, sequester carbon and reduce soil and sand erosion from coastal sites. Most blue carbon is stored in the soil, below ground which differs from forests. Erosion of these sites is a considerable problem, releasing stored carbon into the atmosphere when damaged. Estuarine expansion could provide additional carbon storing habitats. Repurposing sediment dredged from nearby harbours could be used to build up and restore these habitats and provide protection from sea level rise. The beneficial use of dredged sediment (BUDS) is a practice that is being considered for areas in the Thames Estuary.

Coastal habitats also play an important role in pollution control by filtering pollutants and contributing to nutrient cycling. Saltmarshes and seagrass beds can trap sediment, nutrients, and pollutants carried by run-off from land. This helps to reduce the amount of pollution entering coastal waters and helps maintain water quality. In addition, they can help to remove excess nutrients from the water, which in turn prevents harmful algal blooms. Our Native Oysters are also a powerful tool in water quality management, with a single Native Oyster filtering over 200 litres of seawater per day.

Wider benefits of healthy and functioning coastal habitat

Access to coastal habitats near coastal urban populations provide mental health benefits and the opportunity to connect with nature. Coastal and marine areas are

also the location of many recreational pursuits – a number of which rely on clean and healthy water. However, some recreational pursuits in these areas do conflict with the wildlife that relies on these coastal habitats.

Fisheries industries benefit from healthy and functioning marine and coastal habitats, but sustainable fishing practices are also part of the answer to some of the pressures facing marine species.

Note: the priority and potential measures for grazing marsh can be found under grassland habitats (GL2)



Priority CL1 - Sustainable and strategic management of estuaries and open coast to create functionally linked coastal habitats that are allowed to evolve, creating areas for wildlife to thrive. Natural dynamic processes and progression is restored, to enable adaption and resilience to climate change and minimise the loss of intertidal habitats.

	Wider measure CL1.1 Where hard defences must remain, apply the “greening the grey” approach, following Estuary Edges design principles to soften edges to encourage wildlife.
	Wider measure CL1.2 Refuges for wildlife created with access managed to reduce disturbance.
	Potential measure CL1.3 Hard defences removed where appropriate (ensuring that both the natural and built environment is not at risk of inundation, damage or loss as a result), to allow space for tidal ingress and enable the managed realignment of the coastline, to mitigate coastal squeeze and allow intertidal habitats to be more resilient to climate change.
	Potential measure CL1.4 Create areas for saltmarsh restoration, seagrass regeneration and high tide roosts and provide breeding areas for seabirds and/or waders, with appropriate measures to prevent or reduce disturbance and predation.
	Wider measure CL1.5 Hard defences removed where appropriate to enable reconnection of fragmented habitats through managed realignment.

Priority species requiring open coast and estuaries potential measures:

- Oystercatcher

Priority species associated with the open coast and estuaries, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Four-banded Weevil-wasp
- Leaf Beetle
- *Ophonus puncticollis* (Beetle)
- Little Tern
- Redshank
- Ringed Plover
- Sand Martin
- Sandwich Tern
- Fisher's Estuarine Moth
- Juniper
- Ox-tongue Broomrape

Supporting measures for the open coast and estuaries:

- Establish a strategic management approach which recognises, minimises and mitigates the likely loss of one habitat over another as a result of managed realignment.

Priority CL2 - Reduce small scale loss, improve condition and increase connectivity of saltmarsh and mudflats, providing functioning ecosystems that are safeguarded from recreational disturbance.

	Wider measure CL2.1 Maintain high tide roosts and nesting sites, with key sites fenced off, to limit disturbance and safeguard inland feeding, breeding and overwintering areas.
	Potential measure CL2.2 Small-scale saltmarsh restoration. using traditional materials to slow down loss.
	Potential measure CL2.3 Create new high tide roosts, in areas less vulnerable to rising sea levels.
	Wider measure CL2.4 Link areas with other wetland habitats to form a landscape mosaic of wetlands to reduce the tendency for waders and seabirds to be concentrated at key hotspots and reserves.

Priority species saltmarsh and mudflats potential measures:

- Shoveler
- Waders & Wildfowl
- Duffey's Bell-head Spider
- Yellow-striped Bear-spider

Priority species associated with saltmarsh and mudflats, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Sea Aster Bee
- Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass
- Brent Goose
- Common Tern
- Lapwing
- Redshank
- Ringed Plover
- Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass
- Least Lettuce

Land management and land use principles for saltmarsh and mudflats:

- To support fish nurseries, use embryonic structures and channels to create natural drainage channels (ripples, eddies, pools and meanders), saltmarsh islands, and minimise over-engineered structures.
- Create more space for nesting seabirds to avoid competition and predation.
- Create areas for saltmarsh restoration by raising the height of the coastline through managed realignment and the "beneficial use of dredged sediment".

Data, evidence and mapping needs for saltmarsh and mudflats:

- Identify and monitor saltmarsh and mudflat recreational disturbance in order to better target preventative measures.

Priority CL3 - Reverse the decline in seagrass off Kent's coast to safeguard this important habitat for marine species and their breeding grounds and nurseries; and to preserve its vital function as a blue carbon store.

	Potential measure CL3.1 Address threats to seagrass beds by putting in place management which: - Reduces and addresses pollution sources impacting seagrass restoration and growth. - Removes invasive spartina where it is known to be invading, smothering or limiting seagrass extension and restoration. - Minimise damage from boat anchors, dredging, fishing and trampling.
	Potential measure CL3.2 Increase areas of existing seagrass beds.

Priority species requiring seagrass potential measures:

- Short-snouted Seahorse
- Spiny Seahorse

Priority species associated with seagrass, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Brent Goose

Land management and land use principles for seagrass:

- Address and minimise pollution of coastal waters.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for seagrass:

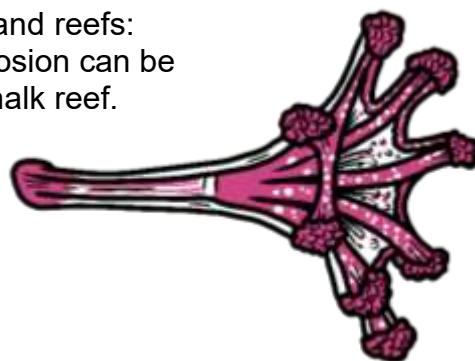
- Identify priority areas for sampling of water quality and corrective action.

Priority CL4 - Chalk cliffs and reef communities thrive in their natural state and are safeguarded from damage from recreational and leisure activities, development and bottom fishing methods.

	Wider measure CL4.1 Management of problematic non-native species.
	Wider measure CL4.2 Control leisure boat and other recreational activity in chalk reef areas.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for chalk cliffs and reefs:

- Identify new sections of profile where natural erosion can be allowed to occur, forming new sea caves and chalk reef.



Priority CL5 - Sustainable management of native reef building shellfish to allow them to reach their habitat providing potential.

	Potential measure CL5.1 Safeguard established areas of Native Oysters and Blue Mussels by developing protected areas with management measures, in collaboration with local stakeholders, including the local fishing community.
	Potential measure CL5.2 Where practical, remove invasive, non-native species from the beds of Native Oysters and Blue Mussels.
	Potential measure CL5.3 Create suitable substrate for native oysters to colonise, focussing on existing/historic areas, and address the lack of larvae in the landscape.
	Potential measure CL5.4 Create suitable substrate for Blue Mussels to colonise, focussing on existing/historic areas.

Data, evidence and mapping needs for Native Oyster and Blue Mussel beds:

- Map and monitor the Native Oyster and Blue Mussel beds to identify priority areas and actions for restoration.



Priority CL6 - Saline lagoons are appropriately safeguarded and managed to increase their resilience and adaptation to climate change and secure their ecological functions, including the role they will play as transitional habitats.

	Potential measure CL6.1 Safeguard existing saline lagoons from loss and damaging activities that harm and/or pollute the lagoons.
	Potential measure CL6.2 Establish buffer zones and/or adjust site features and topography, to ensure ecological function of saline lagoon is not undermined by disturbance; enhance marginal habitat
	Potential measure CL6.3 Create new saline lagoons to connect wetland sites in transitional areas that are likely to flood, taking into account proximity to sources of recreational disturbance.

Priority species requiring saline lagoon potential measures:

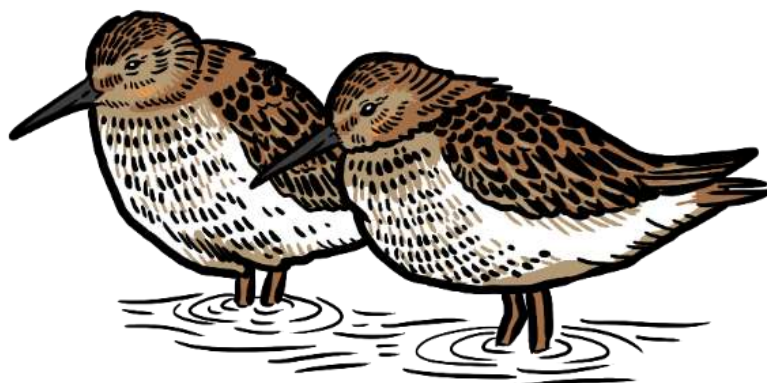
- Tentacled Lagoon Worm
- Pochard
- Shoveler

Priority species associated with saline lagoons, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Brent Goose
- Redshank
- Common Tern
- Ringed Plover
- Little Tern
- Sandwich Tern

Data, evidence and mapping needs for saline lagoons:

- Identify where future new saline lagoons will be required to ensure provision of their ecological function as transitional habitat at the coast.



Priority CL7 - Safeguard and restore vegetated shingle, ensuring there is no unavoidable loss and areas remain in, or are returned to, a favourable condition.

	Potential measure CL7.1. Safeguard existing habitat through access management and interventions (e.g. allocated routes and boardwalks) that minimise the impact of footfall and recreational disturbance on this delicate habitat.
	Potential measure CL7.2 Safeguard and extend supporting habitats, such as species-rich grasslands, next to coastal shingle that can act as seepage areas and support a mosaic of habitats for important coastal shingle species.

Priority species requiring vegetated shingle potential measures:

- Oystercatcher
- Brown Hare

Priority species associated with vegetated shingle, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Long-spined Ant
- *Anthicus bimaculatus* (Beetle)
- *Smicronyx coecus* (Beetle)
- *Ophonus puncticollis* (Beetle)
- Kentish Clown
- Ringed Plover
- Wheatear
- *Cladonia mitis* (Lichen)
- Sussex Emerald Moth



Priority CL8 – Restore sand dunes, enabling, where possible, the natural mobile function of the dune system to be reinstated or use management to maintain a full range of successional stages of sand stabilisation across the dune system.

	Potential measure CL8.1 Management of dunes to reduce scrub encroachment, remove invasive species and reduce disturbance pressures of recreational activities. Management to include year-round low intensity grazing in the absence of endectocides, and with high quality fodder in winter to maintain high dung quality.
	Potential measure CL8.2 Enable more naturalised and mobile sand dune systems, through a full range of successional stages of sand stabilisation across the dune system, from mobile sparsely vegetated foredunes, young dunes with dense Marram Grass clumps, to more established dunes with varied vegetation, stable sandy grassland or heath, open sandy areas and dune slacks. Address overstabilisation of the dunes to increase dune mobility and sand movement.

Priority species associated with sand dunes, requiring additional bespoke measures:

- Four-banded Weevil-wasp	- Forester Moth
- Long-spined Ant	- Sand Running Spider
- <i>Anthicus bimaculatus</i> (Beetle)	- Greater Streaked Shieldbug
- Dune Tiger Beetle	- <i>Prostemma guttula</i>
- East Coast Dune-walker	- Bedstraw Broomrape
- Sandwich Click Beetle	- Bur Medick
- <i>Ophonus puncticollis</i> (Beetle)	- Green-winged Orchid
- <i>Hohenbuehelia culmicola</i> (Fungi)	- Heath Dog-violet
	- Lizard Orchid

Land management and land use principles for sand dunes:

- Maintain the water table in dune slacks but not to deepen them, to make them permanently wet.
- Discourage the removal of biodegradable material from the foreshore and dune.



Priority CL9 - Reduction in coastal wildlife disturbance resulting from leisure pressures at the coast.

	Wider measure CL9.1 Develop zoned recreational areas that limit, restrict or prevent leisure activities which can disturb wildlife and damage sensitive habitats; safeguard offshore islands.
	Wider measure CL9.2 Building up of existing and creation of new seal haul out sites, which are adequately managed to provide safe areas for them.

See all coastal priorities for relevant priority species.

Supporting measures for reducing coastal wildlife disturbance:

- Support management measures by increasing wardens at key sites and installing signage and fencing as appropriate, based on up-to-date guidance

Data, evidence and mapping needs for reducing coastal wildlife disturbance:

- Identify and map key and vulnerable sites in order to better target preventative measures.



Species priorities and potential measures

Ambition for species in Kent and Medway - Habitat management, restoration, extension or creation is specifically targeted to halt the decline, and support the recovery, of the Strategy's priority and threatened species and in doing so, reduces the risk of losing species through extinction from the county.

Overarching approaches to ensure that the Strategy benefits all rare, threatened and significant species in Kent and Medway

Although the Strategy development process requires a focussed list of priority species, identified as the species in most urgent need amongst other considerations, it is still important to take account of all the county's rare, threatened and significant species in any habitat management, restoration, extension or creation work.

The Strategy therefore identifies overarching approaches that ensure this wider suite of species, whilst not the focus of bespoke action, still benefits from action taken with the Strategy area.

1. During the design of works to deliver a Strategy potential measure, the habitat assemblages of the species longlist (see Appendix 2.2) should be consulted for the relevant habitat and all action should consider and take account of the species that depend upon it, recognising and supporting the interdependencies that exist.

Where works are taking place in locations where a long-list species for Kent and Medway is known to occur, the habitats, structures, host species or other features supporting the species concerned should be maintained in extent and quality, and, where possible, should be locally extended, improved and connected.

Where works are taking place in locations where a long-list species for Kent and Medway was previously known to occur and/or might naturally establish populations, planning and delivery of land-use planning, nature conservation activities, or other land-management work should take the needs of the relevant species into account. This should include avoiding action which would decrease the ecological connectivity between potential sites and those sites already supporting the relevant Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy long-list species.

2. During the design of works to deliver a Strategy potential measure, and where those works occur on or near the borders of the Strategy area, the neighbouring Local Nature Recovery Strategy's priority species list should be consulted to ensure that action in the Kent and Medway Strategy area does not undermine efforts for that species in the neighbouring area. Opportunities to facilitate the spread of a local population within the works should be identified, particularly where that species is currently absent from the county.

3. Action design should also recognise the contribution that species may make to the habitat and utilises, where appropriate, species within its management to help deliver more dynamic, natural, intact and climate resilient ecosystems.



Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species and potential measures

The below sets out the agreed priority species for the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy area. In total there are 146 priority species – this is a large number of priority species but is a reflection of the large number of species in the original species long-list. These priority species represent 11% of the county's rare, threatened and significant species – it is expected that targeted action for these 146 species will offer wider benefits to the other 1210 species not identified as a priority.

The breakdown of priority species across the different taxa is as follows:

Taxa	Number of species identified as a priority
Amphibian	2
Annelid	1
Bee, Wasp and Ant	9
Beetle	18
Bird	31
Butterfly	13
Caddisfly	1
Crustacean	1
Dragonfly and Damselfly	1
Fish	6
Fungi	5
Grasshopper, Cricket & Allies	2
Lichen	2
Mammal	10
Millipede	2
Mollusc	1
Moth	16
Reptile	1
Spider	4
True Bugs	2
Vascular Plant	18

The non-statutory guidance on priority species for a Local Nature Recovery Strategy recommends that only species that require bespoke measures are identified and that these bespoke measures are presented alongside the relevant species. However, acknowledging that many of the habitat measures designed for the benefit of a priority species offer wider benefits to other species of that habitat assemblage, it was determined that these should be embedded into the habitat potential measures.

Consequently, a number of the Kent and Medway priority species, whilst meeting the criteria as a priority, seemingly do not have dedicated potential measures – these are noted in this chapter as priority species requiring broad habitat measures, and the relevant habitat priority is identified alongside these.

Where a species requires a bespoke measure that will only benefit that particular species, these are noted in this chapter as priority species requiring bespoke measures – the bespoke measures for the priority species are provided in Appendix 3.1.



Amphibian priority species

Of the five native species of amphibian in Kent, two are frogs and toads, and three are newts. They are the Common Frog, the Common Toad, the Smooth Newt, the Palmate Newt and the Great Crested Newt. The Great Crested Newt has European Protected Species status, and the Common Toad is on England's list of species of principal importance. All these amphibians have partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The Natterjack Toad became extinct in Kent in the 1960s and native Pool Frogs have never been recorded in the county.

Amphibians are dependent upon the presence of breeding ponds with suitable terrestrial habitat. Lowering of pond density can result in damaging levels of population fragmentation. The Low Weald has the highest pond density in Kent and is consequently the stronghold of Great Crested Newts.

Although trends at a county level are difficult to establish, the distribution and status of Kent's amphibians is better known now than ever before, and expert opinion suggests that populations of all of Kent's amphibian species are reasonably stable. However, significant losses of all species are likely to have occurred throughout the 20th Century that were primarily linked to the loss of breeding ponds. The Marsh Frog has become established in Kent over the last 80 years and the range of the species continues to expand. The impact of the Marsh Frog on native amphibian species is still unclear.

Habitat availability, disease and climate change all pose considerable threats to amphibian species.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix X for details of measures)
• Common Toad • Great Crested Newt



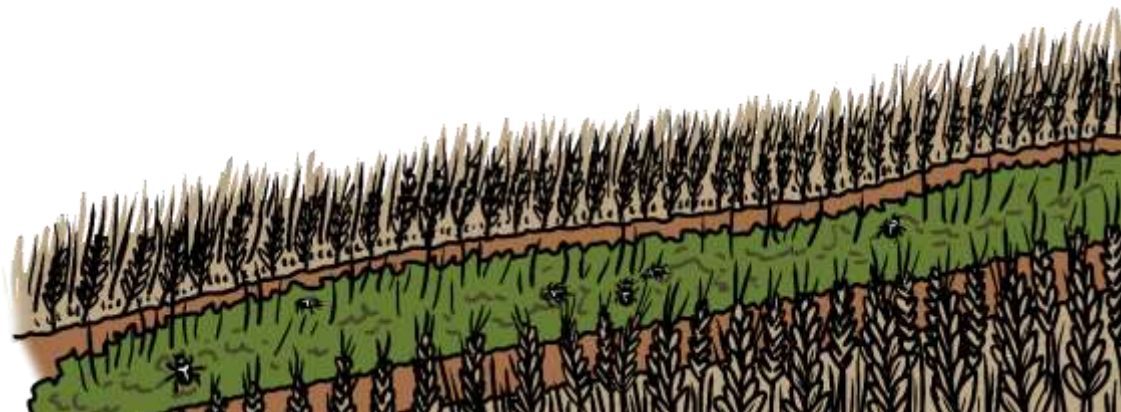
Annelid priority species

Annelid species, also known as segmented worms include Bristleworms (*Polychaetes*), earthworms and leeches and are found in the sea, on land and in freshwater.

Bristleworms are found throughout the intertidal zones of the county and form part of the rich foraging grounds of north Kent. The Tentacled Lagoon Worm is a tiny bristle worm that creates and lives in tubes made of mud within its estuarine habitat. It has numerous tentacles around its mouth, which it uses to feed on the surrounding mud. It is a nationally scarce species, found in the Medway Estuary, and is particularly vulnerable to changes in its habitat. The Medway Estuary Marine Conservation Zone is the only designated area where the Tentacled Lagoon Worm is protected.

An annelid of particular note in the county is the Medicinal Leech, with significant populations found at various locations across Romney Marsh.

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant LNRS priority
Tentacled Lagoon Worm	Saline lagoons CL6 Mudflats CL2



Bee, Wasp and Ant priority species

Ants, bees and wasps (*Aculeates*) in Kent total 523 species. However, 42 of these are regarded as extinct meaning that the current total of extant species is 481, which includes 219 species of bee, 221 species of wasp and 41 species of ant. Kent has a nationally important *Aculeate* fauna, with one of the highest diversities in the UK. This results from a diversity of habitat types with suitability for a broad range of species, warm summers and the county's proximity to Europe, with the continent providing a source of new arrivals. Amongst these species, Kent is nationally important for: White-bellied Mining Bee, Maidstone Mining Bee, Grey-backed Mining Bee, Shrill Carder Bee, Four-banded Weevil-wasp (also known as Four-banded Digger Wasp), Square-jawed Sharp-tail Bee and Hairy-horned Mining Bee (also known as Fringe-horned Mining Bee).

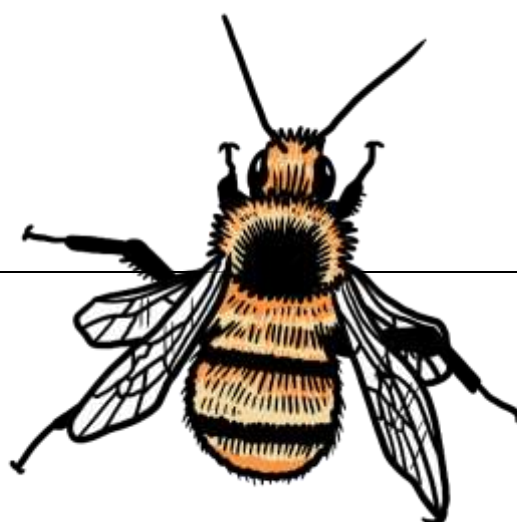
Ants, bees and wasps in Kent are generally suffering from downward trends. This is particularly true of some of the more specialist species in this group. However, some more generalist species appear to be on the increase and the number of ants, bees and wasps recorded in the county is growing year on year, because of new species colonising from continental Europe or variable species being recognised as multiple cryptic species. There has been a total of six *Aculeate* species lost in the last century in Kent, some of which are also now nationally extinct. However, 17 *Aculeate* species have been added to the county list, with the majority of these being discovered in the last decade.

Habitat loss is the main driver of change for this fauna, whether this is through direct loss of sites to development or inappropriate habitat management. Other important factors affecting their populations include climate change and pesticide use. With a changing climate and more development pressure, it is likely that the general trend will continue to decrease.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- Four-banded Weevil-wasp
- Fringe-horned Mason Bee
- Long-spined Ant
- Maidstone Mining Bee
- Moss Carder Bee
- Oak Mining Bee
- Sea Aster Bee
- Shrill Carder Bee
- Shining Guest Ant



Beetle priority species

Almost 68% of Britain's beetles have been recorded in Kent – the known Kent fauna currently comprises 2,758 species in 99 families. Kent is home to many threatened and specialised species however recording of beetles is patchy. Beetles can be found in almost all habitats in Kent, semi-natural habitats hold the richest diversity of species. Kent's beetle fauna is dynamic with new species being found annually. Kent is home to many threatened and specialised species vulnerable to the effects of environmental change and degradation, though recording of beetles is patchy both in space and time, so trends are difficult to determine.

Generalist species seem to be doing well in Kent, however there is no baseline data on their abundance. Specialist species are restricted by the availability of their habitat and are threatened by habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, though some, at the northern edge of their climate envelope in Kent, may be able to broaden their niche as the climate warms and thrive. Kent's position close to the continent makes it a gateway for new species to arrive either by natural dispersal, or by human assisted migration. The effects of non-native species are rarely studied unless they are potentially economically important pests.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species requiring bespoke measures (see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- *Anthicus bimaculatus*
- Dune tiger beetle
- East Coast Dune-walker
- Kentish Clown
- *Longitarsus aeruginosus*
- Noble Chafer
- *Omphalapion beuthini*
- *Ophonus puncticollis*
- Phoenix Clown
- Pride of Kent Rove Beetle
- *Pseudeuparius sepicola*
- Red-horned Cardinal Click Beetle
- Sandwich Click Beetle
- *Smicronyx coecus*
- Southern Oyster Mushroom Beetle
- Spangled Button Beetle

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority
Black Night-runner	Lowland fens FW7
<i>Haliphus variegatus</i>	Lowland fens FW7

Bird priority species

About 245 bird species have been recorded regularly in Kent during the past 100 years, 150 of them breeding. Kent's location in the south-east makes it well-placed to receive new colonists of Britain, and also to support birds at the limit of their European range. The long coastline and especially the estuaries are vital to huge numbers of wintering and passage birds, most notably waterfowl.

Kent is located on migration routes used by thousands of terrestrial and coastal birds that make annual journeys between their breeding grounds in the northern hemisphere and wintering areas in the south. Almost 430 species of bird have been recorded in Kent, including both residents and migrants, but this total includes some that are rare visitors, occurring only occasionally and in very small numbers.

Kent supports national strongholds of species, whose ranges are contracting towards the south-east, including the rapidly declining Turtle Dove and Nightingale. Being close to the continent, Kent is well placed to receive the first pairs of colonising species that are expanding their range, such as Cetti's Warbler in the 1970s and Black-winged Stilt in the last decade.

Kent's long coastline and the estuaries are vital for large populations of non-breeding waterfowl (taken here to include ducks, geese, swans, waders, herons, cormorants, divers, coots and rails, gulls and terns); the more important species depend on a range of habitats – intertidal mud, freshwater bodies and grassland – and include, for example, Brent Goose, Shoveler, Black-tailed Godwit and Dunlin

The most important habitats at a national and international scale are coastal ones (shallow offshore waters, estuaries, and grazing marsh), which support important populations of wintering and some breeding birds. Also noteworthy are the large areas of woodlands and the many artificial and natural wetlands; however, all land use types, including farmland and built development, have their distinctive features for birds.

Over the past century, bird species' fortunes seem to have been fairly evenly matched. Broadly speaking, the numbers of increases are similar or a little greater than the numbers of decreases, but this masks a good deal of complexity within the lists of species involved, and this comparison does need to be qualified for several reasons. Firstly, measuring change simply by the number of species increasing or decreasing ignores changes in abundance. Evidence at national level is that, for the past 50 years, many species groups, most notably specialist farmland and woodland breeding birds, have been declining in abundance. Even those groups, such as wintering waterfowl, that had been increasing in abundance are now showing declines.

Secondly, there is a strong possibility that the qualitative descriptions of species' abundance on which have been relied until around 1970, are insufficiently precise to infer actual changes and the imprecision of status descriptions may well have obscured many real changes. Thirdly, some species – perhaps many – have not simply increased or decreased over the century. At some times, populations have declined and at others they have recovered. Such ups and downs have occurred

over the long-term or even within short periods. Such a pattern of changes makes judging the overall trend difficult.

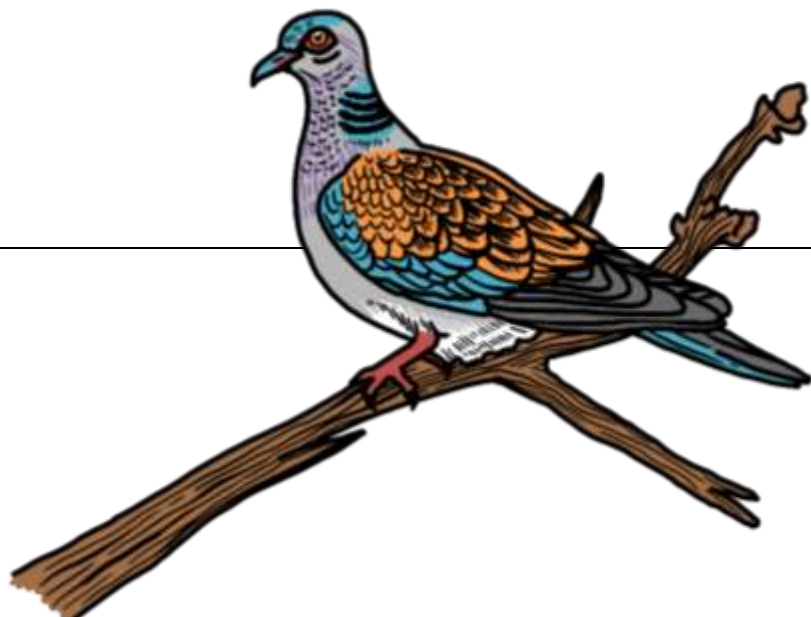
These limitations should be considered while observing that, up to the 1970s, most species seemed to undergo little change and increases outweighed decreases. From this point on, with better evidence, an increased number of changes are apparent, but the balance is still towards more species showing a population increase. In the most recent period, since 2010, that situation has reversed, and decreases exceed increases. Taking abundance changes into account, as well as species richness, the current picture is one of substantial and worrying loss of bird biodiversity. There is strong evidence of declines for specialist farmland and woodland birds and, recently, declines have started to affect groups such as wintering waterfowl, that formerly were increasing.

Land use and habitat change has been the primary driver of changes in bird numbers, now exacerbated by climate change, though altering levels of disturbance and persecution, and introductions of non-native species, have played their part. For migrant birds, similar effects on migration routes or on breeding or wintering grounds also are influential.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bittern• Brent Goose• Common Tern• House Martin• Lapwing• Little Tern• Nightingale• Nightjar• Redshank• Ringed plover• Sand Martin• Sandwich Tern• Swift• Tree Sparrow• Turtle Dove• Wheatear |
|--|



Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority
Barn Owl	Lowland meadows GL3 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1 Wood pasture and parkland WTH1
Bearded Tit	Reedbeds FW8
Corn Bunting	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1
Grasshopper Warbler	Acid grassland and heathland GL4 Scrub SH2 Hedgerow WTH8 Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) FW7
Grey Wagtail	Rivers FW1
Kingfisher	Rivers FW1 Standing waters FW6
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland WTH1 Ancient Woodland WTH5 Wet woodland WTH6 Traditional orchards WTH9
Linnet	Lowland heathland GL4 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1 Scrub SH2 Hedgerow WTH8
Marsh Harrier	Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Arable field margins GL5 Reedbeds FW8
Marsh Tit	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland WTH1 Ancient Woodland WTH5
Oyster Catcher	Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Coast CL1 Vegetated shingle CL7
Pochard	Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) FW7 Saline lagoons CL6 Ponds and lakes FW6
Shoveler	Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Ponds and lakes FW6 Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) FW7 Saltmarsh and mudflats CL2 Saline lagoons CL6
Waders and wildfowl	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Intertidal mudflats CL2 Saline lagoon CL6
Yellowhammer	Lowland heathland GL4 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1 Scrub SH2 Hedgerow WTH8
Yellow Wagtail	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1

Butterfly priority species

Kent has 42 of Britain's 59 resident species of butterfly. The last decade has seen an improvement in the fortunes for several species of butterfly in Kent. The nationally scarce species Heath Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy have increased in number and extended their range slightly. Several other species, including Adonis Blue, have also expanded their range although the spread of Silver-spotted Skipper has slowed. Brown Hairstreak, which hadn't been seen in Kent since 1971, was recorded again in 2016, and is slowly expanding its range in Kent, colonising from Surrey. However, one of our native species, the Grayling, is on the brink of extinction in the county, with a sighting in 2020 the first for seven years.

A number of the county's species include regular migrants from continental Europe, such as Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow, that breed here most years. In addition to the 42 resident species there are rarer migrants, such as the continental form of Swallowtail, Large Tortoiseshell, Scarce (yellow-legged) Tortoiseshell, Camberwell Beauty and Queen of Spain Fritillary. The Long-tailed Blue has reached Kent on several occasions since 2013 and has produced another generation, though this has not survived the winter.

Although records paint a favourable picture for butterfly populations, it is not entirely representative, as many colonies of our more common butterflies have been, and continue to be, lost to an increase in the built environment. The short grassland of the North Downs is a key butterfly habitat, especially for Adonis and Chalk Hill Blues, but a lack of management to maintain these grasslands as suitable habitat poses a threat to these species. Lack of management is also an issue in the county's woodlands, with a reduction in coppicing meaning most woods are unsuitable for many butterflies.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
• Adonis Blue • Brown Hairstreak • Chalk Hill Blue • Dark Green Fritillary • Dingy Skipper • Duke of Burgundy • Grizzled Skipper • Heath Fritillary • Silver-spotted Skipper • Small Blue • Wall • White Admiral • White-letter Hairstreak

Caddisfly priority species

Caddisfly, also known as Sedge Flies, can be found in all types of wetlands and are often found in large numbers near water bodies. Adults are moth-like insects with hairy wings. They are an important food source for freshwater species including the Brown Trout and Atlantic Salmon, birds and bats.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
<i>Tinodes pallidulus</i>



Crustacean priority species

The UK has only one native freshwater crayfish – the White-clawed Crayfish, a bronze-coloured crustacean with pale undersides to its claws, hence the name. It is an omnivorous crustacean, which eats invertebrates, carrion, water plants and dead organic matter. It inhabits small freshwater streams of a depth less than 1 metre, hiding underneath stones and rocks and in small crevices where they forage for food. The species is in decline due to the introduction of the non-native North American Signal crayfish, which has brought disease that our indigenous crayfish has no natural resistance to.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
White-clawed Crayfish

Dragonfly and Damselfly priority species

When it comes to dragonflies, Kent is one of the most species-rich counties in the UK; the county currently hosts 36 species of Odonata that are classified as resident or regular migrants. Of these, one, the Norfolk Hawker *Aeshna isoceles*, is listed as legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and five are listed in the Red Data List for Great Britain (2008).

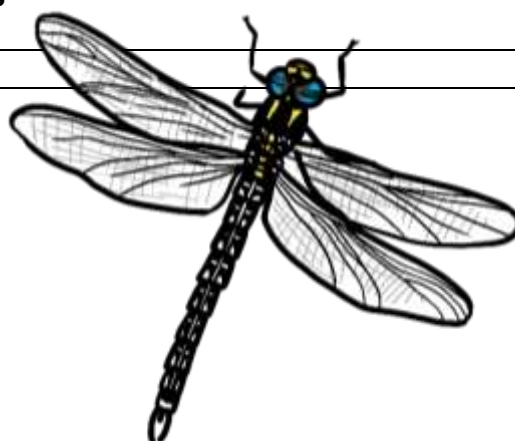
The abundance and diversity of wetlands in Kent is a significant factor influencing the abundance and diversity of dragonflies. Kent's large swathes of grazing marshes form a rich mosaic of pools and ditches that support some of the country's rarest species, including the UK's only Dainty Damselfly populations

In the case of many dragonfly species, maintaining an accurate profile of their status and trend history poses a significant challenge. Over the past 100 years, Kent has gained eight new species through natural colonisation. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these new arrivals have had a negative impact on the wetland communities of the sites they have colonised; consequently, none are classed as 'invasive'.

Climate change is causing rapid changes in species distribution and the county is likely to become home to more new colonists soon. Climate change also threatens several of Kent's resident species, those that occupy low lying flood plains and coastal marshes, which are at risk from sea level rise, as well as peat bogs and shallow streams/ pools, which are at risk from desiccation because of rising summer temperatures and increasing droughts. The future of these species-rich habitats is uncertain, as sea level rise is predicted to threaten many of these coastal and flood plain wetlands. In addition, changes in rainfall patterns, another result of climate change, are threatening some of Kent's rarest wetland habitats, in particular lowland bogs, and their associated peatland specialist dragonflies.

Changes in land use and land use practices, such as urban development and the intensification of agricultural practices, historically have been, and continue to be, a key driver of species trends through the destruction, fragmentation, and degradation of habitat.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
Brilliant Emerald Dragonfly



Fish priority species

Kent has a variety of freshwater fish species, including both native and introduced species. Common fish include Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout, Gudgeon, Minnow, and Tench. Our waters are also home to the European Eel, a very long, narrow fish that can grow to over a metre in length. They can be found in rivers and ditches across the county. Once widespread, they are now one of the most endangered species in the UK and have seen a 95% population declines in the last 40 years. Similar looking to the Eel, are the River Lamprey and Sea Lamprey, which are widespread in Kent and Medway but nevertheless, rare. They similarly migrate to breed but whereas the European Eel moves from freshwater to the sea, the River Lamprey lives in the sea and returns to freshwater to spawn.

It is because of these movements, so critical to the lifecycles of many freshwater species, that the construction of dams and other man-made structures in our rivers pose such an issue, creating barriers to their movement. Habitat loss and degradation, and in particular water quality, are also threats to our freshwater species.

Kent's marine waters are home to a diverse array of fish species, including Bass, Mullet, and various flatfish like Plaice and Sole. There are various skate and ray species, including the Thornback Ray and Common Skate. In the intertidal areas, rockpool fish such as the Toppot Blenny, Butterfish and Rock Goby are commonly found. Both of the two seahorse species found in UK seas are present in our coastal waters – the Spiny Seahorse (or Long-snouted Seahorse) and the Short-snouted Seahorse – and are found in shallow waters, often in estuaries or associated with seagrass meadows.

Threats to our marine fish include the overexploitation of fish stocks, pollution from sewage discharge, oil spills and nutrient and physical disturbance from dredging, mobile fishing gear, boat anchoring and coastal development.

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant LNRS priority
European Eel	Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Rivers FW1 Standing water FW6 Lowland mire sites FW7 Freshwater wetlands FW9 Ditch networks of marshes and lakes FW10
River Lamprey	Rivers FW1
Sea Lamprey	Rivers FW1
Smelt	Rivers FW1
Short-snouted Seahorse	Seagrass CL3
Spiny Seahorse	Seagrass CL3

Fungi priority species

Kent has a rich assemblage of fungi with 859 species known in the database held by Kent & Medway Biological Record Centre (KMBRC). Four Kentish species are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and a further eight Boletes are on the UK Red Data List. In addition, there are 43 species on the Red Data List for Kent. Many common species are widespread across the county, with the rare or endangered species restricted to the county's unimproved chalk grasslands, meadows, ancient woodlands, traditional orchards, parkland with veteran trees, churchyards, and sand dunes.

The vast number of species, relative paucity of recording effort for fungi, and lack of structured, methodological survey schemes mean that assessing trends in the abundance of fungi is highly challenging and therefore not possible to summarise anything meaningful for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. There have been some newly recorded and interesting species of fungi discovered in Kent in the past ten years.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures (see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marram Oyster fungus• Orchard Tooth• Pink Waxcap• Purple Webcap• Sweet Webcap |
|---|

Grasshoppers, crickets and allied priority species

There are 25 species of bush-cricket, cricket, grasshopper, and groundhopper which are regularly recorded in Kent and Medway, around 5 species of cockroach found outdoors and 4 species of earwig. A number of species are rare or scarce nationally.

Climate change has resulted not only in the spread of previously restricted species, but has led to the arrival and establishment of a number of new species from the near continent over recent years. Changes in habitat management have led to declines in the distribution of several species.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures (see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rufous Grasshopper• Wart-biter Bush Cricket |
|--|

Lichen priority species

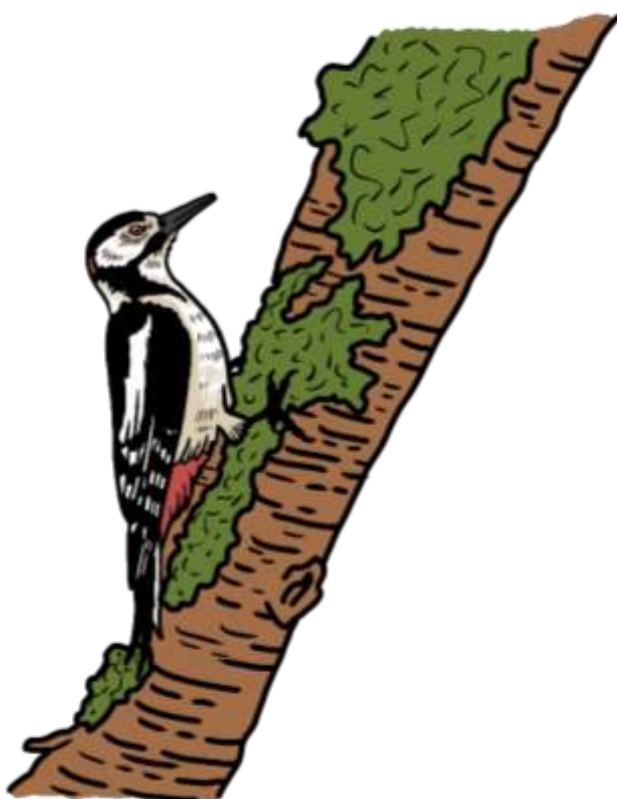
There are a diverse range of lichen species in the UK which can be seen in a variety of habitats – rocks, walls, twigs, bark and exposed soil surfaces. Some species are able to occupy a wide range of habitats, others require very precise conditions of humidity, shade, substrate or nutrient-enrichment. Lichens are non-parasitic and don't harm any plants they grow on. In fact, they're useful to other wildlife, offering nesting material for birds, and food and shelter to lots of invertebrates - which in turn feed other creatures. Woods rich in lichens support more wildlife than any other.

Lichens are incredibly sensitive to pollution and can highlight the quality of the surrounding air. Crusty lichens are hardier to pollution, whereas the more delicate beard-like ones are mostly found in cleaner locations and are rarer.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Enterographa elaborata</i>• <i>Cladonia mitis</i> |
|---|



Mammal priority species

Twenty-nine terrestrial mammal species are found in Kent. Eight mammal species in Kent are of major conservation concern; these are the IUCN Red Listed: Water Vole, Hedgehog, Hazel Dormouse, Harvest Mouse, Otter, Polecat and Eurasian Beaver, which is a critically endangered mammal. Terrestrial mammals occupy all identified Kent priority key habitats and occupy a range of niches. The Hazel Dormouse stronghold is predominantly the woodlands, hedgerows and scrub areas of Kent and other southern counties. The Beaver, Otter and Water Vole all require sympathetic freshwater habitats. Hedgerows are an important priority habitat for many other mammal species including Harvest Mouse and Hedgehog.

The Red Squirrel was lost from Kent in the 1950s, along with the Otter. The Otter has returned in small numbers, whilst the Grey Squirrel (introduced more than 100 years ago) has supplanted the Red Squirrel. The Polecat and Wild Boar have also returned to Kent in recent years. Official and unofficial reintroductions of Eurasian Beaver have seen the return of this species to East Kent. Trends over time indicate that Hedgehog, Water Vole, Hazel Dormouse and Brown Hare populations are all declining. The most recent State of Britain's Hedgehogs (2022) report estimated Hedgehogs in rural areas have declined by a half, and in urban areas by a third since 2000; there is no reason to suggest that the national decline is any different in Kent. The Water Vole has suffered a catastrophic reduction in population, as a result of loss/degradation of habitat and predation by the non-native American Mink.

Kent has a rich fauna of bats with 17 of the UK's breeding species recorded in the last 10 years. The importance of Kent coastal waterbodies to migrating *Nathusius' Pipistrelles* has become apparent by trapping. Two of this species trapped in East Kent had been ringed in Lithuania. The loss and 'improvement' of grazed grasslands are of particular concern. Native woodland is over managed with excessive coppicing in much of Kent, to the detriment of the less common woodland bats.

Populations of most species have much reduced in recent decades. Three species of bat new to Kent have been recorded in the last 10-year period – Kuhl's Pipistrelle, Lesser Horseshoe and Greater Horseshoe. It is significant that both Horseshoe species were recorded in an area of restored grassland habitat. There have been several records of Kuhl's Pipistrelle, as elsewhere in the UK – there is a suggestion its presence may be linked to climate change. The status of the three species in Kent is currently unknown.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority species requiring bespoke measures (see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
• Beaver • Bechstein's Bat • Brown Long-eared Bat • Leisler's Bat • Noctule Bat • Serotine Bat

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority
Brown Hare	Chalk grassland GL1 Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Lowland meadows GL3 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1 Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (brownfield) SH1 Traditional orchards WTH9 Vegetated shingle CL7
European Water Vole	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh GL2 Rivers and streams FW1 Ponds and lakes FW6 Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) FW7 Reedbeds FW8
Hazel Dormouse	Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (brownfield) SH1 Scrub SH2 Woodland WTH1 Ancient Woodland WTH5 Hedgerow WTH8 Urban URB1
West European Hedgehog	Lowland meadows GL3 Arable field margins GL5 & LM1 Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (brownfield) SH1 Scrub SH2 Hedgerow WTH8 Urban URB1



Millipede priority species

Millipedes are a common invertebrate found in various habitats like gardens, woodlands, and under rocks, feeding on decaying vegetation and playing a role in nutrient recycling. There are around 62 millipede species in the UK.

Increased development pressures and agricultural/land-use changes threaten undisturbed soils that could potentially support some of our rarer and endangered millipedes.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Boring Millipede• Kentish Snake Millipede |
|--|

Mollusc priority species

Molluscs are a varied group of species, ranging from the cephalopods of octopus, squid and cuttlefish, to the gastropods of slugs, snails and limpets. Molluscs are found in terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments.

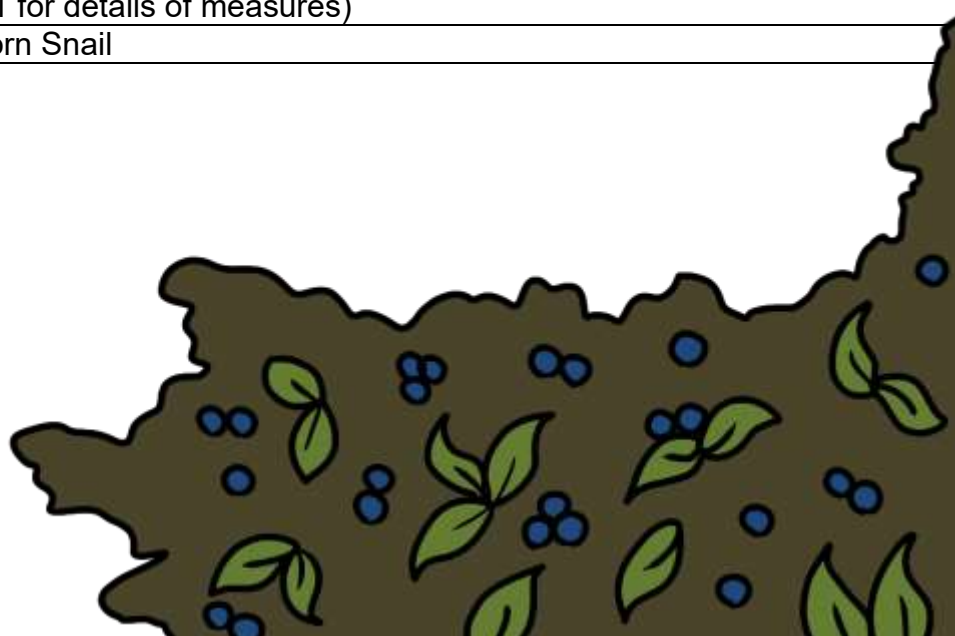
This group of species includes the Native Oyster. As a result of overharvesting, disease, pollution, habitat loss, and invasive species, this once common species has seen a 95% decline and has just a few strongholds – one of them being in the Thames estuary, off the Kent coast.

Along with Blue Mussels, a more commonly found marine mollusc, the Native Oyster is prioritised by the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy under the coastal ambition, owing to their habitat building potential.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

Shining Ram's-horn Snail



Moth priority species

All key habitats in Kent hold at least one population of nationally important macro or micro moth species. Approximately 750 species of macro moth have been recorded in Kent, which includes some very scarce migrants and some now believed to be extinct, representing about 80% of the UK macro moth species. New species continue to be recorded every year in Kent. Kent has important populations of a number of rare moth species, including Straw Belle and Black-veined Moth on the Kent Downs, the principally coastal species Bright Wave and Fiery Clearwing, and Fisher's Estuarine Moth around the Thames Estuary.

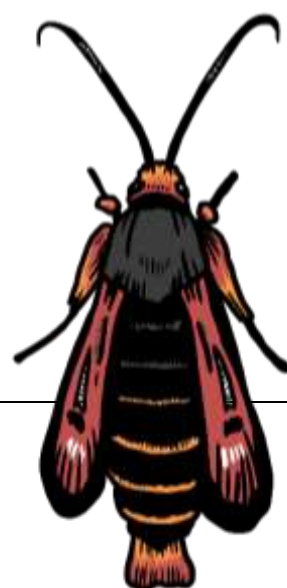
Kent is currently home to somewhere between 1,300 and 1,400 species of micro moth, the list being in constant flux. The positive news is that many species have been added to this list in the last few years, some of which also represent the first record for the UK.

Trends in Kent for all moths show a mixed picture over the last 10 years, but it appears that more species show an increase than a decrease. There are an increasing number of species establishing breeding populations in Kent. It appears that climate change is now the main driver of change for populations of Kent moths. Other factors include land use (including the use of chemicals and eutrophication) and artificial light at night.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- Aspen Knot-horn
- Barred Tooth-striped
- Black-veined Moth
- Daisy Case-bearer
- Drab Looper
- Fisher's Estuarine Moth
- Forester
- Lappet
- Liquorice Piercer
- Marsh Mallow Moth
- Milkwort Beauty
- Scabious Leaf-miner
- Scarce Goldenrod Plume
- Straw Belle
- Sussex Emerald
- White-spotted Sable



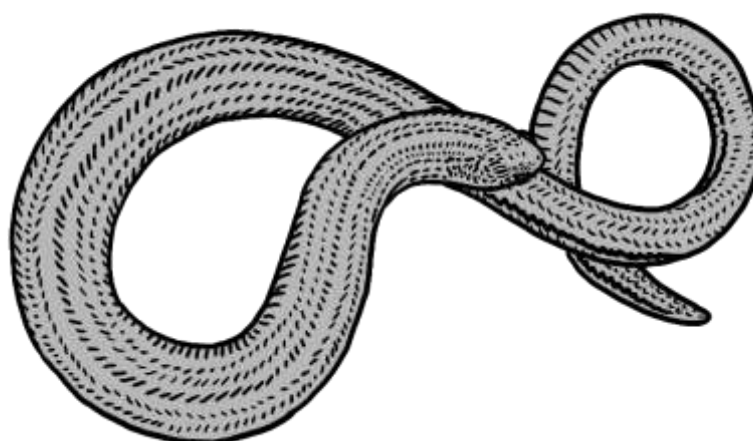
Reptile priority species

Kent's native reptile fauna includes two snakes, the Grass Snake and Adder, and two lizards, the Viviparous (or Common) Lizard, and the Slow Worm. Sand lizards were reintroduced to a dune system in East Kent in 2004-06, following extinction in the late 1960s – the species is actively monitored and was observed in 2025. Non-native species include the Wall Lizard, which has breeding populations at several locations in Kent. Terrapins have also been found in various water bodies, but without evidence of reproduction.

Kent's reptiles use a range of habitats, of which chalk grassland and its associated low scrub is particularly important. While areas of chalk grassland are often wildlife reserves, reptile populations may still be threatened by unsympathetic management. Brownfield sites are important but sometimes overlooked as reptile habitats.

Expert opinion suggests that all four native species are in decline, although all have partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). Of most concern is the Adder, which is thought to be in urgent need of new conservation efforts. Habitat loss and fragmentation are currently the most significant drivers of change; however, the first evidence of the negative impacts of climate change – especially for Adders and possibly also Slow Worms – is beginning to emerge.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures
(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)
Adder



Spider priority species

Kent has a rich spider fauna with 473 species representing almost 71% of the 670 recorded from the British Isles. In total, 22 spider species that occur in Kent are listed as threatened with extinction in Britain, with a further 11 listed as Near Threatened (NT). Among these 33 species there are six for which all UK records are from Kent while a seventh, *Clubiona pseudoneglecta*, is only known from the Scilly Isles and Kent.

Hot spots for these species are to be found in Kent's chalk grasslands, ancient woodlands, and coastal habitats. The county's warm climate, together with the mix and variety of habitats, are the likely major drivers of species richness, but proximity to continental Europe is also important. Kent is in the front line for spider species colonising both naturally by aerial dispersal – so-called “ballooning” – and as hitchhikers in freight and luggage.

Of 12 species newly recorded in Kent in the last decade most are non-native and relatively new to Britain; half of these are likely to have colonised via the Thames corridor. Historically, the destruction of most of the county's extensive tracts of heathland and lowland meadows through agricultural intensification and urbanisation is likely to have caused the loss of many specialist spider species dependent on these habitats. The semi natural habitats for which the county is best known – ancient woodland, chalk downland and coastal sand dunes, shingle, and mud flats – are now hot spots for species richness and species of conservation concern. Among many drivers of population change, pressures on coastal habitats from development, tourism and the impacts of climate change are likely to cause most losses from the county's spider fauna in the next decade and should be a focus for conservation action.

Although numbers of non-native species are increasing, with evidence that the Thames Gateway is an important route of entry, no evidence is available on their impacts on native species. Our ability to detect trends in spider populations is restricted by a lack of systematic recording but increasing interest in this challenging and important group will facilitate the implementation of new recording methodologies that are urgently needed to inform more effective spider conservation.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distinguished Jumping Spider• Sand Running Spider |
|--|

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority
Duffey's Bell-head Spider	Saltmarsh CL2
Yellow-striped Bear-spider	Saltmarsh CL2

True Bug priority species

True bugs are one of the major groups of insects found in the UK, comprising nearly 2000 species and include Shieldbugs, Froghoppers (spittle bugs), Pond Skaters and Aphids.

True bugs face the same threats as other insects, including habitat loss and pesticide use. Climate change, and resulting altered temperature and weather patterns, is another threat, disrupting breeding cycles, affecting the availability of food sources and potentially favouring invasive species.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater Streaked Shieldbug• <i>Prostemma guttula</i> |
|---|



Vascular Plant priority species

As a reflection of its enormously varied topography and geology, more than 2,500 species, subspecies and hybrids of vascular plants have been recorded growing wild in Kent. Of these around 950 are native and the remainder are introductions by man, either deliberate or accidental. In Kent we have responsibility for 194 plants with Red List status, six of which are Critically Endangered, 33 are Endangered and 77 are Vulnerable. The remainder are listed as Near Threatened. The county's Rare Plants Register currently lists 333 species - all threatened and near threatened plants are included along with nationally rare or nationally scarce plants such as Wild Cabbage *Brassica oleracea* var. *oleracea* and Coralroot *Cardamine bulbifera*, both of which have significant Kent populations.

The Kent flora is better documented now than ever before and recording our flora is a way of identifying those plants most in need of assistance. In the last 10 years, four native species have been added and 14, previously thought to have been lost, have been re-found. Some coastal plants have continued to increase their range but there have been declines elsewhere. Species including threatened orchids, thought 10 years ago to have been suffering serious declines, have been found to be faring much better than was feared.

A few non-native species from warmer climates have reached Kent and colonised motorways and other roads. Plants of nutrient-poor soils, grasslands, wetland habitats and waterbodies have suffered the largest population decreases.

The last 10 years have seen great advances in habitat improvement for wild plants on Kent's nature reserves and elsewhere in the county. Kent Wildlife Trust have established pioneering evidence-based information to inform management decisions and provide better outcomes for plants on its reserves and in the wider countryside. Many farmers and landowners have successfully taken part in voluntary schemes targeted at encouraging uncommon arable weeds and grassland plant communities, whilst landscape scale partnerships such as the Upper Beult Farming Cluster, involving farmers, landowners and water authorities, can be expected to benefit aquatic and meadowland plants in the Low Weald by improving water quality and habitats.

However, wildflowers continue to decline and particularly those which grow on nutrient-poor grasslands and those associated with water bodies and wet habitats. Insufficient grazing, scrub invasion and nutrient enrichment together alter soil composition and reduce the number of wildflowers that can survive in grasslands. Nitrogen-hungry broad-leaved grasses and herbs out-compete delicate grassland plants for space so that no bare ground remains for annual species to germinate. For plants of ponds, rivers and ditches, water extraction and lack of management causes water bodies to dry up, whilst poor water quality affects the survival of species that grow submerged in the water. Without help, some of our grassland and wetland species are at risk of disappearing, and more needs to be done to persuade land managers to implement appropriate measures for their long-term conservation.

Priority species requiring bespoke measures

(see Appendix 3.1 for details of measures)

- Bedstraw Broomrape
- Borrer's Saltmarsh-grass
- Bur Medick
- Dwarf Milkwort
- Frogbit
- Greater Water-parsnip
- Green-winged Orchid
- Ground-pine
- Heath Dog-violet
- Juniper
- Lady Orchid
- Least Lettuce
- Lizard Orchid
- Musk Orchid
- Ox-tongue Broomrape
- Slender Hare's-ear

Priority species requiring broad habitat measures	Relevant Local Nature Recovery Strategy priority
Opposite-leaved Pondweed	Chalk rivers FW1 Lowland mire sites (fen and valley mires) FW7
True Fox-sedge	Rivers and streams FW1 Ponds and lakes FW6



Part 4

Local Habitat Map



Kent and Medway Local Habitat Map

The **Local Habitat Map** is a map of the Strategy area that provides a clear visual way for groups and individuals to understand the Areas which are, or Could become, of Particular Importance for Biodiversity and the environment to target nature recovery action. The mapped parts include:

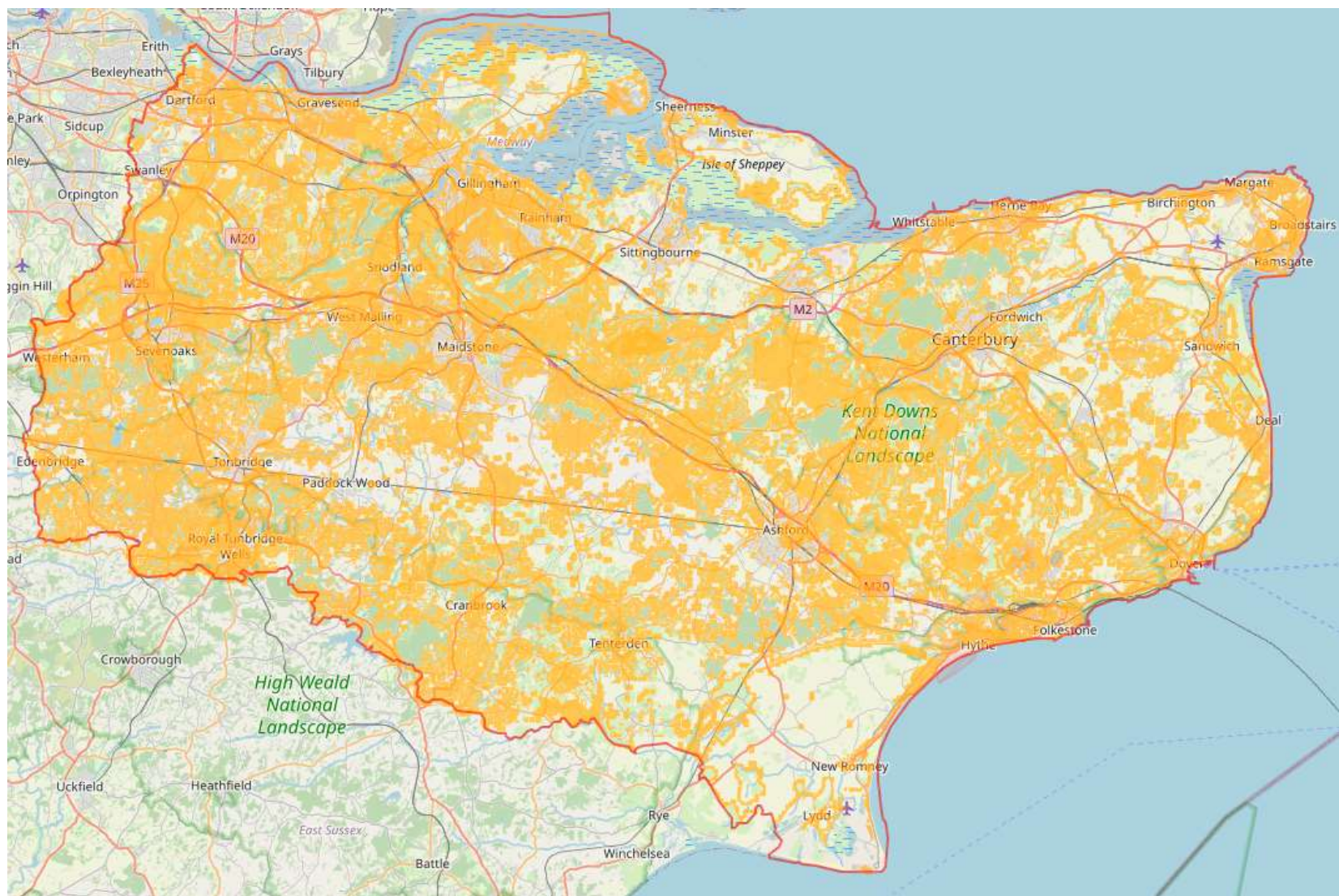
- Location and extent of areas identified as of particular importance for biodiversity.
- Locations where potential measures have been proposed.
- Location and extent of areas identified that could become of particular importance for biodiversity.

All maps can be viewed in detail, online at [LNRS Measures Webmap](#)



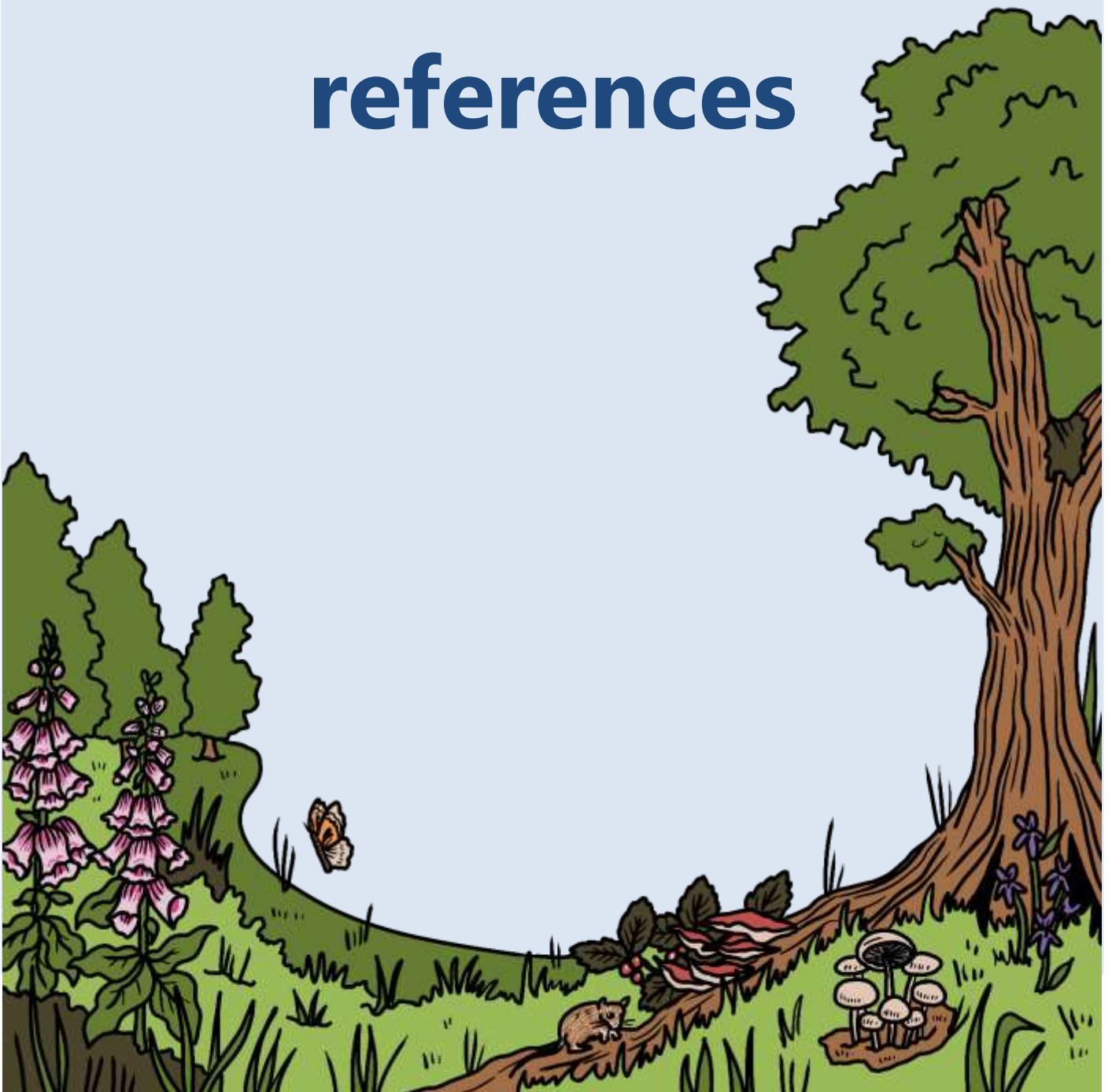
Location and extent of Areas identified as of Particular Importance for Biodiversity.

Locations where potential measures have been proposed.



Location and extent of Areas identified that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity.

Glossary and references



Glossary

Acid grassland	Habitat characterized by grass-dominated vegetation found on nutrient-poor, free-draining acidic soils, often derived from rocks like sandstones and gravels
Active management	Human intervention to maintain or restore habitats and ecosystems to a desired condition. This approach is particularly relevant in areas that have been degraded or where natural processes no longer maintain desired ecological conditions.
Adaptation (climate change)	An approach to climate change that involves making adjustments to systems, infrastructure, and behaviours to prepare for and cope with the unavoidable impacts of climate change, rather than addressing the root causes. This process builds resilience by adapting to both gradual changes and extreme events.
Agroforestry	Integrates trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming systems to create more diverse, productive, and resilient land management systems. This practice enhances farm outputs by improving soil health, providing shelter from extreme weather, and creating new income streams from timber, fruit, and nuts.
Ancient tree	Defined as those that are in the third and final stage of their lives. They typically have a small canopy and a wide trunk with hollows. There is no set age for a tree to be considered ancient, as different species age at different rates.
Ancient woodland	A wooded area that has been continuously wooded since at least 1600 AD in England and Wales (1750 in Scotland and 1830 in Northern Ireland). These sites have developed irreplaceable and complex ecosystems, with unique habitats and specialist plant, fungi, and invertebrate communities that have developed over centuries. They are divided into two categories: ancient semi-natural woodland (native trees and shrubs) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) (where ancient features are retained after replanting).
Arable wild plants	Wildflowers that depend on regularly cultivated land, such as fields for growing crops, to complete their life cycles. These plants, including species like poppies, cornflowers, and corn buttercups, rely on annual disturbance of the soil for germination and growth.
Areas of particular importance for biodiversity (APIB)	The Strategy area's national conservation sites, local nature reserves, local wildlife sites and irreplaceable habitat. The areas eligible for inclusion in this map is tightly defined by the LNRS regulations.
Areas that Could become of particular Importance for Biodiversity (ACIB)	The extent of the mapped potential measures, with areas of particular importance for biodiversity excluded. These are the areas where the Strategy proposes effort should be concentrated to restore habitat, to achieve the greatest gains for nature and derive the greatest benefits from a healthy, functioning environment. They are the areas of Kent and Medway where targeted action will enable us to deliver on the priorities laid out by the Strategy.
Better	Improving the quality of our existing habitats and ensuring they are in a healthy and functioning state, by applying and resourcing better and appropriate management.
Bigger	Increasing the size of the habitat, not only extending but buffering, to protect them from the pressures of human

	influences.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Biodiversity net gain is a mandatory requirement that aims to make sure that development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity. This “gain” is calculated through the use of a standardised metric, which identifies the biodiversity value of the land lost and the biodiversity gained.
Blue carbon store	Carbon captured and stored by marine and coastal ecosystems, such as seagrass, saltmarshes, and mangroves, as well as seafloor sediments. These ecosystems lock away carbon for long periods, performing a vital role in the global carbon cycle and mitigating climate change.
Blue mussel beds	Dense mussels beds that cover the seabed and create a habitat.
Bottom fishing	Trawling the seabed with towed nets to catch fish and other marine species living on or close to the seabed.
Breeding ground	An area where birds, fish, or other animals habitually breed.
Brownfield	Previously developed land, which is abandoned or underused. These brownfield sites are typically made up of a mix of bare ground, short grassland, patches of weedy tall herbs, longer flower-rich grassland, scrub and temporary pools. Brownfield habitats have experienced periodic disturbance and abandonment, which combined with low nutrient soils and introduced materials creates the mosaic of early successional habitats - hence they are now commonly referred to open mosaic habitat on previously developed land.
Buffer strips	Areas of land maintained in permanent vegetation, such as grass, shrubs, or trees, that help to control air quality, soil quality and water quality. They are commonly used to protect water bodies from runoff, in particular agricultural runoff but are also used for other habitat types sensitive to pollution and disturbance.
Canopy cover	The area of floor covered by the vertical project of tree crowns.
Carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS)	A technology aimed at capturing carbon dioxide emissions from industrial processes, power plants, and other sources, preventing them from entering the atmosphere and contributing to climate change. The captured carbon dioxide can then be either reused in various industrial applications or stored permanently in geological formations deep underground.
Carbon Sequestration	The process of capturing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and storing it in various forms to reduce its presence in the atmosphere and help mitigate global climate change. It occurs naturally through biological processes like photosynthesis by trees and plants, and through geological processes involving the storage of carbon in the earth's crust. Humans also enhance sequestration through conservation efforts and develop technological methods for capturing carbon dioxide from industrial sources and storing it underground or in other forms (Carbon capture, usage and storage).

Catchment (river)	An area of land where water, be it from rainfall, snowmelt, or ice, collects from higher areas above it. It's usually surrounded by hills or mountains, which allows water to flow over the landscape into streams and tributaries, and down into the soil, eventually finding its way to the local river, lake, or reservoir. The water absorbed underground slowly feeds the river in drought periods. River catchments can vary in size, going from small urban areas to large estuaries. They are extremely complex and intertwined ecosystems that support a great range of biodiversity and enable human activity. Any changes carried out upstream will eventually be noticed downstream.
Chalk cliffs	Chalk cliffs are formed from the compressed, mineralized skeletons of tiny marine plankton that accumulated on the seabed over millions of years. These soft, porous white rocks are then uplifted and exposed to the elements, forming dramatic coastal cliffs that have been shaped by wave action and erosion.
Chalk grassland	Chalk grassland, also known as lowland calcareous grassland, is a rich, species-diverse habitat found on shallow, nutrient-poor, lime-rich soils overlying chalk bedrock. These conditions allow a variety of small, short herbs and plants to thrive, rather than dominant lush grasses. Chalk grassland is internationally important for its rarity and biodiversity, supporting numerous butterfly and plant species.
Chalk reef communities	Unique marine ecosystems found on the soft, chalk platforms along the south and east coastlines of England. These rare habitats support diverse communities, including extensive algal flora, mussels, and various fish and seabirds.
Chalk stream	A rare river habitat fed by pure, mineral-rich water from underground chalk aquifers, resulting in clear, constant flow, and diverse wildlife. England has 85% of the world's chalk streams, which support unique aquatic plants, insects, and fish.
Clay river	A river system with a substrate or surrounding landscape dominated by clay, which often features heavy soils, lower-lying floodplains, and a dense network of headwaters and larger river corridors.
Coastal	Habitats found wherever the land meets the sea - these are areas that are inundated at high tide.
Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh	Periodically inundated pasture or meadow with ditches, which maintain the water levels, containing standing brackish or freshwater. Located on coastal lowlands or floodplains.
Collaborative	Two or more people working together towards a shared purpose.
Connectivity (habitat)	The degree to which a landscape allows the unimpeded movement of organisms and natural processes between habitat patches. It is essential for maintaining healthy populations, facilitating gene flow and seed dispersal, and enabling wildlife to adapt to environmental changes like climate change.
Cover crop	A plant that's grown to cover the soil for a period, not for harvest, to improve soil health and manage its environment. Key benefits include reducing soil erosion and nutrient loss, increasing soil organic matter and fertility, suppressing weeds, and providing habitat for beneficial insects and wildlife. Commonly sown after main crops are harvested, cover crops are then terminated and left in the field as a "green manure" to feed subsequent crops, or they are tilled in to add organic matter and nutrients to the soil.
Crop rotation	The practice of planting a sequence of different crops in the same area across different growing seasons to maintain soil health, prevent the buildup of pests and diseases, and optimize nutrient use. By rotating different types of crops, you break the life cycles of pests and diseases, improve soil fertility by varying nutrient demands, and reduce reliance on

	chemical inputs.
DEFRA	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - a ministerial body responsible for improving and protecting the environment, growing a green economy, sustaining thriving rural community and supporting the country's food, farming and fishing industries.
Delivery partner	A strategic collaborator involved in the development, implementation and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Designated site	Statutory sites have protection under UK, European and International law, while non-statutory sites are recognised in local planning as being of importance in the local area. Often, the most important sites will have more than one designation. • Statutory sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites and National Nature Reserves. • Non-statutory sites: Local Wildlife Sites, Roadside Nature Reserves, Local Nature Reserves.
Diffuse pollution	Diffuse pollution, or non-point source pollution, occurs when pollutants are released from scattered sources, such as agricultural runoff, urban stormwater, and atmospheric deposition, and are carried into waterways and groundwater by rainfall and surface runoff. Unlike point source pollution, which comes from a specific, identifiable site like a pipe, diffuse pollution originates from a wide range of activities and accumulates to have a significant impact on water quality and the environment at a larger scale, such as a river catchment.
Ecological integrity	The ability of an ecosystem to maintain its natural characteristics, including a complete community of organisms with a characteristic species composition, diversity, and functional organization, and the ecological processes that sustain them. An ecosystem with integrity is resilient, able to withstand and recover from disturbances, and provides ecosystem services.
Ecosystem services	The direct and indirect benefits that human beings receive from healthy, functioning ecosystems, encompassing tangible products like food and water, and intangible benefits such as climate regulation and cultural inspiration. These services are typically categorized into provisioning (goods), regulating (processes), supporting (fundamental functions), and cultural (non-material) benefits.
Environment Act 2021	The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's framework for environmental protection, introducing legally binding targets for areas like air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste. It established the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) to oversee compliance, modernized waste crime regulations, mandated biodiversity net gain for development, created Nature Recovery Networks, and introduced new duties for local authorities on waste and nature recovery. The Act aims to improve environmental quality, halt species decline, increase recycling, and enhance resource efficiency by providing new powers and responsibilities for government bodies and businesses.
Ephemeral headwater stream	A small, non-permanent stream that flows only temporarily, usually in direct response to precipitation like rain or snowmelt, and is not connected to groundwater year-round.

Estuary	A semi-enclosed coastal body of brackish water (a mix of fresh and saltwater) where rivers or streams flow into the sea, creating a transitional zone between a river and the ocean. These highly productive ecosystems serve as vital habitats for diverse wildlife, act as natural filters for pollution, offer coastal protection from floods and storms, and are important for human activities like fishing and recreation.
Evidence-led	Strategic approach where decisions are guided by the collection and analysis of verifiable data and evidence rather than relying on subjective opinions.
Fauna	All the animal life present in a particular region or time.
Flood-plain	A flat, low-lying area of land next to a river or stream that periodically gets covered by water when the river overflows its banks
Flora	All the plant life present in a particular region or time.
Flow	The amount of water moving down a river at a given time and place; measured as a volume of water per unit time.
Forage	Area over which an animal can search for and source food.
Freshwater	Naturally occurring water with low salt concentration, found in glaciers, rivers, lakes, and groundwater. It is essential for life, supporting diverse ecosystems and providing water for human use.
Freshwater wetland	An ecosystem permanently or seasonally saturated with water that contains low concentrations of salt. They are transitional areas between dry land and open water, characterized by specialized vegetation that has adapted to waterlogged, oxygen-poor soil conditions.
Functional habitat	A specific area that not only meets an organism's basic survival needs like food, water, and shelter but also provides the necessary ecological and physical components to support its life cycle, including reproduction and movement. It takes into account aspects like resource availability, connectivity, and the impacts of landscape features.
Functionally linked land	An area of land outside a designated protected site that is used by the species for which the site is designated, and is therefore critical to its conservation. The land serves a crucial purpose for species, providing space for feeding, breeding, resting, or migrating; but unlike a habitat corridor that structurally links two areas, functionally linked land does not need to be physically joined to the protected site. The connection is behavioural and ecological, as the species travel between them through the surrounding landscape.
Functioning (ecosystem)	A dynamic system where biological, geochemical, and physical processes occur, supporting the collective life activities of plants, animals, and microbes while cycling energy and nutrients. It maintains stability, regulates essential processes, and provides benefits to humans.
Gill woodland	Found in the extreme upper reaches of rivers, where springs and streams first form in small, steep, wooded valleys. The steep sided nature of Gills has also ensured that many Gill woodlands have remained untouched and undisturbed by human activity. Gill woodlands have an unusual micro-climate and they are therefore unique.
Good ecological status (water body)	Indicates a healthy, functioning ecosystem with only minor deviations from undisturbed natural conditions, reflecting a good balance of biological, chemical, and physical elements.
Grassland	An ecosystem dominated by plants of the grass family, but may also include various herbs, sedges, and legumes.

Green space	Defined in Kent and Medway LNRS (unless stated otherwise in mapping methodology) as Parks and gardens – urban parks, country and regional parks, historic, formal and managed gardens, children’s play areas, stately homes; Amenity greenspace – informal recreation spaces, village greens, urban commons; Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces – woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground; Green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way; Allotments; Community gardens and orchards; City farms; Cemeteries, churchyards and other religious grounds; Playing fields and pitches; Golf courses; Equestrian sites.
Groundwater	Water that has filtered below the Earth's surface into porous, underground geological layers called aquifers. It is a vital natural resource that supports both ecosystems by flowing into rivers and wetlands and human communities through public water supplies and private use for domestic, agricultural, and industrial purposes.
Habitat change	The alteration of an area where a plant or animal lives, caused by factors such as human land use, climate change, natural disasters, and pollution, leading to habitat loss, degradation, or shifts in vegetation and conditions.
Habitat corridor	A habitat corridor, or wildlife corridor, is a strip of land or water that connects two or more separate natural habitats, allowing animals to safely move between them to find food, water and shelter, and breed. These corridors, which can be natural (e.g. hedgerows) or man-made (green bridges over roads), are essential for maintaining biodiversity, genetic diversity, and the ability of species to migrate in response to climate change.
Habitat fragmentation	Process where a large, continuous area of natural habitat is divided into smaller, isolated fragments due to human activity such as urbanisation, infrastructure and agriculture. Impacts on wildlife include reduced available habitat, barriers for species movement and feeding, lower genetic diversity and increased vulnerability to disease and other threats.
Headwater stream	The source of a river or stream, where water from rainfall, snowmelt, or springs first accumulates and begins to flow. These streams are the uppermost, smallest tributaries in a river network, acting as the fundamental foundation for the health of entire river systems.
Heathland	An open, low-lying landscape dominated by heather, gorse, and grasses on poor, acid soils, typically requiring human management like grazing and burning to prevent its return to scrub and woodland. This distinctive "semi-natural" habitat supports a range of rare wildlife and plants, including specific birds, reptiles, and invertebrates.
Hedgerow	A planted or natural line of shrubs, often with trees, that creates a physical barrier or boundary, but also functions as a complete wildlife habitat and ecosystem. These vital green corridors stitch together fragmented landscapes, providing essential food, shelter, and nesting sites for a vast array of wildlife, such as birds, bats, and insects, while also offering benefits like carbon capture and flood prevention.
Hydrogeological	The occurrence, distribution, and movement of water below the Earth's surface.
Hydrological	Water's movement, distribution, management and quality on Earth and in the atmosphere.
Important Bird Areas	Globally significant sites identified by BirdLife International for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity.

Important Invertebrate Areas	Places that are home to nationally or internationally significant invertebrate populations and their habitats, identified by Buglife. They include diverse species from beetles and moths to freshwater shrimps and woodlice, and habitats from the shoreline, along rivers and to the uplands.
Important Plant Areas	Key sites for exceptional botanical richness; rare, threatened and socio-economically valuable plant species; and rare and threatened habitats. Identified by Plantlife.
Intertidal	Also known as the littoral zone, is the area of a shoreline that is exposed to the air at low tide and submerged under water at high tide. This coastal region experiences dramatic environmental shifts, including changes in temperature, salinity, and wave action, requiring the organisms that live there to be highly adaptable. Habitats within the intertidal zone include rocky shores, sandy beaches, mudflats, and saltmarshes.
Invasive species	A non-native organism that causes significant ecological, environmental, or economic harm to its new environment. While most non-native or introduced species are harmless, a small percentage have the capacity to spread rapidly and negatively impact native species and habitats.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Habitat that is very difficult (or takes a very long time) to restore, create or replace once it has been destroyed. This may be due to its: age. uniqueness. species diversity. For the purposes of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, areas of irreplaceable habitat are defined as those included in the Biodiversity Net Gain irreplaceable habitats list, namely: Ancient woodland; Ancient and veteran trees; Blanket bog; Limestone pavements; Coastal sand dunes; Spartina saltmarsh swards; Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub; Lowland fens.
Lake	A large body of standing water, typically freshwater, completely surrounded by land and often fed by rivers, springs, or precipitation. While most are natural, lakes can also be artificial, formed by mineral extraction or river damming.
Land management	The process of planning and controlling how land and its resources are used.
Land manager	A person responsible for overseeing and directing the use and management of a piece of land.
Land use	Describes how humans utilize a specific area of land for various purposes, such as residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, or conservation activities.
Landowner	A person, entity, or group that possesses ownership rights to land, meaning their name is on the property's title, and they have the legal right to manage, use, and sell the property.
Landscape scale	Working on a large geographical area, such as a river catchment or an entire region, involving collaboration among multiple landholders and stakeholders to manage natural systems and deliver interconnected benefits for nature, society, and the economy.
Lawton principles	Four guiding rules - More, Bigger, Better, and Joined up - for creating a resilient ecological network, proposed by Professor Sir John Lawton in the 2010 Making Space for Nature report.

Local Authorities	An administrative body, run by elected councillors, that provides public services within a specific geographic area, such as housing, planning, environmental health, leisure facilities, waste, schools, roads, libraries, and social care. Collectively, services provide for the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the community. In the context of this Local Nature Recovery Strategy we are referring to Kent County Council, Medway Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dartford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swale Borough Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
Local Habitat map	The Local Habitat Map is a map of the Strategy area that provides a clear visual way for groups and individuals to understand the areas which are, or could become, of particular importance for biodiversity and the environment to target nature recovery action. The mapped parts include: • Location and extent of areas identified as of particular importance for biodiversity. • Locations where potential measures have been proposed. • Location and extent of areas identified that could become of particular importance for biodiversity.
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	A new system of spatial strategies for nature, introduced in the Environment Act 2021. Local Nature Recovery Strategies will help map out the action needed to restore nature, working closely with local stakeholders, especially farmers and land managers. When put together they will be a key way to meet the Government's England-wide nature targets.
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	Areas designated by local authorities for their significant local wildlife, geological interest, or educational value. These reserves provide safe habitats for plants and animals, offer spaces for public enjoyment and learning, and support biodiversity. Local authorities, such as town or county councils, establish and manage LNRs, often encouraging community involvement in their care and access.
Local Plan	Local Plans are documents prepared by a council's Local Planning Authority that guide future development by setting out a vision and framework for the area, covering housing, employment, and other priorities, and identifying areas for development or restriction. They are based on up-to-date evidence, undergo an independent examination to ensure soundness, and once adopted, become the starting point for deciding planning applications. Local Plans should safeguard the environment, enable adaptation to climate change and help secure high quality accessible design.
Local Planning Authorities	A local planning authority is the local government body that is empowered by law to exercise urban planning functions for a particular area. For the Strategy area, the following local planning authority roles are assigned to: • Kent County Council - planning authority for minerals and waste and county council developments (e.g. schools and roads). • Medway Council - planning authority all planning matters, including minerals and waste, council developments (e.g. schools and roads) and housing. • District and Borough Councils - all other planning matters, excluding those delivered by Kent County Council.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)	Sites designated on the basis of their representation of the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context. In Kent they are proposed locally under the scrutiny of the Kent Nature Partnership, using robust, scientifically-determined criteria and detailed ecological surveys. Their eventual delineation is by the relevant local planning authority.
Lowland drains and marshlands	Low-lying areas of waterlogged terrain, often found inland or along coasts, characterized by grasses, reeds, and sedges.
Lowland meadow	A species-rich grassland habitat that has developed over centuries on neutral, low-nutrient soils. It is a highly biodiverse environment, traditionally managed by grazing livestock or cutting for hay. These meadows are a priority for conservation in the UK due to a significant and continuing decline in their extent.
Lowland mire sites	Rare and threatened wetlands characterized by peat formation, such as lowland fens and valley mires.
Making Space For Nature	The project that developed the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
Mapping Platform	The online tool used to present the Strategy mapping and enable its easy viewing and scrutiny.
Mapping Tool	The online platform used to present the Strategy mapping and enable its easy viewing and scrutiny.
Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)	A specific type of Marine Protected Area (MPA) designated to protect nationally important marine species, habitats, geology, and geomorphology in UK waters. These zones safeguard rare or vulnerable underwater features and are established through legal orders to contribute to an ecologically coherent network of protected areas and meet biodiversity commitments.
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)	Designated area of the ocean, sea, or estuary, managed to protect and conserve marine life, habitats, and cultural or historical features. The key purpose of an MPA is to protect and recover rare, threatened and important habitats and species from damage caused by human activities. MPAs include Marine Conservation Zones and also Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, with marine components.
Migration	Seasonal movement of species to a different environment, often for breeding or food. However with climate change, migration may also mean the movement of species in response to changing habitat conditions.
More	Through habitat restoration and creation, establish new, nature-rich sites that not only provide more space for nature but also provide connectivity between existing core sites.
Mosaic Habitat	An area containing closely adjacent, diverse habitat types, such as grasslands, scrub, wetlands, and bare ground, that create a complex, interconnected landscape supporting high biodiversity. This "patchwork" of different environments allows various species to thrive by providing a range of resources and microclimates within a relatively small area.
Mudflat	A coastal wetland that forms in sheltered areas, such as bays, lagoons, and estuaries, where fine silts and clays carried by tides and rivers are deposited. They are part of the intertidal zone, meaning they are covered by seawater at high tide and exposed at low tide.

National Character Areas (NCA)	National Character Areas divide England into 159 distinct areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, history, cultural and economic activity. NCA boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape, not county or district boundaries.
National Landscape	A designation applied to an exceptional landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are precious enough to be safeguarded in the national interest. On par with National Parks, National Landscapes are protected and enhanced for nature, people, business and culture. There are 46 National Landscapes across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Strategy area includes all of the Kent Downs National Landscape and a portion of the High Weald National Landscape.
National Nature Reserves	A protected area of land designated for its nationally important wildlife, habitats, or geological features. NNRs offer opportunities for research and for people to experience nature firsthand.
Native oyster beds	A complex marine habitat created by native oysters on the seabed, providing a hard, rocky structure from the shells of dead and living oysters. These beds are crucial "ecosystem engineers," filtering vast amounts of seawater, supporting biodiversity by providing habitat for juvenile fish and shellfish, and stabilizing sediments.
Native species	An organism that occurs naturally in a particular region or ecosystem due to local natural evolution, having evolved in its natural range without human intervention. These species are adapted to the local environmental conditions and play a specific role in the local food web.
Natural form (river)	A free-flowing, dynamic system that creates diverse habitats and landforms through processes like erosion, deposition, and meandering, including features like gravel bars, oxbow lakes, and varied vegetation zones. Unlike modified or straightened rivers, which are often channelized and cut off from their floodplains, a natural river maintains a complex, varied structure and supports a rich diversity of wildlife, with unconstrained flows allowing for natural sediment transport and the creation of complex ecological niches.
Natural regeneration	The ecological process where plants and woodlands re-establish themselves without human planting, primarily through seeds, suckering, or layering from existing trees. This process is an important method of forest creation and recovery, offering benefits such as greater genetic diversity, increased resilience to pests and climate change, and reduced management costs compared to tree planting.
Nature Friendly Farming	A farming approach using sustainable practices that produce food while restoring and protecting the natural environment. Rather than depending on high inputs of artificial chemicals, this approach builds farm resilience by working with natural processes to improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and mitigate climate change.
Nature-based solutions	Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are actions that protect, manage, and restore natural and modified ecosystems to address societal challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, and poverty. They involve working with nature to provide human well-being and biodiversity benefits, offering cost-effective, adaptive, and resilient approaches.
Non native species	An organism introduced to an area outside its natural range, whether accidentally or deliberately, by human activity. The vast majority are not considered harmful, but a small proportion become "invasive," causing significant damage to the environment, economy, or human health.

Nursery (fish)	An area with abundant food and protection that supports juvenile fish to grow before moving to adult habitats.
Open coast	A stretch of coast where natural forces and systems are dominant, featuring wilderness and naturalness.
Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land	A high-biodiversity habitat, primarily found on former industrial (brownfield) sites, that develops from a mix of bare ground, short-sward grassland, scrub, and ruderal (unmanaged weed) vegetation communities. This diversity supports rich invertebrate and plant communities, including rare species.
Open space	Defined in Kent and Medway LNRS (unless stated otherwise in mapping methodology) as Parks and gardens – urban parks, country and regional parks, historic, formal and managed gardens, children’s play areas, stately homes; Amenity greenspace – informal recreation spaces, village greens, urban commons; Natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces – woodland and scrub, grassland, heath or moor, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and disturbed ground; Green corridors – rivers and canals including their banks, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way; Allotments; Community gardens and orchards; City farms; Cemeteries, churchyards and other religious grounds; Playing fields and pitches; Golf courses; Equestrian sites.
Permaculture	A design philosophy and framework for creating sustainable human habitats and agricultural systems by imitating patterns found in natural ecosystems, rather than working against nature.
Pests	Any animal or plant that is considered a nuisance, causes damage, or poses a health hazard.
Planning system	The process for managing land and buildings, balancing the needs of the community, economy, and environment. It is primarily administered by local government authorities, though national policy also applies.
Pond	A small, still, contained body of water, usually fresh but sometimes brackish, that can be natural or man-made and holds water for at least four months of the year. Ponds serve as vital habitats for diverse wildlife, including plants, invertebrates, amphibians, and fish, while also offering benefits like flood reduction and cooling effects. They come in various sizes and shapes, from small garden ponds to larger, natural pools.
Potential Measure	The proposed action to deliver the priority – these must be practical and achievable.
Potential Measures Mapping	Identifies where the action determined as necessary for our nature recovery priorities should be strategically targeted to achieve the greatest gains for biodiversity and deliver the widest environmental benefits.
Priority	The outcome we want to see for nature.
Priority Species	Species the Strategy has determined should be prioritised for recovery action. They were identified from an initial list of threatened and locally significant species.
Production and provisioning services	Tangible products obtained directly from ecosystems that support human life and needs, including food, water, timber, genetic resources, and medicinal resources. These services involve the extraction, harvest, and use of natural resources for subsistence or industrial purposes, such as agriculture, fishing, mining, and energy generation from natural sources.

Public Right of Way (PROW)	Legally protected routes in England and Wales that people can use for travel, often on land privately owned but accessible to the public. There are different types of PROWs, including footpaths (for walkers), bridleways (walkers, horse riders, and cyclists), restricted byways (any non-motorized transport), and byways open to all traffic (BOATs) (all traffic, including motor vehicles).
Q10 flows	The flow in cubic metres per second which was equalled or exceeded for 10% of the specified term – a high flow parameter which, when compared with the Q 95 flow provides a measure of the variability, or ‘flashiness’, of the flow regime https://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/derived-flow-statistics
Ramsar sites	Wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an intergovernmental treaty focused on the conservation of wetlands. These sites are recognized for their role in conserving biological diversity and their biological or hydrological value. Most Ramsar sites overlap with the SACs and SPAs.
Recreational disturbance	Any human leisure activity that negatively impacts wildlife or habitats, causing changes in behaviour, habitat damage, or physical harm to animals.
Reedbed	A wetland ecosystem characterized by dense stands of common reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>), where the water table is at or above ground level year-round. These habitats form at the transition between land and water and serve as vital natural filters, removing pollutants while producing clean water. Reedbeds are also crucial for biodiversity, providing essential habitat and food for a wide range of wildlife, including rare birds like the bittern.
Regenerative practices	A set of farming and land management techniques designed to reverse soil degradation, improve biodiversity, and enhance the health of the entire ecosystem, rather than just sustaining it. Approaches include reduced inputs, reduced cultivation, no/minimum till, deeper rooting, stronger rooted swards, over wintering stubble, cover crops, minimise compaction, plough along contour, maintain invertebrates and bacteria.
Resilience (climate change)	The capacity ecosystems to withstand, adapt to, and recover from climate-related hazards, such as extreme weather events and slow-onset changes like sea-level rise. It involves understanding risks, developing land management strategies, and implementing a combination of adaptation and mitigation actions to cope with and thrive under a changing climate.
Resilience (ecological)	An ecosystem's ability to withstand and recover from disturbances, maintaining its core structure and functions while continuing to provide vital services like clean water and climate regulation.
Responsible Authority	The organisation that leads the preparation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy - in most cases a combined authority, county council or unitary council. For the Kent & Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the responsible authority is Kent County Council.
Rewilding	A large-scale conservation approach that restores ecosystems by allowing natural processes to take over, giving nature the space and freedom to recover and adapt on its own terms. It goes beyond traditional species-focused conservation by emphasizing the large-scale restoration of natural systems and the return of missing species to restore functioning, biodiverse, and resilient ecosystems.

River	A natural stream of fresh water that flows from a source on high ground toward another body of water, such as an ocean, lake, or another river. The journey of a river is shaped by the land it flows across, gradually eroding and depositing sediment along its course.
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs)	Protected stretches of roadside verge that are managed to conserve biodiversity, serving as vital refuges for rare plants, insects, and other wildlife. Often a remnant of once-extensive habitats like meadows, these verges are particularly valuable in landscapes that have been fragmented.
Safeguarding	In the context of this Strategy, this does not imply a formal protection nor prevention of potentially impactful activities, unless already identified within an existing and adopted local plan or an already established legal protection. Safeguarding may be delivered by setting aside the land but also refers to the use of active management that prevents loss and damage, the use of buffers to minimise human impacts and connecting habitats to increase resilience. Where measures refer to safeguarding areas, this does not mean that nothing can happen in these areas; rather that appropriate action should be taken within these areas to support the habitats and species they are notable for.
Saline lagoons	An area of shallow, coastal saltwater that is partially or completely separated from the open sea by a natural barrier, such as a sandbank, or an artificial one, like a sea wall. This restricted connection to the sea creates a unique environment where the salinity can fluctuate, ranging from brackish (less salty than seawater) to hypersaline (saltier than seawater).
Saltmarsh	A coastal wetland, found where land meets saltwater, dominated by salt-tolerant plants like grasses and shrubs that are regularly flooded by tides. These vital habitats act as natural flood defences, provide crucial environments for diverse wildlife, and are important for carbon sequestration and nutrient remediation.
Scrub	Also known as scrubland, is an area dominated by shrubs, bushes, and other low-growing plants, often forming a transitional zone between open grassland and woodland. These habitats are valuable for wildlife, providing shelter, food sources like berries and seeds, and breeding or roosting sites. Scrub habitats feature a diverse mix of vegetation, with natural edges and a mosaic of different heights and ages of shrubs, grasses, and herbs, such as brambles, hawthorn, and thistles.
Seagrass	The only type of flowering plant that can live fully submerged in seawater, forming underwater meadows that are vital ecosystems. These marine plants have roots, stems, and leaves, and play a crucial role in coastal health by providing food and shelter for diverse marine life, acting as nursery grounds for fish, storing significant amounts of carbon (known as blue carbon), filtering pollutants, and stabilizing coastlines.
Sensitive land management	Implementing practices that deliver environmental and climate benefits alongside food production. Key practices include creating wildlife habitats, improving water quality by reducing pollution, increasing resilience to flooding and drought, planting trees, managing soils sustainably, and reducing carbon emissions.
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A legally protected area of land, habitat, or geological feature in the UK that is of national or international importance for nature and geology. Designations are made by bodies like Natural England and NatureScot, with owners and occupiers having responsibilities to manage the land and seek consent for potentially harmful activities.

Soil management	Practices that maintain or improve soil health, fertility, and productivity for sustainable agriculture and land use. Key practices include adding organic matter, using cover crops, practicing crop rotation, reducing soil compaction, and avoiding working wet soils.
Spatially framed strategy	A plan or approach that integrates physical space into strategic decision-making, often by focusing actions on specific locations to achieve maximum benefit. This spatially framed strategy for nature, focusses action to where its most needed and where it will deliver the greatest benefits.
Special Areas for Conservation (SACs)	A protected area in the UK and Europe designated to conserve natural habitats and species listed in the Habitats Directive. These areas form part of the Natura 2000.
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	A designation for land or sea sites that are internationally important for protecting vulnerable bird species, especially migratory and Annex I listed birds, under the EU's Birds Directive. These areas form part of the Natura 2000 and require conservation measures to protect the birds, their habitats, eggs, and nests.
Species rich grassland	Defined as species-rich if it has more than 15 plant species per square metre; more than 30% cover of wildflowers and sedges (excluding white clover, creeping buttercup and injurious weeds); less than 10% cover of white clover and perennial rye grass.
Species-rich hedgerow	A hedgerow that contains a high diversity of native woody plants, typically defined by having at least five native woody species within a 30-meter section. These hedges are crucial for biodiversity, providing food, shelter, and movement corridors for wildlife. They also offer other benefits like windbreaks and soil erosion control.
Spring	A natural point where groundwater flows to the surface, forming part of the water cycle.
Stage Zero restoration	The philosophy of Stage Zero restoration is to work with natural processes to rehabilitate a modified and incised, or aggrading, channel network and restore the water connection to its floodplain – for more information see https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/09/resetting-our-rivers-how-taking-them-back-to-stage-zero-could-help-nurture-nature/
Stakeholder	An individual, group or organisation within or has links to the Strategy area.
Strategic significance	The statutory biodiversity net gain metric formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat's size, condition, type and strategic significance. Strategic significance is the local significance of the habitat based on its location and habitat type. Where a Local Nature Recovery Strategy has been published, high strategic significance (and the associated score) is applied when: - the location of the habitat parcel has been mapped in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as an area where a potential measure has been proposed to help deliver the priorities of the Strategy; and - the proposed intervention is consistent with the mapped potential measure in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the habitat parcel.

Stream	A smaller, flowing body of water that can be a tributary to a larger river. A river is a substantial, natural stream that is wider, deeper, and often navigable. The distinction between the two is subjective and depends on factors like size, flow, and geographical significance.
Successional Habitats	A specific stage within the natural process of ecological succession, where one habitat type gradually transforms into another over time. These habitats are defined by the mix of plant and animal species present, and they naturally progress through a series of stages, from pioneer species to a relatively stable "climax community," such as a mature forest.
Supporting Authority	The local planning authorities in a Local Nature Recovery Strategy area that are not the lead responsible authority. Their role is to provide input and ensure the strategy accounts for their area's local priorities. For this Strategy the supporting authorities are: Medway Council, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dartford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Swale Borough Council, Thanet District Council, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
Supporting Measures	Supporting mechanisms, processes and functions that are considered critical to the delivery of the identified potential measures for habitats and species, and without these being addressed those measures will be limited in their success.
Surface water management	Environmentally friendly methods to manage rainwater by using natural processes to filter, store, and slowly release it, which helps reduce flooding and pollution, improves water quality, and creates green spaces in urban areas.
Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS)	A natural approach to managing surface water runoff in urban and rural environments. Unlike conventional drainage, which quickly pipes water away, SuDS use a sequence of techniques to mimic natural drainage, slowing and holding back water while filtering out pollutants.
Sustainable land management	A land management approach which aims to balance human needs with the long-term health of the environment by reducing land degradation, enhancing biodiversity, and mitigating climate change impacts.
Swift Bricks	Universal nest brick for cavity nesting small bird species
Traditional orchard	A low-density planting of standard or half-standard fruit and nut trees in permanent grassland. Managed in a low-intensity, chemical-free way, these orchards are a distinct habitat that supports a rich diversity of wildlife. This contrasts with modern, intensive orchards that use high-density plantings of dwarf trees and are managed with chemical inputs.
Transitional habitat	The boundary zone between two different ecosystems or plant communities, such as where a woodland meets a grassland or where fresh and saltwater interact in an estuary. These areas are characterized by a unique mix of species from both adjacent habitats, creating conditions that support a high level of biodiversity and act as important wildlife corridors.
Trees outside woodland	A critical and often underestimated resource in both rural and urban landscapes, defined as trees on land that does not meet the criteria for a forest (typically <0.5 hectares). They include trees in hedgerows, parks, gardens, agricultural land, and along roads and waterways. They provide disproportionately high ecological, cultural, and economic value

	compared to the small area they occupy.
Urban cooling	The use of strategies and technologies to counteract the "urban heat island" effect, a phenomenon in which cities become significantly warmer than their surrounding rural areas. This is mainly due to dense urban development, which uses materials like concrete and asphalt that absorb and retain more heat. Urban cooling strategies include green, blue, and grey infrastructure.
Urban environment	A human settlement characterized by high population density, infrastructure, and a built-up landscape, distinct from rural or natural areas. These areas, which include cities, towns, and suburbs, are dynamic ecosystems shaped heavily by human activity.
Urbanisation	The increasing proportion of people living in urban areas, or cities and towns, compared to rural areas and the resulting growth of developed areas.
Vegetated shingle	A rare and fragile coastal habitat that forms on stable shingle beaches. These are beaches composed of pebbles and stones, rather than sand, and the plants that grow there must be highly adapted to withstand the harsh conditions of wind, salt spray, and drought.
Veteran tree	Ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient. Veteran trees are survivors that have developed some of the features found on ancient trees. However, veteran trees are usually only in their second or mature stage of life.
Wet woodland	A tree-dominated habitat that grows in poorly drained or seasonally flooded soils, featuring trees that are adapted to waterlogged conditions. These woodlands are important for biodiversity, especially invertebrates, and play a vital role in water quality by buffering pollutants and helping to control flood risk by storing water.
Wider measures	Proposed actions which would be similarly beneficial over wide areas or it was not possible to determine specific locations to carry out the proposed action. Collectively, these wider measures identify areas of additional opportunities for nature recovery but do not form a part of the formal Local Nature Recovery Strategy's Local Habitat Map.
Wilding	Allowing plants to grow uncultivated to encourage wildlife or, more broadly, the process of restoring natural processes to an area of land with minimal human intervention.
Wildlife corridor	Linear features, either natural or human-made, that connect fragmented habitats, enabling animals and plants to move, disperse, migrate, access resources like food, water and breed.
Wood pasture and parkland	Historic and ecologically rich "mosaic habitats" that feature large, open-grown trees in a matrix of grazed grassland or heathland.
Woodland	An area of land covered with trees and shrubs.

References

Documents guiding the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Calculate biodiversity value with the statutory biodiversity metric (guidance) 2025	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-metric-calculate-the-biodiversity-net-gain-of-a-project-or-development
Data standards for Local Nature Recovery Strategies Advice for Responsible Authorities Version 1. February 2024	https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Data-Standards-Advice-for-LNRS-Responsible-Authorities.pdf
Environment Act 2021	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents
Environmental Targets 2022	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan/25-year-environment-plan-our-targets-at-a-glance
Irreplaceable habitat guidance - How biodiversity net gain (BNG) applies to irreplaceable habitat (2024)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/irreplaceable-habitats
LNRS Species Advice: Identifying threatened bird species whose drivers of decline operate outside England	https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/LNRS-species-guidance-threatened-bird-declines-driven-by-factors-operating-outside-England.pdf
Local Nature Recovery Strategy regulations 2023 (The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023)	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/341/contents/made
Local Nature Recovery Strategy statutory guidance 2023	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6421a4bdf97a8001379ecf1/Local_nature_recovery_strategy_statutory_guidance.pdf
Mapping potential measures in Local Nature Recovery Strategies Advice for Responsible Authorities Version 1. 28th March 2024	https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Mapping-potential-measures-in-Local-Nature-Recovery-Strategies-advice.pdf
National planning practice guidance on Local Nature Recovery Strategies 2025	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#local-nature-recovery-strategies
Paragraph 192(a) of the National Planning Policy Framework (15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/15-conserving-and-enhancing-the-natural-environment
Species Recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies Advice for Responsible Authorities Version 1. August 2023	https://www.makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Species-Recovery-within-Local-Nature-Recovery-Strategies-v.1-August-2023.pdf

Kent documents providing the strategic context to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including those the Strategy seeks to align with and/or support

Darent Catchment Flood Management Plan	https://darentpartnership.org.uk/darent/action-plan
High Weald AONB Management Plan	https://highweald.org/document-library/aonb-management-plan/high-weald-aonb-management-plan-consultation-2024-2029/hwmp2024-consultation-draft/?layout=default
Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plan	https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/shoreline-management-plan/SMP10
Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy	https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/environment-conservation-and-waste-policies/environmental-policies/kent-and-medway-energy-and-low-emissions-strategy
Kent Biodiversity Strategy	https://kentnature.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Kent-Biodiversity-Strategy-2020.pdf
Kent Climate Change Adaption Plan	https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s127871/24-00095%20-%20Appendix%20%20-%20KCC%20Climate%20Change%20Adaptation%20Plan%202025-2028%20v5.pdf
Kent and Medway Climate change risk and impact assessment	https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/climate-change/kents-changing-climate/climate-change-risk-and-impact-assessment
Kent County Council Environment Plan 2025	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/214944/Environment-Plan.pdf
Kent County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/208312/Rights-of-Way-Improvement-Plan-2018-2028.pdf
Kent County Parks Strategy	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/148854/Kent-Country-Parks-Strategy-2023-28.pdf
Kent Downs AONB Management Plan	https://kentdowns.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/The-Kent-Downs-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-2026-Adopted.pdf
Kent Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/12407/Joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy.pdf

Kent Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/205621/Local-Flood-Risk-Management-Strategy-2024-2034.pdf
Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan	https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/housing,-regeneration-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/minerals-and-waste-planning-policy/kent-minerals-and-waste-local-plan-kmwlp
Kent Plan Bee	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/181489/Kents-Plan-Bee.pdf
Kent Plan Tree	https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/148983/Kent-Plan-Tree-2022-V2.pdf
Kent Preliminary flood risk assessment	https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/economic-regeneration-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/flooding-drainage-and-water-management-policies-and-guidance/preliminary-flood-risk-assessment
Kent Surface water management plans	https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/service-specific-policies/economic-regeneration-and-planning-policies/planning-policies/flooding-drainage-and-water-management-policies-and-guidance/surface-water-management-plans
Local green infrastructure strategies	See appendix 2.1
Local Plans	See appendix 2.1
Medway Catchment Flood Management Plan	https://medwaypartnership.org.uk/medway/action-plan
Medway Climate Change Action Plan	
Medway Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy	https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/3710/joint_local_health_and_wellbeing_strategy_2024_to_2028
Medway Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	
Medway Preliminary flood risk assessment	

Medway Rights of Way Improvement Plan	https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/5080/medway_rights_of_way_improvement_plan_2020_to_2030_executive_summary
Medway Surface water management plan	
NHS Kent and Medway Green Plan	https://www.kentandmedway.icb.nhs.uk/application/files/7217/4610/3201/KMICB_Green_Strategy_2024_to_2029.pdf
North Kent Catchment Flood Management Plan	https://msep.org.uk/our-work/north-kent-catchment-improvement-group/
River Medway and Swale Estuary Shoreline Management Plan	https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/shoreline-management-plan/SMP9
South East Marine Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-south-east-marine-plan-documents
South East River Basin Management Plans	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/south-east-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022
South Foreland to Beachy Head Shoreline Management Plan	https://environment.data.gov.uk/shoreline-planning/shoreline-management-plan/SMP11
South Marine Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-south-marine-plans-documents
Stour Catchment Flood Management Plan	https://www.kentishstour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Stour-Catchment-Management-Plan-2.docx
Thames River Basin Management Plans	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022

National documents providing the strategic context to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, including those the Strategy seeks to align with and/or support

Air Quality Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1180706/Air_Quality_Strategy_Web.pdf
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation – Design your Local Nature Recovery Strategy to Deliver for Amphibians and Reptiles.	https://www.arc-trust.org/design-your-lhrs-to-deliver-for-amphibians-and-reptiles
Bat Conservation Trust – Taking bats into account in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.	https://www.bats.org.uk/resources/guidance-for-professionals/taking-bats-into-account-in-local-nature-recovery-strategies
Big Chalk – Big Chalk and Local Nature Recovery Strategies.	https://www.cotswolds-nl.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Big-Chalk-LNRS-guidance-note-v1.3.pdf
Biomass Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1178897/biomass-strategy-2023.pdf
Buglife – Delivering for Invertebrates in Local Nature Recovery Strategies.	https://www.buglife.org.uk/resources/planning-hub/local-nature-recovery-strategy-guidance-in-england/
Bumblebee Conservation Trust – Local Nature Recovery Strategies: a guide to help bumblebees thrive.	https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/what-we-do/our-position-statements/local-nature-recovery-strategies/
Chalk Stream Strategy	https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/CaBA-CSR-Strategy-MAIN-REPORT-FINAL-12.10.21-Low-Res.pdf
Chalk Stream Strategy	https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CaBA-CSR-IMP-PLAN-FINAL-25.11.22.-V2.pdf
Clean Air Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c3b9debe5274a70c19d905c/clean-air-strategy-2019.pdf
Delivering 30 by 30 on land in England	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65807a5e23b70a000d234b5d/Delivering_30by30_on_land_in_England.pdf
England Trees Action Plan	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60a3ddd1d3bf7f2886e2a05d/england-trees-action-plan.pdf
Environment Targets	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/91/made#:~:text=Long%2Dterm%20biodiversity%20target%20to%20reverse%20the%20decline%20of%20species%20abundance&text=(b)at%20least%2010%25,the%202030%20species%20abundance%20target

Environmental Improvement Plan	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1168372/environmental-improvement-plan-2023.pdf
Environmental Land Management Scheme	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/future-of-farming-in-england
Fisheries Management Plan	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-management-plans/fisheries-management-plans
Floodplain Meadows Partnership – Floodplain Meadows in Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	https://floodplainmeadows.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Floodplain%20Meadows%20crib%20sheet%201%20draft%20Jan%2024%20ER.pdf
Food Strategy	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-food-strategy/government-food-strategy
Freshwater Habitats Trust – Incorporating small freshwater habitats into your Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	https://freshwaterhabitats.b-cdn.net/app/uploads/2024/08/FHT-Small-Freshwaters-Guidance-for-LNRSs.pdf
GB Plant Biosecurity Strategy	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plant-biosecurity-strategy-for-great-britain-2023-to-2028/plant-biosecurity-strategy-for-great-britain-2023-to-2028
Government Food Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62a6eb418fa8f5039a1bd7b5/government-food-strategy.pdf
Great Britain Invasive Non-Native Species Strategy	https://www.nonnativespecies.org/assets/Uploads/The-Great-Britain-Invasive-Non-Native-Species-Strategy-2023-to-2030-v2.pdf
Green Finance Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1149690/mobilising-green-investment-2023-green-finance-strategy.pdf
Green Infrastructure Framework	https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx
Grey Squirrel Action Plan	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ad477d4ed915d32a3a70af4/Grey-squirrels-policy-and-action-plan.pdf
Groundwater protection position statements	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab38864e5274a3dc898e29b/Environment-Agency-approach-to-groundwater-protection.pdf
Joint Fisheries Statement	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1119399/Joint_Fisheries_Statement_JFS_2022_Final.pdf

Keepers of Time Policy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/628f7bdf90e070394dbc10f/Keepers of time woodlands and trees policy England.pdf
Land Use Framework	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/effective-use-of-land
Litter Strategy for England	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a82216340f0b6230269b009/litter-strategy-for-england-2017-v2.pdf
Meeting our future water needs: a national framework for water resources	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e6e478ed3bf7f26963789f3/National Framework for water resources main report.pdf
National Adaptation Programme	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1172931/The Third National Adaptation Programme.pdf
National Deer Management Strategy	https://consult.defra.gov.uk/team-trees/consultation-on-proposals-for-the-deer-management/supporting_documents/Deer%20management%20strategy%20consultation%20.pdf
National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6b6da6e90e076c182d508d/023_15482_Environment_agency_digitalAW_Strategy.pdf
National Pollinator Strategy: Pollinator Action Plan 2021 to 2024	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62878a17d3bf7f1f4469542b/Pollinator Action Plan 2021 to 2024.pdf
Natural England and Forestry Commission: Our position on woodland creation	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-position-on-woodland-creation-in-england/natural-england-and-forestry-commission-our-position-on-woodland-creation
Nature Markets Framework	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-markets
Nature Recovery Network	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nature-recovery-network/nature-recovery-network
Net Zero Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6194dfa4d3bf7f0555071b1b/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf
People's Trust for Endangered Species – Our guidance for designing Local Nature Recovery Strategies.	https://ptes.org/get-informed/publications/guidance-leaflets/our-guidance-for-designing-local-nature-recovery-strategies/
Plan for Water	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-water-our-integrated-plan-for-delivering-clean-and-plentiful-water https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1164375/plan for water.pdf

Plantlife – How to Design your Local Nature Recovery Strategy to Deliver for Plants and Fungi.	https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/local-nature-recovery-strategy-lrns-for-plants-fungi/
Protected Landscapes Targets and Outcomes Framework	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework/protected-landscapes-targets-and-outcomes-framework
Resources and Waste Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c18f11740f0b60bbe0d827/resources-waste-strategy-dec-2018.pdf
The Agricultural Transition Plan	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/60085334e90e073ec94cc80b/agricultural-transition-plan.pdf
Tree Health Resilience Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b06a40e40f0b61f92a72a16/tree-health-resilience-strategy.pdf
UK Marine Strategy	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f6c8369d3bf7f7238f23151/marine-strategy-part1-october19.pdf
	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1125641/uk-marine-strategy-part-two-monitoring-programmes-2021.pdf
	https://consult.defra.gov.uk/uk-marine-strategy-programme-of-measures-3/uk-marine-strategy-part-3/supporting_documents/UKMS3%20Consultation%20Document.pdf
Unleashing Rural Opportunity	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unleashing-rural-opportunity/unleashing-rural-opportunity

Documents providing information to the Strategy Area Description

Air pollution impacts on avian species via inhalation exposure and associated outcomes (Sanderfoot & Holloway, 2017).	https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/aa8051
Classification information for WFD water bodies	https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning/
Ecological Consequences of Gamebird Releasing and Management on Lowland Shoots in England (NEER016) Natural England (2020)	https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5078605686374400
Greater Thames Estuary (NCA81)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/greater-thames-estuary/
High Weald (NCA122)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/high-weald/
High Weald National Landscape	https://highweald.org/
Important Bird Areas	https://www.birdlife.org/projects/ibas-mapping-most-important-places/
Important Invertebrate Areas.	https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/important-invertebrate-areas/
Important Plant Areas	https://www.plantlife.org.uk/protecting-plants-fungi/important-plant-areas/
Kent Downs National Landscape	https://kentdowns.org.uk/
Kent Habitat Survey 2012	https://kentnature.org.uk/publications/kent-habitat-survey-2012/
Kent State of Nature 2022	https://kentnature.org.uk/state-of-nature/
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/create-and-manage-local-nature-reserves
Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs)	https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/projects/local-wildlife-sites
Low Weald (NCA 121)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/low-weald/

Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)	https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/marine-conservation-zones/
Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)	https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/about-marine-protected-areas/
Met Office's UK Climate Projections (UKCP)	Met Office's UK Climate Projections (UKCP)
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-nature-reserves-in-england
North Downs (NCA119)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/north-downs/
North Kent Plain (NCA113)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/north-kent-plain/
Plant defences mediate interactions between herbivory and the direct foliar uptake of atmospheric reactive nitrogen (Campbell & Vallano, 2018)	https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-07134-9
Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs)	https://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/roadside-nature-reserves
Romney Marshes (NCA123)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/romney-marshes/
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/protected-areas-sites-of-special-scientific-interest
Special Areas for Conservation (SACs)	https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-areas-of-conservation/
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)	https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/special-protection-areas/
Wealden Greensand (NCA120)	https://nationalcharacterareas.co.uk/wealden-greensand/

Appendices

**Please click on the above
weblink to view the
appendices, which
are presented
online.**



This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025

Subject: **To extend current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework SS 15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport**

Key Decision: **25/00078**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **N/A**

Future Pathway of Paper: **For Cabinet Member Decision**

Electoral Divisions Affected: **All**

Summary:

The current DPS framework expires on the 31st of December 2026 and under the new Procurement Act 2023, there is no like for like replacement. To provide suitable time for alternative procurement frameworks to be fully explored and a new commercial strategy to be developed, it is proposed to extend the current DPS to 23rd February 2029. Such an extension is allowed under the Procurement Act 2015.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to:

EXTEND the current DPS framework for SS15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport from its current expiry of 31st December 2026 to 23rd February 2029.

ENABLE the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.

DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the 1st of January 2017, the procurement of supported local bus and mainstream home to school transport has been through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR2015). This framework for procurement was chosen following an exhaustive evaluation and it was chosen for the flexibility it provided for procurement, especially at short notice.
- 1.2 The DPS is due to expire on the 31st of December 2026 and Public Transport alongside colleagues in Procurement and Commissioning have been examining the options available under the Procurement Act 2023.
- 1.3 Under the new act there is no comparable replacement for a DPS and so, to provide further time to evaluate a new commercial/procurement strategy, this paper seeks to extend the current DPS from 31st December 2026 to 23rd February 2029. Under the Procurement Act, any DPS extension must be made by 23rd February 2026, and the latest it can run is to 23 February 2029.

2. Background

- 2.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age under the Education Act 1996. As the Local Transport Authority, KCC also has a duty under the Transport Act 1985 to provide socially necessary public passenger transport services where the requirements for such would not otherwise be met, for example by a private or commercial operator.
- 2.2 The annual budget for supported local bus services is £6.2M and the budget is held by Growth, Environment and Transport. The annual budget for mainstream home to school transport is £13.5M and held by Children's, Young People, and Education. (CYPE).
- 2.3 This leads to a need to contract from bus and coach operators (known as Public Service Vehicle Operators (PSV)), be it for a local registered bus service or a contract transporting children from their home to a local school.
- 2.4 Most of the requirement is centred on local registered bus service, with the smaller requirement being contracted home to school transport workings.
- 2.5 The Supported Local Bus (including Kent Karrier) and Home to School Transport Services DPS was established as a route to market to meet both obligations. This route to market was determined following a full review of the procurement options/frameworks available to the service. It sought feedback from other local authority transport teams, in particular their preferred procurement routes and benefits of. Approval of the route to market involved full engagement with a range of stakeholders across the authority.

- 2.6 The DPS allows the Public Transport Team to run competitive and PCR2015-compliant tenders with pre-qualified Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators for the provision of bus and coach services.
- 2.7 Supported Local Bus Services and Home to School Transport services are generally tendered on a cyclical basis, but circumstances do occasionally arise where the facility to seek bids on an accelerated basis is necessary. KCC commits to have transport in place for eligible children within six weeks of the application being made, and this includes the time CYPE needs to process the details, so there are occasions where the requirement is not passed to Public Transport with enough time remaining for a full 30-day tender window. Additionally, an Operator may give 30 days' notice to terminate a contract, in which case an alternative provider must be sought.
- 2.8 Furthermore, the DPS includes the facility to directly award de-minimis (low value) contracts, including small additions to an existing contract and in emergencies, where a supplier becomes insolvent or has their PSV licence revoked by a Traffic Commissioner and an alternative is required the next morning.
- 2.9 The DPS commenced on 1st January 2017 with a 10-year lifespan and estimated total value of £100 million and stands to conclude on 31st December 2026.
- 2.10 When the DPS was set up in 2016, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 applied. However, as of 24th February 2025, any new procurement or purchasing mechanism is subject to the Procurement Act 2023, which provides new procurement processes but does not have a directly comparable replacement for Dynamic Purchasing Systems. Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23), there is no longer the option to establish new Dynamic Purchasing Systems. However, two new arrangements were introduced: Open Frameworks and Dynamic Markets. These options have been explored and assessed, and it has been determined that they are not currently viable routes to market for this service. In addition, 'Guidance: transitional and saving arrangements' was published to advise on managing the changeover from the previous legislation, including the lifespan of extant DPSs. With the current DPS set to expire at the end of next year, several options for fulfilling KCC's statutory obligations have been identified and evaluated.
- 2.11 The service, following consultation with colleagues in Commissioning and Procurement, still believe that a DPS provides a procurement framework, that meets its needs in terms of being procurement compliant, is resident/client focused, is flexible, is resource efficient, allows planned tendering but also short-term tendering, even for urgent needs. Allows direct award de-minimis contracts, which are useful in this arena. Therefore, to not have a comparable replacement for the DPS under the new Procurement Act 2023, poses a risk to how the service tenders transport and ultimately users.

- 2.12 This is not an issue unique to Kent, several local transport authorities (those tender transport contracts) have conveyed to national government the risk of not having a DPS replacement and the limits that the procurement options available bring to transport tendering. It is hoped that this may see changes brought forward by national government. The recognition of this gap in the Procurement Act has led to the allowance for DPSs to continue under transitional provisions until 23 February 2029.
- 2.13 Options to extend the DPS were not published within statutory notices, as traditional extensions typically do not apply to this form of purchasing mechanism as they do to Framework Agreements and Contracts. The spend to date is approximately £65 million over the first eight years.
- 2.14 DPSs live at the time the new Act came into effect must expire by no later than 23rd February 2029. The current termination date is 31st December 2026 but can be varied as described in Section 34 and regulation 72, of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 2.15 Extending the term of the current DPS would minimise service disruption by retaining processes which KCC staff and Suppliers are already familiar with. Additionally, it offers relative stability in the medium-term, while the potential impacts of Local Government Reform crystallise. Whilst this still does not directly resolve the matter of the route to market beyond 23rd February 2029, it does offer an interim solution which can be delivered, while work progresses to develop a longer-term commercial strategy.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this extension of the DPS, as all spend through the DPS is agreed, either by key decisions already in force or through the authority's budget setting process.
- 3.2 The framework still provides best value to the authority, as all tenders (commissions) that are run through the framework is market tested, i.e. the lowest compliant bid is the winning bid and all bids are ranked. Every tender issued through the framework is available to all suppliers on the framework.

4. Options (other options considered but discarded)

- Procuring under PCR15
- Dynamic Markets
- Open Frameworks

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Appropriate legal advice was taken in respect of extending the current DPS until 23rd February 2029. Advice was sought from KCC's legal team, and an appropriate legal organisation was commissioned to provide the advice.
- 5.2 That advice set out a recommended approach for making the modification, including the use of safe harbour provisions under the regulations, which aligns with both the Public Contracts Regulations and the Procurement Act.
- 5.3 On which basis, there are no legal implications.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An EqIA has been undertaken and there are no equality implications.

7. Other corporate implications

- 7.1 It should be noted that in extending the DPS arrangement, this is to provide time to explore the opportunities under the Procurement Act 2023 for an arrangement, that whilst complying with the new regulations, provides the flexibility in tendering currently enjoyed.
- 7.2 As such work will continue, between the service, Public Transport, and Commissioning and Procurement, to determine a post Feb 2029 arrangement.

8. Governance

- 8.1 Subject to key decision, the extension report in respect of the DPS will be prepared by Commissioning and Procurement, to be approved by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport.

9. Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to:

EXTEND the current DPS framework for SS15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport from its current expiry of 31st December 2026 to 23rd February 2029.

ENABLE the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.

DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into

contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

10.0 Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
EqIA

11. Contact Details

Report Author: Phil Lightowler Head of Public Transport Telephone number: 03000 414073 Email: philip.lightowler@kent.gov.uk	Director: Haroon Chughtai Director of Highways and Transport Telephone number: 03000 412479 Email: haroon.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

DECISION NO:

25/00078

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: To extend current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework SS 15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to:

- EXTEND the current DPS framework for SS15096 Supported Local Bus & Home to School Transport from its current expiry of 31st December 2026 to 23rd February 2029.
- ENABLE the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.
- DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

The current DPS framework expires on the 31st of December 2026 and under the new Procurement Act 2023, there is no like for like replacement. To provide suitable time for alternative procurement frameworks to be fully explored and a new commercial strategy to be developed, it is proposed to extend the current DPS to 23rd February 2029. Such an extension is allowed under the Procurement Act 2015

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal is being considered by members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- Procuring under PCR15
- Dynamic Markets
- Open Frameworks

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date ..

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

SS15096 Supported Local Bus and Home to School Transport DPS

Responsible Officer

Tim Edwards - GT TRA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Phil Lightowler - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Public Transport

Responsible Head of Service

Phil Lightowler - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age under the Education Act 1996. As the Local Transport Authority, KCC also has a duty under the Transport Act 1985 to provide socially necessary public passenger transport services where the requirements for such would not otherwise be met, for example by a private or commercial operator.

The annual budget for supported local bus services is £6.2M and the budget is held by GET. The annual budget for mainstream home to school transport is £13.5M and held by CYPE.

This leads to a need to contract from bus and coach operators (known as Public Service Vehicle Operators (PSV)), be it for a local registered bus service or a contract transporting children from their home to a local school.

The majority of the requirement is centred on local registered bus service, with the smaller requirement being contracted home to school transport workings.

The Supported Local Bus (including Kent Karrier) and Home to School Transport Services DPS was established as a route to market to meet both of these obligations. This route to market was determined

following a full review of the procurement options/frameworks available to the service. It sought feedback from other local authority transport teams, in particular their preferred procurement routes and benefits. Approval of the route to market involved full engagement with a range of stakeholders across the authority.

The DPS allows the Public Transport Team to run competitive and PCR2015-compliant tenders with pre-qualified Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators for the provision of bus and coach services.

The DPS commenced on 1st January 2017 with a 10-year lifespan and estimated total value of £100 million and stands to conclude on 31st December 2026.

When the DPS was set up in 2016, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 applied. However, as of 24th February 2025, any new procurement or purchasing mechanism is subject to the Procurement Act 2023, which provides new procurement processes but does not have a directly comparable replacement for Dynamic Purchasing Systems. Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23), there is no longer the option to establish new Dynamic Purchasing Systems. However, two new arrangements were introduced: Open Frameworks and Dynamic Markets. These options have been explored and assessed, and it has been determined by Commissioning and Procurement that they are not currently viable routes to market for this service. In addition, 'Guidance: transitional and saving arrangements' was published to advise on managing the changeover from the previous legislation, including the lifespan of extant DPSs. With the current DPS set to expire at the end of next year, several options for fulfilling KCC's statutory obligations have been identified and evaluated.

2The service, following consultation with colleagues in Commissioning and Procurement, still believe that a DPS provides a procurement framework, that meets its needs in terms of being procurement compliant, is resident/client focused, is flexible, is resource efficient, allows planned tendering but also short term tendering, even for urgent needs. Allows direct award de-minimus contracts, which are useful in this arena. Therefore to not have a comparable replacement for the DPS under the new Procurement Act 2023, poses a risk to how the service tenders transport and ultimately users.

This is not an issue unique to Kent, a number of local transport authorities (those tender transport contracts) have conveyed to national government the risk of not having a DPS replacement and the limits that the procurement options available bring to transport tendering. It is hope that this may see changes brought forward by national government. The recognition of this gap in the Procurement Act has led to the allowance for DPSs to continue under transitional provisions until 23 February 2029.

Options to extend the DPS were not published within statutory notices, as traditional extensions typically do not apply to this form of purchasing mechanism as they do to Framework Agreements and Contracts. The spend to date is approximately £65 million over the first eight years.

DPSs live at the time the new Act came into effect must expire by no later than 23rd February 2029. The current termination date is 31st December 2026, but can be varied as described in Section 34 and regulation 72, of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Extending the term of the current DPS would minimise service disruption by retaining processes which KCC staff and Suppliers are already familiar with. Additionally, it offers relative stability in the medium-term, while the potential impacts of Local Government Reform crystallise. Whilst this still does not directly resolve the matter of the route to market beyond 23rd February 2029, it does offer an interim solution which can be delivered, while work progresses to develop a longer-term commercial strategy.

Section B – Evidence
Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?
Yes
It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?
No
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
No
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Yes
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
Commissioning and Procurement Democratic Services Childrens and Young People Legal
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
Extension of the DPS will enable the service to procure the transport services residents/clients need in a prompt manner, without undue delay and in a procurement compliant manner.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 9 September 2025

Subject: **To extend current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework SS15124 Home to School Transport (taxi)**

Key Decision: **25/00079**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: **N/A**

Future Pathway of Paper: **For Cabinet Member Decision**

Electoral Divisions Affected: **All**

Summary:

The current DPS framework expires on the 31st of December 2026 and under the new Procurement Act 2023, there is no like for like replacement. To provide suitable time for alternative procurement frameworks to be fully explored and a new commercial strategy to be developed, it is proposed to extend the current DPS to 23rd February 2029. Such an extension is allowed under the Procurement Act 2015.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to:

- **EXTEND** the current DPS framework for the Home to School Transport (taxi) SS 15124 from its current expiry of 31st October 2026 to 23rd February 2029.
- **ENABLE** the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.
- **DELEGATE** authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.
- **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since the 1st of January 2017, the procurement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) /Adult Social Care (ASC) transport has been through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR2015). This

framework for procurement was chosen following an exhaustive evaluation and it was chosen for the flexibility it provided for procurement, especially at short notice.

- 1.2 The DPS is due to expire on the 31st of October 2026 and Public Transport alongside colleagues in Procurement and Commissioning have been examining the options available under the Procurement Act 2023.
- 1.3 Under the new act there is no comparable replacement for a DPS and so, to provide further time to evaluate a new commercial/procurement strategy, this paper seeks to extend the current DPS from 31st October 2026 to 23rd February 2029. Under the Procurement Act, any DPS extension must be made by 23rd February 2026, and the latest it can run is to 23 February 2029.

2. Background

- 2.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age under the Education Act 1996. In addition, under Adult Social Care, it supports clients with transport to a range of support functions.
- 2.2 The annual budget (based on 25/26) for Home to School Transport SEN transport is £83.9M and is a budget within Children's, Young People and Education (CYPE). The cost of transport for Adult Social Care sits across a range of services within the ASC directorate.
- 2.3 The Home to School Transport (taxi) DPS, was put in place to enable the service to procure contracted services, for vehicles with 8 seats or less. Although named taxi, the framework is open to operators with hackney carriage (taxi), private hire, school only private hire or bus operators focused on specialist services.
- 2.4 The framework is used to procure transport for children and adults, covering SEN school transport, SEN Further Education (FE) transport, Adult Social Care and specialist educational support. These are bespoke transport arrangements, which could be a single trip, a range of trips or a fixed period, up to several years.
- 2.5 Due to the nature of the transport required, tenders can be on a planned cycle i.e. transport into one educational establishment every three years, to a need that has to be covered in 24 hours. Tenders can be released to the market in lots or as single needs. The volume of tenders is significant and there are service agreements in place with both CYPE and Adult Social Care, in respect of transport response times.
- 2.6 The DPS allows the Public Transport Team to run competitive and PCR2015-compliant tenders with pre-qualified operators.
- 2.7 The framework was determined as the most effective route to market in 2016. This determination was made, based on how transport contracts were tendered, the timescales sometimes involved, and the volume of tenders undertaken. In addition, feedback was sought from other local authority transport teams, in particular their preferred procurement routes and benefits of. Approval of the route to market involved full engagement with a range of stakeholders across the authority

- 2.8 When the DPS was set up in 2016, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 applied. However, as of 24th February 2025, any new procurement or purchasing mechanism is subject to the Procurement Act 2023, which provides new procurement processes but does not have a directly comparable replacement for Dynamic Purchasing Systems. Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23), there is no longer the option to establish new Dynamic Purchasing Systems. However, two new arrangements were introduced: Open Frameworks and Dynamic Markets. These options have been explored and assessed, and it has been determined that they are not currently viable routes to market for this service. In addition, 'Guidance: transitional and saving arrangements' was published to advise on managing the changeover from the previous legislation, including the lifespan of extant DPSs. With the current DPS set to expire at the end of next year, several options for fulfilling KCC's statutory obligations have been identified and evaluated.
- 2.9 Working alongside colleagues in Commissioning and Procurement, the service still believes that a DPS provides a procurement framework, that meets its needs in terms of being procurement compliant, flexible, allows planned tendering but also short-term tendering, even for urgent needs. Therefore, to not have a comparable replacement for the DPS under the new Procurement Act 2023, poses a risk to how the service tenders transport and ultimately users.
- 2.10 This is not an issue unique to Kent, several local transport authorities (those tender transport contracts) have conveyed to national government the risk of not having a DPS replacement and the limits that the procurement options available bring to transport tendering. It is hoped that this may see changes brought forward by national government. The recognition of this gap in the Procurement Act has led to the allowance for DPSs to continue under transitional provisions until 23 February 2029.
- 2.11 DPSs live at the time the new Act came into effect must expire by no later than 23rd February 2029. The current termination date is 31st October 2026, but can be varied as described in Section 34, and regulation 72 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.
- 2.12 Extending the term of the current DPS would minimise service disruption by retaining processes which KCC staff and Suppliers are already familiar with. Additionally, it offers relative stability in the medium-term, while the potential impacts of Local Government Reform crystallise. Whilst this still does not directly resolve the matter of the route to market beyond 23rd February 2029, it does offer an interim solution which can be delivered by Place CPD and managed by the Public Transport team, while work progresses to develop a longer-term commercial strategy.

3 Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications from this extension of the DPS.
- 3.2 The DPS continues to provide value for money, as all tenders issued through the framework are subject to market testing. In that every tender issued, is seen by every supplier on the framework, so all suppliers can bid for each tender. Lowest compliant tender, based on price, wins the tender and bidders are ranked, based on their price. There is no automatic annual inflation uplift provided to contracts (only price change at re-tender). The framework allows the packaging of tenders to be varied and to undertake re-tendering, in response to change circumstance.

4. Options (other options considered but discarded)

- Procuring under PCR15
- Dynamic Markets
- Open Frameworks

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Appropriate legal advice was taken in respect of extending the current DPS until 23rd February 2029. Advice was sought from KCC's legal team, and an appropriate legal organisation was commissioned to provide the necessary advice.
- 5.2 That advice set out a recommended approach for making the modification, including the use of safe harbour provisions under the regulations, which aligns with both the Public Contracts Regulations and the Procurement Act.
- 5.3 On which basis, there are no legal implications.

6. Equality implications

- 6.1 An EqlA has been undertaken and there are no equality implications.

7. Other corporate implications

- 7.1 It should be noted that in extending the DPS arrangement, this is to provide time to explore the opportunities under the Procurement Act 2023 for an arrangement, that whilst complying with the new regulations, provides the flexibility in tendering currently enjoyed.
- 7.2 As such work will continue, between the service, Public Transport, and Commissioning and Procurement, to determine a post 23rd February 2029 arrangement.

8. Governance

- 8.1 Subject to key decision, the extension report in respect of the DPS will be prepared by Commissioning and Procurement, to be approved by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport.

9. Recommendation

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to:

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to:

- EXTEND the current DPS framework for the Home to School Transport (taxi) SS 15124 from its current expiry of 31st October 2026 to 23rd February 2029
- ENABLE the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.
- DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision as shown at Appendix A.

10. Appendices

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- EqlA

11. Contact Details

Report Author: Phil Lightowler Head of Public Transport Telephone number: 03000 414073 Email: philip.lightowler@kent.gov.uk	Director: Haroona Chughtai Director of Highways and Transport Telephone number: 03000 412479 Email: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL –PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osbourne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

DECISION NO:

25/00079

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: To extend current Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework SS15124 Home to School Transport (taxi)

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to:

- EXTEND the current DPS framework for the Home to School Transport (taxi) SS 15124 from its current expiry of 31st October 2026 to 23rd February 2029.
- ENABLE the development of an appropriate commercial strategy, taking account of the procurement options available under Procurement Act 2023.
- DELEGATE authority to the Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to approve the DPS extension report, as prepared by Commissioning and Procurement.
- DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision

Reason(s) for decision:

The current DPS framework expires on the 31st of December 2026 and under the new Procurement Act 2023, there is no like for like replacement. To provide suitable time for alternative procurement frameworks to be fully explored and a new commercial strategy to be developed, it is proposed to extend the current DPS to 23rd February 2029. Such as extension is allowed under the Procurement Act 2015.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposal will be considered by Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9th September 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- Procuring under PCR15
- Dynamic Markets
- Open Frameworks

Any interest declared when the decision was taken, and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

SS15124 Home to School Transport Taxi DPS Extension

Responsible Officer

Tim Edwards - GT TRA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Phil Lightowler - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Public Transport

Responsible Head of Service

Phil Lightowler - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council (KCC) has a statutory duty to provide home to school transport for eligible children of compulsory school age under the Education Act 1996. In addition, under Adult Social Care, it supports clients with transport to a range of support functions.

The annual budget (based on 25/26) for HTST SEN transport is £83.9M and is a budget within CYPE. The cost of transport for Adult Social Care sits across a range of services within the ASC directorate.

The Home to School Transport (taxi) DPS, was put in place to enable the service to procure contracted services, for vehicles with eight seats or less. Although named taxi, the framework is open to operators with hackney carriage (taxi), private hire, school only private hire or bus operators focused on specialist services.

The framework is used to procure transport for children and adults, covering SEN school transport, SEN FE transport, Adult Social Care and specialist educational support. These are bespoke transport arrangements, which could be a single trip, a range of trips or a fixed period, up to a number of years.

Due to the nature of the transport required, tenders can be on a planned cycle ie transport into one

educational establishment every three years, to a need that has to be covered in 24 hours. Tenders can be released to the market in lots or as single needs. The volume of tenders is significant and there are service agreements in place with both CYPE and Adult Social Care, in respect of transport response times.

The DPS allows the Public Transport Team to run competitive and PCR2015-compliant tenders with pre-qualified operators.

The framework was determined as the most effective route to market in 2016. This determination was made, based on how transport contracts were tendered, the timescales sometimes involved and the volume of tenders undertaken. In addition feedback was sought from other local authority transport teams, in particular their preferred procurement routes and benefits of. Approval of the route to market involved full engagement with a range of stakeholders across the authority.

When the DPS was set up in 2016, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 applied. However, as of 24th February 2025, any new procurement or purchasing mechanism is subject to the Procurement Act 2023, which provides new procurement processes but does not have a directly comparable replacement for Dynamic Purchasing Systems. Under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA23), there is no longer the option to establish new Dynamic Purchasing Systems. However, two new arrangements were introduced: Open Frameworks and Dynamic Markets. These options have been explored and assessed, and it has been determined by Commissioning & Procurement that they are not currently viable routes to market for this service. In addition, 'Guidance: transitional and saving arrangements' was published to advise on managing the changeover from the previous legislation, including the lifespan of extant DPSs. With the current DPS set to expire at the end of next year, several options for fulfilling KCC's statutory obligations have been identified and evaluated.

Working alongside colleagues in Commissioning and Procurement, the service still believe that a DPS provides a procurement framework, that meets its needs in terms of being procurement compliant, flexible, allows planned tendering but also short term tendering, even for urgent needs. Therefore to not have a comparable replacement for the DPS under the new Procurement Act 2023, poses a risk to how the service tenders transport and ultimately users.

This is not an issue unique to Kent, a number of local transport authorities (those tender transport contracts) have conveyed to national government the risk of not having a DPS replacement and the limits that the procurement options available bring to transport tendering. It is hoped that this may see changes brought forward by national government. The recognition of this gap in the Procurement Act has led to the allowance for DPSs to continue under transitional provisions until 23 February 2029.

DPSs live at the time the new Act came into effect must expire by no later than 23rd February 2029. The current termination date is 31st October 2026, but can be varied as described in Section 34, and regulation 72, of the Public Contract Regulations 2015.

Extending the term of the current DPS would minimise service disruption by retaining processes which KCC staff and Suppliers are already familiar with. Additionally, it offers relative stability in the medium-term, while the potential impacts of Local Government Reform crystallise. Whilst this still does not directly resolve the matter of the route to market beyond 23rd February 2029, it does offer an interim solution which can be delivered by Place CPD and managed by the Public Transport team, while work progresses to develop a longer-term commercial strategy.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost-effective way?

Page 140

Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
No
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Yes
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
Commissioning and Procurement Democratic Services Children and Young People Legal
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
No
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
In extending the DPS it will enable the service to procure the transport services needed by residents/clients in a timely, efficient manner and in a procurement compliant manner. The alternative would be an elongated process that could lead to significant delays in providing transport services.
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex

No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

This page is intentionally left blank

From: Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Simon Jones, Corporate Director Growth Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee

Subject: Transport for the South East – KCC endorsement of Transport Strategy for the South East

Key decision Decision No: 25/00080

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Leader decision

Electoral Division: All divisions

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) was a founding member of the Sub-national Transport Body (STB), Transport for the South East (TfSE), participating and funding TfSE since 2017 (decision 16/00120). A further decision (20/00010) was taken in July 2020 to support the TfSE Proposal to Government for Statutory Powers, including endorsing its first Transport Strategy. These decisions were taken by the Leader as they concern participating in a partnership listed in KCC's constitution.

Despite not achieving statutory status, TfSE, like all STBs except Transport for the North (TfN) as the only statutory body, has continued as a voluntary partnership and KCC agreed to this approach with the Leader decision 22/00023 in March 2022. TfSE has continued to receive funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) alongside the annual contributions from its constituent authorities. The Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) was adopted in January 2023 (endorsed in the Leader decision 22/00114). Note that all decisions to date have been by previous Leaders of KCC. The TfSE Board agreed in July 2024 to update its Transport Strategy, which was subject to public consultation from December 2024 to March 2025. KCC, as a member of the Partnership Board, is now being asked to endorse this new Transport Strategy. Therefore, the Leader will need to make the decision on whether or not to do so.

KCC had input to the draft Transport Strategy through KCC's then representative (Former Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, David Robey) sitting on the Transport Strategy Member Task and Finish Group, as well as at officer level through the Transport Strategy Working Group and Senior Officer Group. KCC also responded to the consultation, being broadly positive at the overall ambition and aims of the Strategy and how it accorded with Kent's own recently adopted statutory Local Transport Plan 5. However, the response asked for some changes and also flexibility in the timeline to adoption given the large scale changes across local government in the region.

The final version of the Transport Strategy has been reviewed and is considered to have adequately addressed KCC's consultation response. TfSE's preferred approach

is to proceed with the updated Transport Strategy and address any issues as a result of changes to local government later as a separate workstream.

Recommendation:

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Leader on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (Appendix A):

As Leader of the Council, I agree to:

1. ENDORSE the new Transport Strategy for the South East prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE) and support TfSE with its implementation; and
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take the actions required to support TfSE with the implementation of the strategy, subject to the Council's decision-making procedures.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

1. Background

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is the largest single constituent member of the Sub-national Transport Body (STB), Transport for the South East (TfSE) and provides an annual contribution of £58,000 towards its operating costs. Match funding is provided by other constituent County Councils and Unitary Authorities, whilst the Department for Transport (DfT) provides the main portion of funding, which in the 2025/26 Financial Year is £2.16m.
- 1.2 The first Key Decision was taken by the then Leader on 8 December 2018 (16/00120) to agree to KCC's participation in TfSE as an informal non-statutory body, and to further work to establish TfSE as a statutory STB. It is therefore listed as a voluntary partnership in KCC's constitution and so decisions pertaining to it are required to be made by the Leader of KCC.
- 1.3 TfSE applied to the Secretary of State for Transport to be granted Statutory Status. KCC's Leader took a further decision (20/00010) on 10 July 2020 to:
 - Consent to Transport for the South East's Proposal to Government for powers in addition to the general powers of a Sub-national Transport Body and endorse the Transport Strategy for the South East as part of this proposal.
 - Participate in, and cooperate with, Transport for the South East in accordance with the powers requested from Government and those powers operating concurrently with Kent County Council as Local Highway Authority and Local Transport Authority.

- 1.4 TfSE was unsuccessful in securing these powers as government did not want to make any other STBs statutory bodies, other than the existing statutory Transport for the North (TfN). TfSE therefore continued as a voluntary partnership and the Leader of KCC took a further decision (22/00023) in March 2022 to agree to this continued partnership working. TfSE has considered making a further bid in due course; however, as part of a review of its function and role no further bid is currently under consideration. Government has continued to provide funding to TfSE, including for the development and adoption of its Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) which required a decision (22/00114) by the Leader of KCC to endorse it in January 2023. Since then, TfSE has used its funding to progress implementation of its SIP and for research on topics ranging from EV charging to decarbonisation, as well as for setting up the Centre of Excellence (a repository of webinars, guidance and other materials for use by constituent members). Note that all decisions to date have been made by previous Leaders of KCC.
- 1.5 Since the adoption of the original Transport Strategy in 2020, much has changed in terms of the context of transport in the South East. There has been a change in national government and consequently national policies, changes to the travel market due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, new trading arrangements post-Brexit, and many of TfSE's constituent members have updated their own Local Transport Plans (including KCC). This has prompted TfSE to refresh its own Transport Strategy. KCC now needs to decide whether to endorse the new Transport Strategy, which will allow KCC's representative on the TfSE Partnership Board (the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) to vote on the new Strategy at the Board meeting on 27 October 2025. The Proposed Record of Decision is **Appendix A** to this report.

2. Summary of the new Transport Strategy

- 2.1 The full draft final Transport Strategy for the South East as presented to the TfSE Partnership Board at its meeting on 21 July 2025 is **Appendix B** to this report. It is summarised as follows.
- 2.2 The Transport Strategy consists of four sections. Firstly, TfSE's role is set out as well as the context for refreshing the Transport Strategy (such as policy and government changes, travel impacts arising from Covid-19, and impacts on trading post-Brexit). It also describes the characteristics of the region and the challenges currently faced (including poor east-west connectivity, stagnating productivity, and a lack of funding for transport interventions).
- 2.3 The next section sets the Vision for the Strategy alongside three goals (economic, social and environmental):

Our Vision is for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in achieving sustainable, net zero carbon growth.

- 2.4 This then leads to the five Missions that the Strategy prioritises for achievement by 2050, namely:
- **Strategic Connectivity** – to boost connectivity in the South East by enhancing strategic regional corridors to ensure all communities and

businesses have access to high-quality, convenient and resilient transport links and key services, for people and goods.

- **Resilience** – focuses on safeguarding and enhancing the resilience of the South East’s transport network to ensure reliable and smooth journeys for all users.
- **Inclusion and Integration** – to create an inclusive, affordable, and integrated transport network across the South East, providing safe, secure, and seamless door-to-door connectivity for everyone.
- **Decarbonisation** – supporting the South East’s transition to net zero by 2050 by enabling the shift to cleaner transport, promoting sustainable travel choices, and adopting new technologies that reduce emissions and improve quality of life — in a way that is affordable, fair, and accessible to all.
- **Sustainable Growth** – to champion transport interventions that unlock investment, enable sustainable growth, and create healthy, vibrant, well-connected communities in the South East.

2.5 Each of the missions is supported by its desired outcomes, and short- and long-term priorities that will see those outcomes delivered. Those priorities may include some specific schemes, although the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) is the separate document where all proposed project interventions across the region are listed.

2.6 The final section explains the approach to the delivery of the Strategy, including challenges and opportunities that may arise. The emphasis is on the need to work in partnership across the region, not just as TfSE but with other organisations and companies – such as utilities, universities, transport service and infrastructure providers, and government. It includes the specific role TfSE will undertake in relation to each mission. For example, for Strategic Connectivity, TfSE will support the development of business cases for schemes in the SIP, deliver on the recommendations of their studies, work with government and local partners to develop a coherent pipeline of infrastructure investment, and so on.

2.7 The framework for monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy is also included, using measures such as journey time reliability, number of passengers using ‘Smart Ticketing’, and reduced delays on the highways network due to poor weather.

3. Transport Strategy consultation and general feedback

3.1 TfSE consulted on their draft strategy for 12 weeks from December 2024 through to March 2025. Feedback was received from 742 individuals and 69 organisations, with 94% of organisations and 74% of individuals who responded either strongly supporting or supporting the vision and goals in the strategy.

3.2 Amongst organisations, support was especially high. 79% of organisations agreed on the challenges compared with 62% agreeing among those individuals who responded.

3.3 All five proposed missions – strategic connectivity; resilience; inclusion and integration; decarbonisation; and sustainable growth – garnered broad support from respondents (84–94% among organisations; 65–84% among individuals).

3.4 Additional themes raised during the consultation included health and wellbeing, active travel and connectivity. The full consultation report can be viewed in [Appendix 2 to the TfSE Partnership Board paper](#) from the 21 July 2025 on the progress with the new Transport Strategy (page 6 of the document linked).

4. KCC consultation feedback and how it has been addressed by TfSE

4.1 The consultation was undertaken prior to the most recent local government elections. An officer response was drafted in line with the recently adopted Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5) after having sought input from officers across Highways and Transportation. An All Member briefing was then held and led by the then-Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Neil Baker. An officer from TfSE presented the Transport Strategy and then KCC officers provided an overview of the proposed consultation response, followed by an opportunity for questions. All comments made by KCC Members were noted and incorporated into a revised response, which was signed off through the officer chain of delegation before being submitted to TfSE in March 2025. KCC's consultation response is included as **Appendix C** to this report.

4.2 KCC's consultation response is summarised as follows:

- Asked for greater emphasis on the importance of addressing the growing highways maintenance backlog.
- Considered that many of the contextual issues raised are national issues without specific local resolutions.
- Questioned whether now was the right time for a full refresh of the Transport Strategy given the forthcoming significant challenges of Devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and disparity in whether local elections were to be held across the region.

4.3 The response followed the questionnaire format prescribed and so highlighted the most important priority for each of the missions from KCC's perspective. For example, the restoration of international rail services from both Ebbsfleet and Ashford under the "Strategic Connectivity" mission, and securing sustainable funding for maintenance under "Resilience" were KCC's top priorities.

4.4 The response also provided some comments on the missions, such as critiquing that the constituent authorities of TfSE do not have sufficient control over all the activities proposed, and that certain priorities should not be a priority for our region – specifically the extension of the Bakerloo Line in south east London as it is not guaranteed to release capacity/train paths to Kent (as it mostly benefits London) and is a considerably expensive scheme outside of the TfSE region.

4.5 Overall, the draft was an ambitious strategy that broadly aligned with Kent's own LTP, set a bold vision for how the region's transport networks should function, but was overly reliant on third parties to be successful (such as utilities).

4.6 The changes TfSE have made to the draft as a result of all consultation feedback are:

- References to more recently published policy, such as [UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy](#) and the [Integrated National Transport Strategy](#). Reference has also been made to the mix of authorities on the Devolution Priority Programme across the region and how that will change governance structures.
- Change of emphasis from the economic goal of competing in the global marketplace to building a sustainable, inclusive and resilient economy.
- Other slight changes in emphasis for priorities, such as changing “Expanding rail capacity to support growth at Gatwick and Southampton airports” to “Providing adequate rail capacity and connectivity to support growth...”
- The Decarbonisation mission has been toned down to remove the aspiration to make the South East a global leader and instead support the transition to net zero in a way that is affordable, fair and accessible to all. The outcome is therefore to make progress towards decarbonisation rather than to achieve net zero for surface transport by 2050. This recognises the point KCC made that many of the factors influencing this are outside of TfSE’s direct control.
- Reference to the Bakerloo Line Extension as a priority project has been removed at KCC’s request.
- Recognising the need to make schemes affordable and accessible to all, and reflecting how TfSE can work with partners on capability and capacity building through its Centre of Excellence.

4.7 The changes made have alleviated many of the concerns raised in KCC’s consultation response and now the tone of the Transport Strategy more coherently reflects the range of views across the region. It sets a bold vision for transport across the region and the thematic content is in alignment with the aims of our of [Local Transport Plan 5: Striking the Balance](#).

4.8 The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal has also been updated to reflect the changes since the draft Transport Strategy was assessed. None of the conclusions are affected as a result of the updates and it remains the case that more detailed appraisal will need to take place at the individual project level. The updated Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is available as **Appendix D** to this report.

4.9 The Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) lists specific project interventions that support the delivery of the Transport Strategy. The SIP will be updated in due course and brought forward for a further decision by the Leader of KCC.

5. Legal implications

5.1 TfSE will remain a non-statutory, informal and voluntary partnership that KCC participates in. There are no legal implications of the planned decision.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 KCC contributes £58,000 per year to fund TfSE. All constituent upper tier Local Transport Authorities in the TfSE partnership make this £58,000 a year contribution with Unitary Councils each contributing £30,000. The Department for Transport (DfT) provides the majority of funding support to TfSE, which varies annually but is usually in excess of £1m and most recently to the value of £2.16m within the current Financial Year 2025/26.
- 6.2 There are no additional financial implications to KCC of taking the decision to endorse the new Transport Strategy.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 The Transport Strategy is accompanied by an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, including an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) as shown in Appendix D. None of the outcomes in the strategy were predicted to have a negative effect on any protected characteristic. However, depending on the design of individual project interventions there may be positive and negative impacts. Each will need to undertake their own EqIA in future. **Appendix E** is the EqIA of KCC endorsing TfSE's Transport Strategy.

8. Data Protection implications

- 8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not required as this decision does not require the processing of personal data.

9. Governance

- 9.1 The Leader's endorsement of TfSE's Transport Strategy will inform KCC's position at the TfSE Partnership Board. The Board will consider adopting the Strategy at its meeting on 27 October 2025, subject to the endorsement received from constituent authorities, including KCC. The Council's representative on the Board (the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) will participate on the Board, in line with the endorsed position. Any work arising from the TfSE Partnership Board that requires further action or decision by KCC will be subject to the appropriate governance processes and approvals in accordance with the Council's constitution.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 TfSE has updated its Transport Strategy following a public consultation on a new draft strategy. KCC's response to the consultation has been considered by TfSE in finalising the new Transport Strategy, alongside responses from other member authorities, other organisations, and members of the public. A Key Decision is required by the Leader of KCC as it relates to an external partnership listed in KCC's Constitution as to whether KCC endorses the new Transport Strategy.
- 10.2 By endorsing the Transport Strategy, KCC will benefit from being a part of the voice of the wider South East when the new Transport Strategy is presented to

government. Schemes/interventions in the Transport Strategy that are in Kent will therefore have increased visibility with the Department for Transport.

11. Recommendation

- 11.1 The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Leader on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (Appendix A) to:

As Leader of the Council, I agree to:

1. ENDORSE the new Transport Strategy for the South East prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE) and support TfSE with its implementation; and
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take the actions required to support TfSE with the implementation of the strategy, subject to the Council's decision-making procedures.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

12. Background Documents

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B: TfSE's Final Transport Strategy
- Appendix C: [KCC response to TfSE Draft Transport Strategy](#)
- Appendix D: [TfSE Final Integrated Sustainability Appraisal](#):
- Appendix E: EqIA for KCC endorsing TfSE's Transport Strategy

13. Contact Details

Relevant Director:

Haroona Chughtai, Director of Highways and Transportation

03000 412479

haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Leader of Kent County Council

DECISION NO:

25/00080

For publication**Key decision: YES****Subject Matter / Title of Decision :**

Transport for the South East – KCC endorsement of Transport Strategy for the South East

Decision:

As Leader of the Council, I agree to:

1. ENDORSE the new Transport Strategy for the South East prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE) and support TfSE with its implementation; and
2. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take the actions required to support TfSE with the implementation of the strategy, subject to the Council's decision-making procedures.
3. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016 amended the Local Transport Act 2008 to allow the creation of Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs). Transport for the South East (TfSE) was established in 2017 and is a partnership of 16 Local Transport Authorities.

In December 2024, TfSE published a draft new Transport Strategy given the significant changes in context since 2020, such as the implementation of Brexit, changes in government policy, and changes in travel patterns post-pandemic. TfSE have now refined the Transport Strategy following consideration of the responses received in the public consultation and have put it forward for a vote to adopt it as their new Transport Strategy at the Partnership Board meeting on 27 October 2025.

As a named partnership, it is set out in the Council's constitution that the Leader has responsibility for decisions on TfSE and therefore will need to decide whether to endorse this new Strategy so that KCC's representative (the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport) at the TfSE Partnership Board can vote (aligned with the Leader's Decision) on its potential adoption by TfSE.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

TfSE consulted on the draft Transport Strategy from 10 December 2024 to 7 March 2025. KCC responded to this consultation. TfSE analysed the results and amended the final Transport Strategy accordingly.

The proposed key decision will be taken to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 9 September 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

To not endorse the Transport Strategy would mean voting against it at the TfSE Partnership Board

meeting on 27 October. If a weighted majority of the Board voted in favour of the Strategy, then KCC would be in a position where it did not support a Strategy that may form the basis of future funding and investment decisions that could affect Kent. Given that the Transport Strategy accords with KCC's own statutory Local Transport Plan 5 and that KCC's consultation comments have been addressed, this option was discounted.

Another option would be for KCC's Board Member to raise a motion for further amendments to the Transport Strategy to be made before coming forward later for endorsement. This would rely on the motion being carried. For the same reasons as above, this option was discounted.

The only other option would be to cease participation in TfSE altogether. This option has been discounted because it is not strictly the subject of this decision and further work on the ramifications of such a decision would need to be undertaken.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None.

.....
signed

.....
date

Revised version of the Draft Transport Strategy approved by the TfSE Partnership Board - 21 July 2025.

Transport Strategy for the South East

Draft Final Transport Strategy

July 2025

Foreword

Cllr Keith Glazier, Chair, TfSE and Leader, East Sussex County Council

We know that transport is integral to how we live, work, develop and enjoy the place we live in. It has never been more important to create a South East where transport enables and empowers local people. That's why I am proud to present this new Transport Strategy for the South East. .

This Strategy sets out our partnership's shared vision for the South East which sets out how a better integrated and more sustainable transport network across our region can deliver a higher quality of life for everyone who lives, works, has a business, or visits the South East.

The world has changed since we adopted the first Transport Strategy in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic legacy has shaped how we work and travel in ways we could have never foreseen. Businesses have had to adjust to new trading arrangements with international markets – especially through our major international ports and airports.

Government policy has changed significantly. A variety of national transport strategies and documents have been published on everything from railway to buses and active travel. There have also been announcements in other related policy areas such as planning, climate change, and economic development

The publication of UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy establishes a new framework for the delivery of nationally significant infrastructure projects, and commits to speeding up delivery Our strategy compliments this approach by providing identifying the priority outcomes we are seeking to achieve.

We welcome the development of the Integrated National Transport Strategy, which seeks to bring coherence across transport modes

and regions. Our own Strategy will support and complement this national framework by ensuring the South East's priorities are clearly articulated and grounded in strong evidence.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) itself has grown as an organisation during this time. We have developed a Strategic Investment Plan, setting out our priorities for transport infrastructure investment, as well as strategies on Future Mobility, Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure and Active Travel. We have developed our in-house analytical capability and launched our Centre of Excellence to build the capability of our local transport authorities.

Throughout all of this, one thing has remained constant – the need for continued, sustainable investment in the South East's transport infrastructure and services in order to improve people's lives, support businesses and tackle climate change through our 2050 Vision.

We have co-created this strategy with our partners based around the delivery of five Missions which will best address the key challenges the region faces and have the biggest impact.

These Missions are:

- Improving strategic connectivity between our major urban areas and with international gateways, especially by public transport, which is crucial for economic growth.
- Improving the resilience of the transport network, so that it offers reliable journeys and can respond to current and future risks to its operation.
- Tackling the inclusion and integration challenges facing our communities, such as transport-related social exclusion and providing a joined-up transport network to enhance connectivity and improve people's lives.

- Decarbonising our surface transport network, which is essential if we are to meet our climate change goals.
- Achieving sustainable growth through planned housing and employment growth which has sustainable transport at its heart.

We are under no illusions as to the scale of the change that is needed to achieve these Missions. We need to think big and deliver at pace. This requires new thinking, the identification of new funding sources and the sharing of best practice to unlock the delivery challenges ahead.

The English Devolution White Paper poses both challenges and opportunities to the delivery of this strategy. Especially considering that two areas in the South East: Sussex and Brighton and Hampshire and the Solent, are part of the Devolution Priority Programme. This Strategy provides a basis on which TfSE can work together with partners, including new Strategic Authorities and Councils to deliver on shared priorities. We will work with national and local government and our key partners to deliver our Missions as we strive towards achieving the economic, social and environmental goals embodied in our 2050 Vision.

This Strategy has been shaped through extensive consultation, including engagement with socially excluded groups, over 1,500 public survey responses, and detailed input from our Transport Forum, expert working groups, and local leaders. We are grateful to everyone who contributed their time and insights. Your feedback has been invaluable in helping us refine our approach and ensure this Strategy meets the region's needs.

If we get this right, the prize is huge – emitting less carbon, creating more sustainable and healthy communities, growing businesses, and increased prosperity across the region.

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Transport Strategy for South East England, developed by Transport for the South East (TfSE), presents an ambitious Vision for the region as a global leader in sustainable prosperity and quality of life.

With its vital economy, rich heritage, and proximity to London and mainland Europe, the South East plays a key role in connecting Britain to the world. This Strategy seeks to enhance the region's strategic connectivity, resilience, integration, decarbonisation, and sustainable growth.

TfSE, as the Sub-national Transport Body for the South East, unites 16 local transport authorities and partners to deliver a cohesive, evidence-based approach to transport.

Established in 2017, TfSE's Mission is to grow the South East's economy through a safe, sustainable, and integrated transport system that enhances residents' quality of life and protects the environment. TfSE's governance and regional expertise allow it to advocate effectively for the South East, aligning transport initiatives with local and national priorities.

Since the first Transport Strategy in 2020, the context has evolved significantly. National and local policy changes, intensified decarbonisation efforts, post-Brexit trade dynamics, and shifts in travel behaviour due to the pandemic all present new challenges. Additionally, TfSE's expanded evidence base has provided critical insights into the region's transport needs, informing this Strategy's updated priorities.

Key regional challenges underscore the case for action. Rising congestion, carbon emissions, transport-related social exclusion, and housing affordability issues demand a targeted, mission-driven approach. This refreshed Strategy outlines coherent "Missions" that

provide a Route Map to achieve the region's Vision, delivering significant value to the South East's economy and quality of life.

This Strategy focuses on areas needing urgent action, where TfSE is uniquely positioned to drive change. Recognising financial constraints, TfSE's approach emphasises practical, achievable solutions, aiming to maximise the impact of available resources. Developed through rigorous evidence gathering and stakeholder engagement, this Strategy presents a framework for action to meet the region's most pressing transport challenges.

In addition to the Strategy, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Statement have been prepared to assess the Strategy's impact on Sustainability Goals, including biodiversity, health, and access equity.

Vision and Goals

Our Vision is for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in achieving sustainable, net zero carbon growth.

To achieve this, we will develop a resilient, reliable, and inclusive transport network that enables seamless journeys and empowers residents, businesses, and visitors to make sustainable choices.

We will deliver this Vision by driving strategic investment and forging partnerships that deliver sustainable transport, integrated services, digital connectivity, clean energy, and environmental enhancement.

Our Vision is supported by three Goals that reflect the three pillars of sustainable development:

- **Economic Goal:** Improve productivity and attract investment to grow our economy in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

- **Social Goal:** Improve health, safety, wellbeing, quality of life, and access to opportunities for everyone.
- **Environmental Goal:** Protect and enhance the South East's unique natural and historic environment, while supporting a just transition to net zero.

Our Strategy is built on six Principles that guide us toward our Vision and Goals. These Principles have been applied across many aspects of this Strategy and help us stay focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the South East. These Principles are outlined below:

- **Vision and Validate:** Instead of planning based on current travel trends, this approach envisions a desired future and creates the transport system to achieve it, focusing on long-term sustainability and resilience.
- **Triple Access Planning:** This Principle expands accessibility by considering not only physical transport but also digital and social factors, ensuring a more inclusive and connected transport system.
- **Movement and Place:** Roads and streets are designed not only for efficient transport but also to enhance the surrounding areas, balancing the needs of movement with creating vibrant, liveable spaces.
- **User Hierarchy:** By prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport over cars, this Principle promotes safer, more sustainable urban environments by designing infrastructure to reflect these priorities.
- **Avoid – Shift – Improve:** A Strategy to reduce transport carbon emissions by avoiding unnecessary travel, shifting to lower-carbon transport modes, and improving the efficiency of remaining high-carbon modes.

- **Environmental Net Gain:** New transport developments should leave the environment better off than before by enhancing biodiversity, using sustainable design, and integrating green solutions into infrastructure projects.

Missions

TfSE has prioritised five Missions to drive progress toward its Vision. Each Mission serves as a clear call to action, emphasising tangible outcomes, setting direction, and aligning with national and local priorities. The Missions are:

- Strategic Connectivity.
- Resilience.
- Inclusion and Integration.
- Decarbonisation.
- Sustainable Growth.

The Missions have been carefully chosen to address key areas where the South East risks lagging behind without decisive action, focusing on issues where TfSE can play a strategic, impactful role. Each Mission follows a structured Route Map that clarifies the path forward. These Route Maps contain:

- **Mission Statement:** Outlining the core aim and urgency for each Mission.
- **Desired Outputs and Outcomes:** Defining tangible targets to measure success.
- **Context:** Outlining why each Mission is important to the South East and has been selected for this Strategy.
- **Short and Long Term Priorities:** Highlighting key interventions to achieve the desired results, including schemes from the SIP.

- **Supporting Context:** Providing detailed challenges, theories of change, and cross-references to SIP indicators for monitoring and evaluation.

This approach ensures that each Mission is robust and adaptable to different scenarios, enabling TfSE and its partners to respond effectively to emerging needs while driving meaningful progress across the region's most pressing transport challenges.

Strategic Connectivity Mission

Mission Statement

This Mission aims to boost connectivity in the South East by enhancing strategic regional corridors to ensure all communities and businesses have access to high-quality, convenient and resilient transport links and key services, for people and goods.

Success will mean that key towns, cities, and international gateways are as accessible by public transport as they are by car, with rail freight becoming as competitive as long-distance road freight.

Outcomes

The core Goal is to increase the modal share of both passenger and freight journeys using sustainable travel options on strategic corridors connecting the South East's major economic centres and international gateways.

Achieving this modal shift will reduce congestion, improve air quality, enhance safety, and support economic growth, particularly in rural and coastal areas. Strengthened demand for public transport will place bus and rail services on a more sustainable financial footing, while making rail and bus travel as convenient and competitive as car journeys.

Short Term Priorities

The immediate focus is on improving the existing network to better serve both passengers and freight by:

- Enhancing incentives for long-distance public transport by optimising fares, ticketing, and on-board amenities.
- Refining timetables to support fast-growing markets like leisure travel and rescheduling maintenance to reduce disruption.
- Reinstating international rail services from Ebbsfleet and/or Ashford to relieve capacity at St Pancras.
- Providing adequate rail capacity and connectivity to support growth at Gatwick and Southampton airports.
- Safeguarding critical areas and aligning planning policies to enable future improvements.

Long Term Priorities

In the longer term, efforts will focus on major upgrades and expansions to address bottlenecks and improve connectivity by:

- Upgrading the South Coast's highway and rail corridors between Brighton and Southampton to strengthen economic ties between the region's two largest built-up areas.
- Reducing journey times between London and "left-behind" coastal communities
- Enhancing ferry access to islands, including the Isle of Wight.
- Strengthening freight corridors from Southampton and Channel Ports to the Midlands and North.
- Developing new rail connections to international gateways, including links to Heathrow and Gatwick.

- Reviewing regional rail connectivity to leverage opportunities presented by the opening of Old Oak Common and HS2.

Resilience Mission

Mission Statement

This Mission focuses on safeguarding and enhancing the resilience of the South East's transport network to ensure reliable and smooth journeys for all users.

Success will mean a transport system that has the capacity and agility to manage, absorb, and recover from major disruptions quickly – including disruption arising from associated power and digital networks.

Outcomes

The primary Goal is to reduce the effects of disruption across the strategic transport network – from extreme weather, planned works, or infrastructure failure – including on roads, railways, and critical assets such as bridges. Reliable and predictable journeys are essential for user confidence and economic productivity. A resilient network reduces the risk of failure, lowers long-term costs, and ensures essential services and goods keep flowing, even during periods of disruption.

A resilient network that is well-maintained reduces long-term costs for both users and the government. By focusing on resilience, resources can be reallocated to further network improvements, fostering economic growth and creating a cost-effective system for all stakeholders.

Short Term Priorities

Immediate efforts will strengthen the current network's resilience against both planned and unplanned disruptions by:

- Evaluating the economic impact of road disruptions and seeking sustainable funding to enhance maintenance.

- Establishing a long-term funding pipeline for infrastructure renewals.
- Strategically planning for future risks – including climate, land use, and technology – to ensure the network can anticipate and adapt to potential threats.
- Advocating for consistent funding for critical maintenance and preventative projects.
- Coordinating with utility providers on roadworks planning to complete essential maintenance with minimal disruption.

Long Term Priorities

In the longer term, efforts will focus on major upgrades and expansions to address bottlenecks and improve connectivity by:

- Reducing bottlenecks in key areas like Croydon and Woking to improve service reliability on major rail corridors.
- Developing secondary corridors, such as the Uckfield – Lewes line, to offer alternative routes and ensure continuous connectivity.
- Implementing the Kent Bifurcation Strategy and improving Enhancing Kent's to maintain traffic flow during cross-Channel disruptions. to alleviate pressure on the Thames crossings and improve resilience between Channel ports and the M25.
- Addressing pinch points on highways to improve flow for all users, including buses, and making key infrastructure more resilient to future risks.

Inclusion and Integration Mission

Mission Statement

This Mission aims to create an inclusive, affordable, and integrated transport network across the South East, providing safe, secure, and seamless door-to-door connectivity for everyone.

Success will mean that all residents can travel affordably, comfortably, and confidently, with high satisfaction across diverse user groups.

Outcomes

The Mission's core Goal is a transport system that is accessible, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all residents – particularly those most at risk of exclusion. Key outcomes include:

- Reduced Transport Related Social Exclusion, especially in rural and coastal areas.
- Higher satisfaction across all user groups, with a focus on accessibility and comfort.
- A network that is inclusive and safe for people with mobility and sensory needs.
- Improved safety and personal security, including progress toward "Vision Zero".
- Better public health, enabled by increased active travel and cleaner air.
- Reduced severance and improved public realm, supporting liveable neighbourhoods.
- A lower proportion of household income spent on housing and transport.

Infrastructure Priorities

Delivering these outcomes will require targeted infrastructure upgrades, with priorities including by:

- Designing infrastructure using inclusive design principles that cater to socially excluded groups, enhancing accessibility for those with disabilities and limited mobility through improved lighting, wayfinding, and public spaces.
- Improving connectivity in areas at risk of social exclusion, focusing on North and East Kent and coastal East Sussex to ensure that residents have reliable access to key services.
- Upgrading Interchanges and Step-Free Access at transport hubs, facilitating smooth connections and enhancing comfort with better signage, seating, and safe, comfortable waiting environments.

Fares, Ticketing, and Service Priorities

Interventions to improve affordability and accessibility include by:

- Delivering affordable fares and concessions for low-income residents, students, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups.
- Improving fares and ticketing by simplifying journeys and lowering costs with a unified ticketing structure across modal and institutional boundaries.
- Delivering Socially Necessary Transport Services (potentially demand responsive) to connect isolated communities with essential services.
- Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and exploring models like franchising to meet community needs.
- Enhancing connectivity to Islands and Peninsulas, particularly the Solent and Medway areas.

Decarbonisation Mission

Mission Statement

This Mission supports the South East's transition to net zero by 2050 by enabling the shift to cleaner transport, promoting sustainable travel choices, and adopting new technologies that reduce emissions and improve quality of life — in a way that is affordable, fair, and accessible to all.

Outcomes

The Goal of this Mission is to help the South East make meaningful progress toward decarbonising transport, in line with national policy and public expectations. This includes ensuring the vast majority of surface transport trips made across the South East are net zero emission by 2050, while not exceeding our carbon budgets for surface transport by the same date.

Another key goal to ensure the transition to cleaner transport is affordable, fair, and accessible — ensuring no communities are left behind.

Key outcomes include:

- A complete shift to zero-emission vehicles, supported by national and local targets.
- Increased use of sustainable modes like walking, cycling, bus, and rail, especially for short and medium-length trips.
- Decarbonisation of freight, including mode shift to rail and adoption of clean fuels and logistics.
- Reduced reliance on fossil fuels, with transport emissions falling in line with the region's carbon budget.
- A fair and affordable transition that benefits all communities and supports green jobs and investment.

Short Term Priorities

We will accelerate the transition to low-carbon transport by:

- Rolling out EV charging infrastructure to support rapid EV adoption.
- Supporting uptake and recycling of cleaner vehicles and batteries.
- Making public transport more affordable and appealing, especially buses.
- Helping operators transition to zero-emission fleets.
- Expanding walking, wheeling, and cycling routes.
- Promoting liveable neighbourhoods that reduce car dependency.
- Addressing affordability barriers to low-emission transport.

Long Term Priorities

We will solidify the transition to a zero-emission system by:

- Decarbonising rail through electrification and clean fuel technologies.
- Developing new rail and mass transit schemes to support modal shift.
- Ensuring power networks are clean, resilient, and ready for transport electrification.
- Reducing embodied carbon in transport infrastructure.
- Exploring fair, future-ready approaches to road user charging.
- Supporting alternative fuels for sectors harder to electrify, such as aviation and freight.

Sustainable Growth Mission

Mission Statement

This Mission aims to champion transport interventions that unlock investment, enable sustainable growth, and create healthy, vibrant, well-connected communities in the South East.

Outcomes

The Mission's core objective is to support sustainable population and economic growth by ensuring that transport infrastructure aligns with major developments, particularly in public transport and active travel.

The desired outcomes include:

- Provision of high-quality public transport and active travel networks to support major developments.
- Improved access to key services and employment within a 30-minute journey by sustainable modes.
- Increased number of new homes located close to frequent, reliable public transport, reducing car dependence.
- Integration of urban design features that promote physical activity, public health, and inclusive access.
- Creation of vibrant, well-connected communities with maintained access for those who need to drive.

Integrated Land Use Priorities

Achieving sustainable growth requires integrated land use and transport planning, alongside effective funding mechanisms by:

- Focusing development in areas with planned or existing transport links, including new towns, urban extensions, regenerated brownfield sites, and mixed-use communities.
- Aligning housing and transport planning by coordinating efforts across authorities.

Transport Intervention Priorities

The Mission also prioritises essential transport projects to support sustainable growth by:

- Expand concessionary fare schemes to make public transport more affordable.
- Develop mass transit and Bus Rapid Transit systems in major centres.
- Upgrade suburban rail services, particularly in the Solent and Sussex Coast.
- Embed walking and cycling infrastructure into new developments and local plans.

Enablers

Achieving these Goals requires sustainable funding sources and regulatory support, including:

- Using funding tools like value capture and road user charging to forward-fund transport projects.
- Implementing fair demand management tools, such as workplace parking levies or clean air zones.
- Strengthening local planning capacity to ensure timely, effective decisions.
- Aligning with emerging planning reforms to support environmental net gain alongside growth.

Delivery

TfSE is committed to turning its ambitious Vision for the South East into action, building on the foundation provided by its Strategic Investment Plan and Delivery Action Plan.

TfSE is committed to keeping its Strategy relevant and effective. Following this refreshed Strategy, the SIP will be updated to align with the new Missions. TfSE also plans to refresh the Transport

Strategy every five years, ensuring its approach remains adaptable to evolving challenges and opportunities.

TfSE recognises the successful delivery of this Strategy relies on collaboration across various stakeholders. TfSE will therefore drive policy prioritisation, stakeholder engagement, scheme development, and advocacy, while supporting local partners to build capacity in preparation for evolving governance structures, including the formation of Strategic Authorities. Local Transport Authorities will also play a crucial role, especially in delivering highway and public transport projects, while national infrastructure managers (Network Rail and National Highways) will lead major interventions on the railway and strategic road network. Private sector entities, including bus and rail operators, are also essential partners in delivering services and innovations.

Delivering meaningful change requires overcoming significant challenges, including financial constraints, fragmented resources, and increasing demand for public services. TfSE and its partners must embrace innovative solutions such as "beneficiary pays" models, greater devolution, and rail reform to secure sustainable funding. Where demand management tools are proposed, TfSE will work with partners to ensure these are fair and proportionate. Collaboration across all levels of government, transport operators, and the private sector is essential to achieve the region's Goals.

TfSE will support its partners with tools such as scheme development funding, the Centre of Excellence, and its enhanced Analytical Framework, which underpins all major decisions from decarbonisation to freight planning. Regular updates to the Delivery Action Plan and the biennial State of the Region Report will ensure its strategies remain adaptable and focused on delivering tangible benefits.

Through this approach, TfSE is working to create a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable transport network – unlocking economic

growth, enhancing accessibility, and tackling climate change for the benefit of the South East and its communities.

Part 1 | Introduction

Introduction

This is the Transport Strategy for South East England, prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE), the region's Sub-national Transport Body. This first Chapter of the Strategy outlines the context in which this Strategy has been developed.

The South East of England is Britain's gateway to the world. Its dynamic economy, scenic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and proximity to London and mainland Europe make it one of the most prosperous and desirable regions for living, working, and visiting in Britain.

This Strategy outlines a Vision for the South East to be recognised globally for achieving sustainable prosperity and the highest quality of life. It builds on the previous Strategy that was published in 2020 and is underpinned by over seven years' extensive technical work.

Its mission-driven approach sets a Route Map for achieving this Vision through improving strategic connectivity, strengthening resilience, enhancing integration, decarbonising the transport system, and unlocking sustainable growth.

Our role

TfSE brings together 16 local transport authorities, as well as representatives from district and borough councils, protected landscapes, business representatives, National Highways, Network Rail and Transport for London, harnessing a wide range of local and regional expertise. Established in 2017, TfSE's Mission is to grow the South East's economy by delivering a safe, sustainable, and integrated transport system.

This system aims to boost productivity and competitiveness, enhance the quality of life for residents, and protect the region's

natural and built environment. TfSE aspires to transform the quality of door-to-door journeys for residents, businesses, and visitors across the South East.

As a strategic body, TfSE plays a crucial role in adding value by ensuring that funding and strategic decisions about transport in the South East are informed by local knowledge and priorities.

Its comprehensive governance structure – combining political leadership, technical expertise, and stakeholder engagement – ensures that TfSE is well-placed to deliver for the region. This structure enables it to speak with one voice on behalf of the region, making a compelling case for investment in the region.

Changing context of the South East

Since its adoption in 2020, TfSE's first Transport Strategy has provided an ambitious Vision for the region's future. However, since its publication, the context within which the Strategy operates has changed. These changes broadly fall into three groups.

The first group relates to changes in national and local policies.

There have been major shifts in national and local policies that affect transport. New policies such as the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the Bus Back Better Strategy, and the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail have introduced new priorities and objectives that need to be integrated into the Strategy. More recently, the new government has outlined six Missions for the country, underpinned by five Strategic Priorities for the Secretary of State for Transport, which place significant emphasis on rail reform, sustainable economic growth, and transforming local transport. Significant reforms to the planning system and devolution are also expected.

The urgency of decarbonising the transport sector has intensified, with both national and local governments placing increased emphasis on reducing carbon emissions. While UK Greenhouse Gas emissions have halved since 1990, transport emissions have

only declined 15%. This Strategy therefore seeks to support the South East's transition to net zero.

The ongoing legacy of new trading arrangements between the UK and EU, particularly its effects on freight movements through the region's ports and airports, has introduced new challenges that were not fully anticipated in the 2020 Strategy. For example, in 2023 trade through the Port of Dover was around 20% lower compared to 2019 (UK wide, the comparable figure showed a 10% reduction). This Strategy addresses these economic shifts and ensures the region can adapt to new trade patterns.

At the local level, many authorities have adopted new Local Transport Plans and Local Plans, some of which introduce new Goals and infrastructure needs that should be reflected in this Strategy. The Strategy supports stronger alignment with these local policies, enhancing collaboration across the South East.

The second group relates to changes in travel behaviour, resulting from the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound and lasting impacts on travel behaviour and transport demand. Remote working, changes in commuting patterns, and shifts in the use of public transport versus private vehicles all demand a reassessment of the Strategy's assumptions and priorities. Despite some recovery, some train operators in the South East are carrying 30% fewer passengers today than they did before the pandemic. These post-pandemic realities must be fully considered to ensure the Strategy is future-proof.

The financial health of the bus and rail industries has deteriorated since 2020. In 2022/23, the UK rail industry collected 30% less revenue than in 2018/19, despite rising costs and inflation. Less money through fares, made worse by the pandemic and rising costs of running services, have led to cuts in services, leaving many communities with fewer public transport options.

Financial and capacity constraints in government funding have been made worse as inflation has put further pressure on public finances. With construction inflation reportedly exceeding 10% in 2022, it has become much harder for governments at all levels to invest in their priorities.

The structure of regional and local government is also changing, with a clear policy for increasing devolution across the South East. These changes present an opportunity to strengthen local leadership and align transport more closely with housing, energy, and growth priorities across the region.

The final group lies in the progress made since the publication of the first Strategy

TfSE has significantly strengthened its evidence base. TfSE has conducted extensive research, analysis, and engagement with key stakeholders across the region to develop area studies, thematic studies and a Strategic Investment Plan. This Strategy draws on insights from this technical programme of work that were not developed at the time of the original Strategy's publication, enabling us to take a more informed and targeted approach to addressing the region's transport challenges. The Strategy is also informed by the work of specialist working groups and studies, including an insightful commission into socially excluded groups, which highlighted important priorities that have been captured in the Transport Strategy.

The region has made progress in some areas, but in others, it has gone backwards. While we acknowledge that there has been significant progress in certain areas – for example, efforts to improve air quality by promoting clean air zones and rolling out cleaner vehicles have yielded positive results – new or intensified challenges have emerged. For example, the region's reliance on private cars has remained high. This continued reliance on cars makes it more challenging to reduce carbon emissions and congestion.

Case for action

The case for a refreshed Transport Strategy is clear.

While some aspects of our transport system have seen improvement since 2020, such as air quality in specific areas, many critical challenges have worsened, and new uncertainties have arisen. A proactive and flexible Strategy must tackle these challenges head-on.

To secure future funding and government support for transport services and infrastructure, we need to present a clear narrative for intervention.

This case must connect the region's current challenges, such as congestion and high carbon emissions, with the solutions we propose and the outcomes we aim to achieve. By addressing these problems, we can unlock the region's substantial potential in housing, employment, and economic growth.

In this Strategy, we present coherent "Missions" that provide route-maps for delivering the Vision.

They also show how TfSE's Vision and Goals are aligned with national objectives and ensure the South East delivers for the whole country – as a critical economic engine for the UK, a key player in international trade, and an area of substantial housing and job growth.

Ultimately, our case for change is grounded authoritative evidence – which is presented in our "Need for Intervention report" – along with in the belief that solving today's transport challenges will unlock tomorrow's opportunities.

By investing to deliver a modern and sustainable transport network, we can reduce emissions, ease congestion, and create a region that is economically resilient, environmentally sustainable, and a magnet for investment and innovation.

An overview of what TfSE considers to be the region's key transport challenges are presented below.

- **Productivity:** UK productivity has flatlined – Productivity per hour worked grew just 5% between 2010-20 – half the rate seen in Germany and the USA
- **International trade:** Trade volumes through Dover are down around 20% since the UK left the EU, and Eurostar no longer serves Ebbsfleet and Ashford.
- **Climate resilience:** There were more than 4 times as many delays to rail services in the South due to extreme heat in 2018 than in the 2000s.
- **Decarbonisation:** Transport accounts for 40% of carbon emissions in the South East (2022) – by far the largest contributor across all industries.
- **Housing affordability:** The house price to earnings ratio is over 10:1 in the South East – higher than any other region outside London.
- **Equitable prosperity:** The Gross Value Added per capita of less well-connected areas is less than half that of other areas and over 80% of Hastings' residents are at risk of Transport Related Social Exclusion.
- **East-West connectivity:** The average speed of passenger rail services on most East-West corridors is under 40mph – compared to 60mph on most London corridors.
- **Highway congestion:** The M25 carries over 220,000 vehicles a day – making it the busiest and one of the most congested roads in Europe.
- **Funding and delivery:** Construction inflation exceeded 10% in 2022, and local authorities have severe financial constraints making it hard to deliver capital projects.

- **Technology:** We do not have the luxury of time to rely on less mature technologies to solve these problems – some behaviour change is needed.

Focus of this Strategy

This Strategy focuses on areas where urgent action is most needed and where TfSE can make a difference. While the 2020 Strategy laid the groundwork, this updated Strategy focuses on specific priorities that have emerged from the region's changing context and where TfSE is well placed to help the region achieve its Vision and Goals.

We have structured this Strategy around a set of Missions, which are carefully designed to target the areas where we believe the most urgent action is required. Whether it's improving public transport, addressing the environmental impact of road traffic, or supporting the decarbonisation of our transport network, these Missions focus on delivering real, measurable change where it matters most.

These Missions also recognise the importance of fairness and affordability, ensuring that the benefits of transport investment are shared equitably

Furthermore, this Strategy places a stronger emphasis on delivery. While we recognise that the financial and operational capacity of the public sector is constrained, and additional government funding is uncertain, we are committed to driving bold action to achieve our Vision.

This Strategy provides a high-level framework for shaping the future of transport in the South East. It sets out the long-term vision, priorities and principles that will guide investment and policy decisions over the coming decades. While it does not list specific schemes for delivery, these are developed through our Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and a suite of supporting strategies, such as the Rail Strategy and thematic studies on freight, decarbonisation,

and rural mobility. Together, these documents form a cohesive programme of evidence-based planning. This Strategy informs those more detailed plans, and in turn is kept relevant through updates to them. As we move forward, we will refresh the SIP to align with the new Missions and priorities set out here. In doing so, we will remain focused on identifying practical, achievable solutions that deliver real-world benefits, even within a constrained financial environment.

How this Strategy was prepared

This Transport Strategy was developed through a structured process of evidence gathering, scenario planning, and stakeholder engagement, including input from socially excluded groups. The evidence base informed a clear Vision, Goals, and defined Missions, resulting in a Strategy that addresses the region's key challenges.

The Evidence Base Reports will be published alongside this Strategy and can be accessed at www.transportforthesoutheast.org.uk.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Statement were prepared alongside the 2020 Transport Strategy and have also been prepared for this Transport Strategy.

The appraisal examines the potential impacts this Strategy could have on a range of sustainability objectives, including economic, social, and environmental aspects. These include, but are not limited to biodiversity, habitats, carbon, the historic environment, health, and equality of access to opportunities.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal was also undertaken for each of the five Area Studies and covers the schemes that contributed to a

Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). A summary of the appraisal was published alongside the SIP and is accessible [here](#).

All the interventions outlined in this Strategy will undergo thorough the appropriate level of assessment (including environmental, equalities, and habitats regulations assessment) as and when schemes come forward. The same applies to Local Transport Plans in the South East as and when these are prepared.

Relationship to other strategies and plans

This Strategy has been designed to complement and build on national, regional, and local policies and strategies.

A diagram showing the relationship between TfSE and policies and strategies that will affect how each Mission is delivered.

- **National:** Integrated National Transport Strategy (expected later in 2025) Future of Freight: a long term plan (2022); Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021); Great British Railways: Williams Plan for Rail (2021); Road Investment Strategy 3 (2021); Bus Back Better (2021); Gear Change (2020).
- **Regional:** Transport Strategy (this document); SIP (2023 and to be refreshed by 2027); Delivery Action Plan (2023); Strategy and SIP Evidence Base (2023).
- **Local:** Local Transport Plans; Local Cycling and Walking Plans; Local Bus Service Improvement Plans; Local Plans, Regional Energy Strategic Plans.

At the same time, this Strategy seeks to influence the direction of these national, regional and local strategies as many of them will be critical in ensuring the Vision set out in this Strategy will be achieved.

Part 2 | Vision

Introduction

This Chapter outlines our ambitious Vision for 2050 and the Goals that underpin it, setting the foundation for a thriving South East that balances economic growth, social wellbeing, and environmental stewardship.

Our Vision is to create a region that not only leads the way in sustainable, net zero carbon growth but also offers its residents, businesses, and visitors the highest quality of life. This Vision is supported by three Goals, addressing the pillars of sustainable development: fostering a competitive economy, improving social outcomes, and safeguarding the region's natural and historic environment. Together, these Goals ensure that growth in the South East is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

To guide us in delivering this Vision and achieving these Goals, we have adopted six core Cross-Cutting Principles that reflect our commitment to forward-looking, evidence-based, and inclusive planning. These Principles are rooted in best practice and have been tailored to the needs of the South East to ensure every initiative we pursue contributes meaningfully to a prosperous and sustainable future.

2050 Vision and Goals

Our Vision is for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in achieving sustainable, net zero carbon growth.

To achieve this, we will develop a resilient, reliable, and inclusive transport network that enables seamless journeys and empowers residents, businesses, and visitors to make sustainable choices.

We will deliver this Vision by driving strategic investment and forging partnerships that deliver sustainable transport, integrated services, digital connectivity, clean energy, and environmental enhancement.

Our Vision supported by three Goals that reflect the three pillars of sustainable development.

- **Economic Goal:** Improve productivity and attract investment to grow our economy in a way that is sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.
- **Social Goal:** Improve health, safety, wellbeing, quality of life, and access to opportunities for everyone.
- **Environmental Goal:** Protect and enhance the South East's unique natural and historic environment, while supporting a just transition to net zero.

Cross-cutting Principles

Our Strategy is built on six core Principles that guide us toward our Vision and Goals. These Principles have been applied across many aspects of this Strategy and help us stay focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the South East.

1. By adopting a **Vision and Validate** mindset, we have taken a forward-looking approach to our Strategy, setting a clear Vision for the future and validating all initiatives against our Goals. This ensures that our actions drive meaningful progress toward our ambitions.
2. Through **Triple Access Planning**, we have expanded our understanding of accessibility by considering not only physical transport but also digital and social factors, making the transport network more inclusive and connected.
3. By applying the **User Hierarchy** set out in the Manual for Streets, in most environments we have prioritised the most vulnerable road users – i.e. pedestrians and cyclists – as well as more sustainable modes of transport – i.e. public transport – over private cars, and, in doing so, we promote safer, more sustainable outcomes.
4. The **Avoid-Shift-Improve** framework has guided our decarbonisation Strategy by encouraging us to focus on reducing emissions by avoiding unnecessary trips, shifting

to lower-carbon transport options, and enhancing the efficiency of remaining modes of transport.

5. In our first Strategy we introduced the **Movement and Place framework**, which states that roads and streets should serve more than just transport needs. Our approach balances efficient movement with creating vibrant, liveable spaces that enhance the quality of life.
6. Last but not least, and guided by our Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, we have embedded **Environmental Net Gain** into our thinking. We aim for every new transport project to leave the environment better off, enhancing biodiversity, using sustainable design, and integrating green solutions throughout.

Description of the Principles cited above:

- **Vision and Validate:** Instead of planning based on current travel trends, this approach envisions a desired future and creates the transport system to achieve it, focusing on long-term sustainability and resilience.
- **Triple Access Planning:** This Principle expands accessibility by considering not only physical transport but also digital and social factors, ensuring a more inclusive and connected transport system.
- **Movement and Place:** Roads and streets are designed not only for efficient transport but also to enhance the surrounding areas, balancing the needs of movement with creating vibrant, liveable spaces.
- **User Hierarchy:** By prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport over cars, this Principle promotes safer, more sustainable urban environments by designing infrastructure to reflect these priorities.

- **Avoid – Shift – Improve:** A Strategy to reduce transport carbon emissions by avoiding unnecessary travel, shifting to lower-carbon transport modes, and improving the efficiency of remaining high-carbon modes.
- **Environmental Net Gain:** New transport developments should leave the environment better off than before by enhancing biodiversity, using sustainable design, and integrating green solutions into infrastructure projects.

Part 3 | Missions

Introduction

This chapter outlines the five key Missions that TfSE will prioritise to achieve its Vision.

Each Mission presents a clear call to action, focusing on delivering tangible outcomes while providing direction and a sense of urgency.

They were chosen because they represent the key challenges identified in the Need for Intervention Report where we believe concerted action is needed to get the region “back on track” and realise its full potential. They also focus on topics where we believe a regional authority such as TfSE is well placed to make a material contribution in delivering them at a strategic level.

They are carefully aligned with both national and local priorities, ensuring a cohesive approach that resonates across all levels of government. Additionally, they are designed to inspire and encourage collaboration among partners, fostering a shared commitment to delivering meaningful progress.

Further details about the context of each Mission and the proposed interventions included in each Mission are outlined in **Appendix A**.

The Missions are:

- Strategic Connectivity

- Resilience
- Inclusion and Integration
- Decarbonisation
- Sustainable Growth

Further details about the context of each Mission and the proposed interventions included in each Mission are outlined in Appendix A.

Route Maps

The five Missions have been developed and presented using a Route Map approach. The key components of these are presented in the Strategy as follows:

- **Mission Statement:** which sets out a clear call to action, focusing on delivering tangible outcomes while providing direction and a sense of urgency.
- **Desired outputs and outcomes:** which define a set of tangible outputs required to achieve key outcomes.
- **Shorter-term and longer-term priorities:** which identify the key interventions (schemes and policies) required to deliver desired outputs and outcomes, referencing schemes in the SIP. These are also presented on a map.

Supporting this, **Appendix A** presents further detail:

- **Context:** Which provides further detail and evidence articulating the challenge and need for intervention.
- **Theory of change:** Which on a page summarise how the context and challenges have informed the intervention priorities, outputs, outcomes and impacts.
- **Interventions:** A cross-reference for how the schemes and policies in the SIP align to achieving our five Missions

- **Indicators:** A cross-reference for how indicators identified in the SIP and State of Region Report have informed the delivery, monitoring and evaluation of achieving the five Missions.

Route Map components:

- Context and challenges.
- Theory of change.
- Desired Outputs and Outcomes that define the success of the Mission.
- Priorities that outline how the Mission will be delivered.
- SIP Interventions.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

Appendix B presents TfSE's assessment of the impact of each Mission's Route Map against a set of Scenarios.

Strategic Connectivity

Mission Statement

We will boost connectivity in the South East by enhancing strategic regional corridors to ensure all communities and businesses have access to high-quality, convenient and resilient transport links and key services, for people and goods.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- The connectivity of all the South East's strategic corridors – in terms of journey times and reliability – is comparable to those corridors that serve London.
- Our key towns, cities, and international gateways are as accessible by public transport as they are by car, and rail freight is as competitive as long-distance road freight.

Content

Connectivity refers to the speed, frequency, and ease by which people and goods move between places. TfSE's focus is on strategic and regional connectivity, as local connectivity is led by our local authority partners.

TfSE has undertaken extensive research – including an Economic Connectivity Review and Strategic Corridor Evidence Base. This research has shown that many parts of the South East boast excellent rail connectivity to London, particularly towns and cities served by High Speed 1 and mainline railways. However, while radial connectivity to London is generally good, most orbital and East-West corridors – such as the A27/A259 corridor in Sussex and Kent – are poorly served. Often, it is faster to travel from one part of the South Coast to another via London or the M25 than directly along the South Coast's highway or railway corridors.

These connectivity gaps prevent communities along the South Coast from benefiting from agglomeration – the pooling and sharing of resources and talent that drives prosperity. This issue is particularly acute within the region's largest urban centres. For example, it takes longer to travel from Southampton to Portsmouth by train than from Southampton to Bournemouth.

Furthermore, communities that are comparatively less well-connected are less attractive to investors, visitors, and potential residents. This is particularly the case for coastal, island, and peninsula communities, which need to work harder to achieve the same socioeconomic outcomes as better connected places.

The region's international gateways also have connectivity gaps. Heathrow Airport has high public transport mode share for London journeys but very low beyond the capital. Some key ports are vulnerable to delays due to the current configuration of the highway network at multiple locations on the coast.

Similarly, some freight corridors (e.g. Southampton – Midlands/North, Kent Coast – Midlands/North) have capacity, gauge, and gradient constraints that will need to be addressed to

support growth and modal shift from highways to rail. Similar constraints exist on sections of the Strategic Road Network that serve nationally important freight corridors.

Addressing these connectivity challenges will require significant capital investment, and it is recognised this will take time to deliver and may need to come from a wide range of sources – including direct beneficiaries.

Outcomes

The key outcome of this Mission is to increase the modal share of both passenger and freight journeys using sustainable travel options on strategic corridors between the South East's major economic centres and international gateways. This will enable the South East's population and economy to grow while minimising the adverse impacts of transport on society and the environment.

Achieving this modal shift will help reduce congestion, improve air quality, reduce severance, improve safety, and contribute to the overall satisfaction of transport users. In turn, it should strengthen public transport demand and revenues, placing the bus and rail industries on a more sustainable financial footing.

This Mission also seeks to improve inclusive access to employment and services – especially in rural and coastal communities – by ensuring strategic corridors enable flexible, affordable, and frequent services that match the needs of today's travel patterns.

To achieve these outcomes, sustainable travel options – particularly railways at a pan-regional level – need to deliver journeys that are comparable in speed, convenience, affordability and comfort to car journeys. Additionally, the economics of rail freight need to become more attractive to industry compared to highway freight.

Short Term Priorities

TfSE's SIP outlines the schemes that we have prioritised for the South East. In this Strategy we highlight those schemes that have

the potential to make the greatest contribution to achieving the Strategic Connectivity Mission. Our immediate focus will be on improving the existing network to better serve passengers and freight and supporting public transport's recovery from the pandemic.

Key initiatives include:

1. Enhancing incentives for long-distance public transport use by better optimising fares, offering more flexible ticketing options, and enhancing the on-board experience (e.g. luggage space, catering, personal safety, information).
2. Refining timetables to better serve faster-growing markets, such as leisure travel. This could involve re-evaluating the timing of planned road and rail works to take advantage of quieter periods during the working week.
3. Delivering or initiating well-developed schemes that enhance road and rail connectivity. Notable examples include improving junctions on strategic highways corridors and known rail bottlenecks, such as at Croydon, which should release capacity for longer-distance rail services servicing the TfSE area.
4. Reinstating international rail services from Ebbsfleet and/or Ashford, recognising the challenges posed by changes in the UK-EU relationship but also noting capacity constraints at St Pancras, which could make Ebbsfleet a more attractive option for current and future operators.
5. Providing adequate rail capacity and connectivity to support growth at Gatwick and Southampton airports, both of which generally have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate service enhancements.
6. Planning for longer-term initiatives by safeguarding critical areas and aligning planning policies across all levels of government.

Long Term Priorities

In the medium to longer term, the focus shifts to more substantial upgrades and network expansions to address major bottlenecks and connectivity issues. Again, details of each intervention are documented in the SIP.

Key initiatives include:

1. Upgrading the region's key coastal corridor to match the standards of other strategic corridors, particularly between Brighton and Southampton. This includes faster regional rail services and longer-term improvements to the A27 and A259 corridors in Sussex (e.g. at Chichester, Worthing, Lancing and Lewes), bringing them closer to the standard of the A34 and speed of the current Cross Country rail route. These upgrades should be implemented in stages, possibly involving tunnelled solutions, while also enhancing the natural and built environment along the route.
2. Improving journey times between London/M25 and coastal communities like Hastings and North Kent, which face significantly longer travel times to London compared to nearby areas like Brighton and Ashford. This puts them at a structural disadvantage in terms of accessibility and opportunities.
3. Improving access to islands and peninsulas, notably through boosting Isle of Wight ferry services.
4. Strengthening strategic freight corridors, such as the Southampton–Midlands/North and Channel Ports–Midlands/North routes, as well as the highways serving these areas. Expanding the use of HS1 and the Channel Tunnel for rail freight may be an option, depending on how technology, logistics, and cross-Channel trade evolve.
5. Developing new rail connections to international gateways, including direct rail access to Heathrow Airport from the

South and West, and rail infrastructure investment near Redhill to enable direct Gatwick-Kent services.

6. Reviewing regional rail connectivity when Old Oak Common and HS2 open, potentially making it faster and more convenient to connect the Midlands and North to the South East via Old Oak Common or Heathrow Airport. This may offer opportunities to rethink the regional passenger rail map.

Case Study: Opportunities to enhance cross-regional connectivity through Heathrow and London

Strategic connectivity goes beyond the boundaries of the TfSE area, playing a crucial role in linking the South East to the rest of the UK and the world. Often, it's the connections at these boundary points that offer the greatest potential.

This is particularly evident at Heathrow and Old Oak Common. By the mid-2030s, Old Oak Common is set to become one of the most connected hubs in the country, with high-speed, high-frequency rail links reaching the North via HS2, the West via the Great Western Mainline (and potentially the Chiltern Main Line), London via the Elizabeth Line (with potential London Overground extensions), and direct links to the UK's busiest airport—Heathrow.

The proposed Heathrow Southern Rail scheme, which would connect the South West Main Line to Heathrow, presents a range of exciting possibilities for enhancing strategic rail connectivity.

These include:

- Direct Heathrow rail connections to Woking, Basingstoke, Guildford, and potentially towards Southampton, Portsmouth, Gatwick, and Brighton.

- Long-distance rail connections from Paddington and Old Oak Common to the Solent area and the West.
- A reimaged regional rail network, allowing many in the South East to use Old Oak Common as a high-speed gateway to the Midlands and the North.
- Opportunities for modal shift, potentially reducing reliance on the M25 for journeys between Surrey, West London, the Inner Thames Valley, and potentially the Chilterns and North West London.

Realising these opportunities would require alignment across multiple agencies, but the benefits would significantly strengthen the case for investing in improved infrastructure between London and the South East, as well as the longer-term development of Heathrow Airport.

Resilience

Mission Statement

We will safeguard the South East's connectivity and work to maintain and enhance the reliability and resilience of our transport systems for future generations. We will do this by anticipating risks, taking preventative measures, enhancing recovery and adapting in the face of uncertain future risks.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- The transport network delivers comfortable, reliable journeys between key towns, cities, and international gateways.
- The transport network has the capacity and agility to manage, absorb, and recover from major disruptions quickly – including disruption arising from associated power and digital networks.
- The risk of major failures occurring on the transport network is reduced.

Context

The resilience of the South East's transport network is vital to the region's economic, social, and environmental well-being.

The closure of key infrastructure – such as a road, railway, or bridge – can have far-reaching consequences, disrupting access to jobs, education, and services, while severely impacting freight and trade. For example, the failure of a coastal route or bridge due to extreme weather or erosion could isolate communities, increase congestion on alternative routes, and escalate economic losses. Such disruptions also erode public confidence in the system and may shift users away from sustainable travel options.

The South East's transport network faces mounting risks from climate change, severe weather, congestion, and high levels of use. Critical corridors, like the London-Brighton route, rely heavily on single highways and railways, making them particularly vulnerable to disruption. Ports like Dover and the Channel Tunnel compound this pressure, as congestion and trade frictions often spill onto regional road networks, affecting local communities and key routes.

A significant portion of the network, built in the 19th and 20th centuries, requires urgent maintenance and renewal. However, funding constraints have led to growing backlogs, leaving the network increasingly exposed. For instance, weather-related delays on the railways have doubled in the past decade, according to Network Rail. Addressing these vulnerabilities demands integrating resilience into infrastructure planning, ensuring it can adapt to future risks like rising sea levels, extreme weather, technological advancements, and socio-economic changes.

Building resilience will also require a collaborative approach. Strong partnerships with local authorities, national agencies, digital network providers, and utility providers are essential to managing immediate operational challenges and developing long-term strategies for water, power, and digital infrastructure. TfSE can play a key role in

advocating for resilient infrastructure investment and supporting partners in planning for diverse future risks.

Outcomes

The key outcome of this Mission is to reduce the effects of disruption on the strategic transport network from a variety of current and future risks, including extreme weather, deteriorating infrastructure, and planned maintenance..

In particular, we aim to avoid the loss or prolonged closure of critical transport assets – such as roads, railways, and bridges – due to risks like flooding, coastal erosion, subsidence, or extreme temperatures. The closure or failure of such assets can have far-reaching consequences: isolating communities, damaging local economies, diverting freight onto unsuitable routes, and increasing congestion and emissions elsewhere. Some infrastructure in the South East is already operating at or near capacity, and its vulnerability risks being exacerbated by climate change, and a deteriorating condition of transport infrastructure.

Reliable and predictable journeys are critical to user confidence and business productivity, and reducing delays will enhance the overall performance of both passengers and freight customers. Ensuring more predictable and reliable journey times will also support economic productivity, as businesses and individuals rely on consistent travel and delivery schedules.

Another key outcome is to reduce disruption for all users of the transport network during planned engineering works and maintenance. While such activities are essential for safety and performance, they can cause avoidable disruption if not effectively planned and communicated. Providing suitable alternative routes and travel options – both during planned works and unexpected incidents – will play a vital role in achieving this outcome.

Ultimately, a well-maintained and resilient network is not just a transport benefit – it also protects public services, economic

performance, and community cohesion. Preventative works can reduce the risks associated with infrastructure failure, including disrupted journeys, costly emergency repairs, and damage to property and vehicles.

Short Term Priorities

The immediate priority is to strengthen the resilience of the existing transport network, ensuring it can better withstand both planned and unplanned disruptions. This includes addressing current maintenance backlogs, improving traffic management, and making the network more reliable.

Key initiatives include:

1. Assessing the economic, social, and environmental impact of major network disruptions, such as the closure of roads, railways, or key structures, and use this evidence to build the case for targeted investment in resilience.
2. Securing long-term and consistent funding for a pipeline of infrastructure renewals and upgrades, reducing the risk of asset failure and avoiding costly emergency repairs. This will also reduce the cost of emergency repairs and vehicle damage and include adjacent systems to transport such as drainage, power, and digital infrastructure.
3. Developing a strategic understanding of future risks, including climate change, changing land use, and technological dependencies, to ensure today's decisions are robust under a range of future scenarios. Taking a strategic approach to resilience will ensure that the transport network can anticipate and adapt to the risks to its resilience in the future.
4. Making the case for, and securing, more and consistent funding for maintenance and enhancements, such as infrastructure adaptation, coastal erosion, and delivering nature-based solutions. Securing funding for urgent repairs

and preventative maintenance will ensure the network remains safe and operational, reduce the risk of infrastructure failures, and minimise disruptions from unplanned events.

5. Encouraging more joined-up actions with utilities operators and satellite navigation providers on roadworks planning and general traffic management. We can learn from best practice approaches from across the region, such as lane rental schemes, and work with navigation companies to ensure vehicles are directed on appropriate routes, both during roadworks and normal operations. This will ensure essential maintenance works are completed efficiently and with minimal disruption to users. It will also ensure the right vehicles are directed to the right roads, minimising impact on roadside communities, ensuring rural roads are not adversely impacted.

Long Term Priorities

In the medium and long term, the focus shifts to making more substantial upgrades that will increase the overall resilience of the network and build strategic resilience capacity. This involves expanding capacity at critical points and implementing strategic projects that reduce the impact of disruption.

Key initiatives include:

1. Addressing major bottlenecks on the region's busiest corridors, including in the Croydon and Woking areas, to improve the reliability of services on the region's busiest railways.
2. Expanding and strengthening secondary and alternative corridors, such as the Uckfield – Lewes Railway Reinstatement, Canterbury Rail Chord, and A22 and A24 Corridor Packages, to provide potential diversionary options when primary routes are closed or constrained.

3. Improving Operation Brock and Operation Stack in Kent by implementing alternative solutions to maintain traffic flow during cross-Channel disruptions, reducing congestion and delays on key routes for both passengers and freight.
4. Delivering the Kent Bifurcation Strategy to relieve pressure on existing Thames crossings and strengthen strategic connectivity and resilience between the Channel ports and M25.
5. Tackling pinch points on highways for the benefit of all road users, including bus services. This can be achieved through upgrading junctions and providing additional lanes for bus services and other sustainable travel options. It will ensure critical points more resilient to future risks, such as climate change, while exploring placemaking opportunities
6. Coordinating with other infrastructure sectors (e.g. utilities, digital, energy) to ensure interdependencies are understood and resilience is built in across systems. This includes working with them to plan for future requirements and risks. For example, ensuring the region's power networks have sufficient capacity and resilience to support the roll-out of electric vehicles.

Case Study: Delivering Kent's Bifurcation Strategy

Kent's strategic position between London and continental Europe has always made it vital to the resilience of the UK. This position has seen Kent secure investment in major schemes, recognising the benefits to local growth and communities, and the national economy.

As the shortest crossing point across the English Channel, Dover is home to the world's busiest Roll-On Roll-Off port, placing it at the forefront of recent challenges such as Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. Even in more stable times, the county's transport networks face regular strain from adverse weather events,

industrial action, and major events – all of which have the potential to disrupt ferry crossings and lead to traffic management issues. Nearby, the UK's only fixed link to continental Europe, the Channel Tunnel, with its terminal at Cheriton (Folkestone) can also be affected by these issues.

To strengthen resilience, authorities in Kent and Medway have established the Kent Bifurcation Strategy. This long-term Vision aims to reduce the burden on the M20 between Dover, the Channel Tunnel, and the M25, by utilising an upgraded M2/A2 corridor linked to a new Thames crossing. This is supported by improved connections between the M2/A2 and M20 corridors, and improvements in protocols to manage high traffic volumes during disruptions, such as Dover Traffic Assessment Project, Operation Brock, and Operation Stack. In the long term, the aim is to reduce the need for these protocols and/or develop an off-highway solution.

Key enhancements are needed to fully realise Kent's potential as a resilient transport hub. These include:

- Upgrades to the M2/A2 corridor, with targeted junction improvements to enhance safety and ease congestion, including improved connecting links to the M20 corridor to enable traffic to switch between the two strategic routes.*
- Dynamic traffic management capabilities to better distribute traffic between the M2/A2 and M20.*
- A The recently-approved Lower Thames Crossing to provide a step change in capacity and a resilient alternative to the over-capacity Dartford Crossing.*
- Increased lorry holding capacity to handle incidents and adapt to evolving EU customs controls, including the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and Entry-Exit Scheme.*

- Enhanced rail freight options on the HS1 and domestic rail network to utilise the substantial safeguarded capacity of the Channel Tunnel, diverting freight from the road network.*

TfSE's SIP includes these initiatives (and more) to build a resilient Kent, ensuring seamless UK-European connectivity into the future.

Inclusion and Integration

Mission Statement

We will create an inclusive and integrated transport network in the South East that enables affordable, safe, seamless, door-to-door connectivity for all users – including those currently underserved by the transport system.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- Everyone can affordably travel where they need to go when they need to go.
- Customer satisfaction with all aspects of the transport network is high across all sections of society.

Context

Creating an inclusive and integrated transport network should be a fundamental part of planning and decision-making. However, TfSE's engagement with socially excluded groups has revealed that many communities across the region still face barriers to access, putting them at risk of exclusion.

Although some progress has been made, parts of the South East's transport system remain physically and socially inaccessible and lack integration between services. This results in varied customer experiences, particularly around fares, information, and ticketing systems – issues that impact all users but are felt more acutely by some groups. Young people, for example, have highlighted difficulties in accessing direct bus services between smaller towns

and rural areas, making it challenging for them to access opportunities. These issues are particularly problematic where services cross local and sub-national government boundaries.

Disabled people face additional challenges. Those with mobility needs encounter physical barriers in stations and on vehicles, while people with visibility or cognitive impairments often struggle with inadequate navigation and information systems. There is also a recognised need for better staff training to support diverse needs, and for safety measures that address personal safety concerns, particularly in the evening.

Affordability is another key issue, as the cost of transport can disproportionately affect those on lower incomes or with additional travel needs, such as frequent medical appointments.

While concessionary travel schemes provide some support, many are inconsistently applied across the region. Given the constraints on public finances and the commercial pressures facing operators, this Strategy advocates for planners and operators to explore ways to increase public transport patronage along existing corridors, creating favourable conditions for more affordable fares.

Communities with poor connectivity and accessibility are particularly at risk of what is known as “Transport Related Social Exclusion” – a concept studied in detail by Transport for the North, whose work has highlighted several areas in South East England that are at greater risk of TSRE than most of the North of England.

Additionally, the rapid advancement of transport technologies, such as vehicle electrification and digitisation, could exacerbate inequalities if their benefits are not distributed equitably. It is therefore essential that decision-makers consider equity and inclusion impacts when implementing interventions to achieve other Missions, ensuring that the transition to a modern transport network benefits all parts of society.

TfSE is also engaging with the Rural Mobility Centre of Excellence, led by Transport East, to better understand the unique needs of rural communities across the South East. Guidance from the Centre – including resources available at www.transporteast.gov.uk/rural-transport – is helping inform our approach to tackling transport-related social exclusion in less connected areas.

Outcomes

The key outcome of this mission is a transport system that is fair, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all residents – particularly those currently at greatest risk of exclusion. This includes people on low incomes, older residents, disabled users, young people, and rural communities.

Specific outcomes include:

- Reduced Transport Related Social Exclusion – which particularly affects coastal and rural areas – through improving the accessibility of transport services and the improving the connectivity they deliver, particularly to parts of the South East at risk of exclusion.
- Increased customer satisfaction across all user groups, ensuring that everyone can access and use the transport network confidently and comfortably.
- A transport network that is accessible and safe for people with specific mobility and sensory needs.
- Improved safety across the transport network, aiming for a “Vision Zero” for killed and seriously injured incidents, as well as improvements in personal safety. This will be achieved through better infrastructure design, enhanced safety measures, and targeted initiatives that prioritise the safety of all users, especially vulnerable road users.

- Improvements in public health and wellbeing by enabling more journeys by active travel, promoting liveable neighbourhoods, and delivering improvements to air quality.
- Reduced severance and improvements to the public realm, creating more cohesive communities where residents can move safely and comfortably through shared spaces. This includes addressing barriers like busy roads and railway lines that can divide communities and hinder access to services.
- Reduced real-term percentage of household income spent on housing and transport costs, ensuring that residents have affordable access to housing and mobility options, making the region more equitable.

Infrastructure Priorities

The outcomes will be achieved through a combination of physical infrastructure upgrades, enhanced safety measures, and the reduction of barriers that limit access to transport and services.

Physical infrastructure interventions include:

1. Designing inclusive infrastructure with and for socially excluded groups using inclusive design principles, improved lighting, signage, and wayfinding. Enhancing connectivity to areas at risk of Transport Related Social Inclusion, including North and East Kent, the East Sussex coastline, and coastal communities in the Solent. Many of these interventions are cited in the Strategic Connectivity Mission.
2. Upgrading interchange facilities and implementing step-free access at stations and public transport hubs to provide seamless connections between different modes of transport and support the “first-mile-last-mile” elements of journeys. Enhancements such as better signage, increased seating, and protected waiting areas will make switching between services more comfortable and convenient for all users.

Fares, Ticketing, and Service Priorities

Fares and ticketing interventions include:

1. Providing socially necessary public transport services, such as demand-responsive transport, rural bus services, ferries to islands, and other options that connect isolated communities to the broader network. These services will ensure that all residents, regardless of where they live, have access to essential services and opportunities.
2. Expanding concessionary fares and capping schemes to improve affordability for people on low incomes, young people, and those not currently well served by existing offers. This will help reduce transport-related financial burdens and increase the use of public transport.
3. Implementing integrated fares and ticketing systems that allow passengers to travel across local government boundaries by multiple modes of transport using a single ticket or fare structure. This will simplify journeys, reduce costs for passengers, and make the transport system easier to use.

Service interventions include:

4. Delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans and supporting locally appropriate models such as franchising or municipal operators, especially where commercial services are unviable.
5. Enhancing inclusive access to islands and peninsulas, such as the Solent and Medway, through integrated ferry and bus services and better access to information. This will support social and economic inclusion for coastal and peninsula communities.

<i>Case Study: Inclusion and integration on the Isle of Wight</i>

The Isle of Wight faces unique transport challenges due to its geographical isolation, with ferry services acting as a critical lifeline to the mainland. In recent years, partnerships between the Isle of Wight Council, ferry operators, and community organisations have led to initiatives aimed at making these connections more accessible, integrated, and affordable.

Local residents benefit from discounted ferry fares, making regular travel for work, education, and healthcare more affordable. Ferry operators have also invested in accessible facilities, including step-free access and trained staff, ensuring that travellers with mobility challenges can travel with greater ease.

Efforts to improve transport integration have included aligning bus schedules with ferry timetables and introducing integrated ticketing, allowing passengers to purchase a single ticket covering both ferry and local bus travel. These measures support seamless journeys across the island and encourage the use of public transport. There has also been investment in improving interchange facilities, including the Ryde Transport Hub, which was funded by the South East Hampshire Rapid Transit project.

Further initiatives go beyond traditional transport interventions and focus on supporting residents' broader needs. Medical travel subsidies help islanders access essential healthcare on the mainland, and flexible freight services ensure local businesses can move goods efficiently.

These efforts have increased access to employment, education, and healthcare, while also boosting local tourism. Thanks to these efforts, bus use is markedly higher on the island compared to many more densely populated areas in the South East. The Isle of Wight's approach therefore serves as a model of inclusive transport, illustrating how tailored and integrated solutions can enhance quality of life for isolated communities.

Decarbonisation

Mission Statement

We will support the South East's transition to net zero by 2050 by enabling the shift to cleaner transport, promoting sustainable travel choices, and adopting new technologies that reduce emissions and improve the environment and quality of life.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- The South East makes meaningful progress toward decarbonising transport, in line with national policy and public expectations.
- All surface transport trips made across the South East are net zero emission by 2050 (at the latest).
- We have not exceeded our carbon budgets for surface transport by 2050.
- The transition to cleaner transport is affordable, fair, and accessible – ensuring no communities are left behind.

Context

The government, TfSE, and all local authorities in the South East are committed to achieving net zero transport emissions by 2050.

The ambition is not merely about reaching a final destination but involves adhering to a carbon "budget" and a carefully managed trajectory. These steps are vital to ensure that our total emissions are limited throughout the journey to net zero, in line with the global commitments to keep climate change within manageable limits. To reflect this ambition TfSE's policy statement on decarbonisation was updated and published in 2023 and has developed a Climate Action Plan and electric vehicle forecast studies for the region.

As a leader in global decarbonisation, the UK has made significant progress in reducing emissions, particularly in the energy sector. The rapid decarbonisation of the UK's energy networks has been a

critical success story, with a shift towards renewable sources like wind and solar power. However, despite this momentum, the UK's transport system is still significantly behind many of its peers. For example, only 38% of Britain's railways are electrified, in stark contrast to countries like Sweden, where over 75% of the rail network runs on electricity. Furthermore, the UK currently trails many European countries in the provision of electric vehicle charges – including Scandinavian countries, the Low Countries, and France. This disparity highlights the scale of the challenge ahead for decarbonising our transport systems.

Moreover, there are additional pressures where growth risks undermining decarbonisation efforts, particularly in aviation. For example, both Heathrow and Gatwick airports have ambitious plans to increase passenger numbers to a combined 200 million passengers per annum, which represents a 60% increase from current levels. Without significant changes, such growth could reverse the progress made in reducing emissions across other sectors.

It is therefore clear that the South East's transport system is not decarbonising quickly enough, while the threat of climate change is becoming increasingly urgent. We also must stay within the envelope set for total carbon emissions up to this point to ensure we stick to the carbon budgets agreed at multiple international conferences.

We recognise that we probably cannot rely solely on the market and technology to meet our targets, but clearly new technology will play a big role. We also recognise the need for ancillary industries – especially energy and, to a lesser extent, construction – to decarbonise in tandem with transport to achieve our Goal.

Outcomes

The key outcome of this Mission is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by transitioning to zero-emission vehicles and energy, increasing the use of sustainable travel modes, and reducing the

overall reliance on fossil fuel journeys – in a way that is affordable and fair for all residents and businesses.

By 2050, we aim for 100% of new private vehicles to be zero-emission, with intermediate targets of 35% by 2030 and 80% by 2040. Similarly, all buses will need to be zero-emission by 2035, and rail services decarbonised by 2050. Some local authorities in the South East want to move faster than the milestones set at a national level.

Part of this shift will include promoting active travel for short journeys and increasing the mode share of both bus and rail for longer journeys. This is especially important in the shorter term as it will help limit our emissions while most cars are still powered by fossil fuels.

Freight transport must also play its part in achieving decarbonisation. Through increased rail freight use, optimised logistics, and adapting clean technology and fuels, we will contribute to overall emission reductions in this critical sector. This will also help to ease pressure on the region's roads while supporting sustainable economic growth.

Decarbonising transport also presents opportunities to attract investment and support green jobs in the South East. These benefits will be realised as part of a balanced and affordable transition that works for residents and businesses alike.

Short Term Priorities

The immediate priority is to accelerate the transition towards a low-carbon transport network. Through improving provision for public transport and low carbon technologies, and encouraging a shift to low carbon forms of transport by:

1. Supporting the roll out of EV charging infrastructure on strategic networks and in local areas to support the rapid adoption of electric vehicles. This will ensure that private

vehicles and freight operations have easy access to charging, reducing range anxiety.

2. Supporting the transition to cleaner vehicles by working with manufacturers and fleet operators to increase uptake of zero-emission options where feasible.
3. Supporting the renewal and recycling of low emission vehicles and batteries by developing processes for recycling electric vehicle batteries and repurposing components to minimise the impact of low emission vehicle adoption.
4. Improving bus services by working with local authorities and bus operators to make bus services more affordable, reliable, and customer-focused to encourage a shift from car use to public transport.
5. Supporting local bus, freight, and ferry operators to transition to zero-emission vehicle fleets by providing financial and technical assistance to help replace diesel-powered buses with electric or hydrogen alternatives.
6. Developing local and regional active travel infrastructure by expanding walking, wheeling and cycling routes, making it safer and easier for people to choose active travel modes for short trips. This includes supporting schemes identified in the Regional Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.
7. Supporting sustainable neighbourhood planning with liveable neighbourhood Principles to ensure that residents can meet most of their daily needs within a short walk or cycle from home. This will reduce the need for longer car journeys and making communities more self-sufficient.
8. Identifying and addressing potential affordability barriers to low-emission transport, particularly for lower-income households and small businesses.

Long Term Priorities

In the longer term, the focus shifts towards transformative infrastructure projects and policy reforms that will accelerate momentum towards a zero-emission transport system.

Key actions include:

1. Decarbonising the railways through battery trains and rail electrification, ensuring that all rail services are powered by zero-emission energy sources.
2. Developing new rail schemes to support mode shift for passengers and freight, ensuring that rail becomes the preferred choice for long-distance travel and freight movement.
3. Implementing mass transit schemes, including Bus Rapid Transit, potentially Light Rail, and high-frequency urban rail services to improve public transport accessibility and reduce the need for private vehicle use in densely populated areas.
4. Supporting the greening of the grid to ensure low emission vehicles are powered by clean energy sources, aligning the transition to zero-emission vehicles with the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. This will ensure that the shift to electric vehicles leads to real reductions in emissions.
5. Supporting partners in reducing the embodied carbon of new infrastructure by encouraging the use of sustainable materials and construction methods. This will lower the lifecycle carbon footprint of infrastructure projects, ensuring decarbonisation extends to the construction and maintenance of transport development.
6. Exploring future national approaches to road user charging, ensuring any new models are fair, proportionate, and support sustainable travel choices.

7. Ensure the region's power networks have sufficient capacity and resilience to support the roll-out of electric vehicles, expansion of the rail network, and development – noting that power is one of the key constraints preventing significant expansion of passenger rail services.
8. Advancing research and delivery of alternative fuels by supporting innovation in hydrogen, biofuels, and other alternative energy sources for transport. This will be critical for decarbonising sectors that are harder to electrify, such as aviation and freight.

Case Study: A three-pronged approach to decarbonisation

Our decarbonisation Strategy is built around the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework, guiding us to reduce emissions through a balanced, pragmatic approach.

- **Avoid:** This element aims to reduce the need for unsustainable travel. While it's not about restricting long-distance journeys altogether, we recognise the environmental benefits of limiting certain trips until they can be fully decarbonised. With the growth of virtual tools, avoiding unnecessary journeys has never been more feasible.
- **Shift:** This focuses on moving travel demand to more sustainable modes. Our research shows that a small fraction of journeys—just 7%—make up half of a person's annual transport emissions. Shifting these trips to electrified or low-carbon alternatives could have a big impact. For example, when HS1 opened, Eurostar captured 80% of the London-Paris travel market, replacing one of Europe's busiest air routes. Local Plans provide further examples of this approach by ensuring developments have public transport and active travel connectivity.

- **Improve:** While not all modes of transport can be fully decarbonised today, advances in technology continue to make a difference. Sectors like aviation, maritime, and freight face greater decarbonisation challenges, yet modern aircraft are now four times more energy-efficient than early jet models. Research and development, along with future technologies such as carbon capture and offsetting, are essential for achieving true decarbonisation across all transport modes. Improvements can also be cascaded through existing fossil fuel powered fleets by prioritising higher efficiency engines.

Across the South East, we are already seeing this framework in action. Projects like the electrification of buses and rail in the Thames Valley, the Sussex hydrogen initiative on the south coast, and the decarbonisation of Isle of Wight ferries illustrate how the region is embracing all aspects of Avoid-Shift-Improve. Together, these efforts set a strong foundation for the South East to become a leader in sustainable transport.

Sustainable Growth

Mission Statement

We will champion transport interventions that unlock investment opportunities, enable sustainable growth, and create healthy, vibrant, and well-connected communities.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- Population growth and economic development in the South East is underpinned by sustainable transport and infrastructure,
- The South East has created well-connected, liveable communities with easy access to key services and employment opportunities.

Context

The Sustainable Growth Mission aims to deliver prosperity without harming the welfare of future generations. It supports the government's first Mission, to "kick start economic growth".

One of the key challenges this Mission seeks to address is the affordability of housing in the South East. Significant investment in housing stock will be needed to address this. Additionally, many of the South East's leading industries have ambitions to grow, but are constrained by the availability of well-connected sites.

The new government has committed to reinstating housing targets, aiming to build 1.5 million homes in England over the next five years, with a significant contribution expected from the South East. In the current planning system, only through close collaborative working are major developments realised.

Transport can unlock growth in jobs and housing by providing access to development sites while minimising environmental and social impacts on existing residents and businesses. Well-planned developments can enhance the region's transport systems by increasing public transport patronage and revenues.

Sustainable growth can unlock third-party investment in transport options, such as new railway stations and active travel facilities.

Transport can also enhance places. By moving heavy traffic away from urban centres, and by making the urban realm more attractive to pedestrians and cyclists, transport can create liveable neighbourhoods and boost the quality of the environment to attract investment back to commercial centres while improving health and welfare outcomes.

Outcomes

The key outcome of this Mission is that any major development is supported by improvements to transport infrastructure and services, especially for sustainable transport. It is also important that transport is seen as an enabler to sustainable growth, and not a blocker. To achieve this, we aim to significantly increase the

proportion of residents and jobs close to high-quality public transport and active travel networks, promoting sustainable travel choices.

Specifically, this Mission seeks to promote better integrated land use and transport planning, by:

- Ensuring all major developments (e.g. 3,000 dwellings, an expansion of more than 20%, considerable growth coming from multiple, closely located smaller sites, or a major generator/attractor of demand e.g. a new hospital or stadium) have high quality public transport services (2-4 services per hour) and high-quality active travel infrastructure.
- Increasing the percentage of the population and jobs within a 1,500-metre radius of a public transport access point offering a metro-level service frequency of at least four services per hour.
- Ensuring a higher percentage of the population can reach all key services by sustainable transport modes within a 30-minute travel time, whether by public transport, walking, or cycling. This includes access to healthcare, education, shopping, and leisure facilities.
- Promoting the development of well-connected new and growing places by aligning housing and employment growth with high-quality public transport and active travel corridors, as well as good highway access. This will support the creation of vibrant, sustainable communities where residents and businesses can thrive.
- Promoting liveable neighbourhood and healthy streets planning principles to increase the attractiveness of active travel in urban areas.
- Increasing the percentage of new dwellings within 10 minutes of metro-level public transport services and high-

quality active travel routes to ensure new developments are located in places that offer residents a wide range of sustainable travel options.

This mission also recognises the importance of designing places that promote public health through walkability and active travel, while ensuring access is maintained for those who need to drive.

Integrated Land Use Priorities

TfSE has long advocated for better integrated transport and land use planning. Achieving sustainable growth and creating well-connected communities requires a holistic set of interventions that focus on integrating land use and transport planning, delivering high-quality transit services, and enablers including sustainable funding mechanisms and demand management measures.

Key integrated land-use planning interventions include:

1. Delivering new and well-connected communities by focusing development in areas with existing or planned transport infrastructure.

This includes major new towns and extensions at locations such as Ebbsfleet, Basingstoke, and Mid Sussex, as well as the development of appropriately located mixed-use communities that are relatively dense and aligned with public transport corridors.

Priority should also be given to the regeneration of greyfield and brownfield sites (where these have reasonable transport access) to make efficient use of land and minimise the environmental impact of new development.

2. Integrating land use and transport planning to locate new developments where high-quality sustainable transport is viable – including active travel links that support public health and reduce the need to travel by car where possible.

Collaborating across planning authorities and standing ready (in the longer term) for possible governance changes, such as the formation of combined authorities, that will enable more effective coordination of housing, transport, and economic planning.

Transport Intervention Priorities

Key transport interventions include:

1. Expanding public transport concessionary fares schemes to make sustainable travel options more accessible and affordable.

Initiatives like the £3 bus fare cap will encourage greater use of public transport, particularly for shorter journeys, helping reduce congestion.

2. Developing mass transit systems in major population centres, such as Solent, Sussex Coast, North Kent, Gatwick Diamond, Blackwater Valley, and Thames Valley – alongside delivering Bus Service Improvement Plans across the region.

TfSE has undertaken benchmarking studies that show many places in the South East have the scale and density to support sustainable, high-quality, mass transit systems. In the shorter term, these will likely take the form of Bus Rapid Transit systems providing a frequency of 4-6 services per hour – although in the longer term higher capacity options such as trams could be viable. These systems will improve access to jobs and services, reduce congestion, and support sustainable travel in high-density areas.

3. Delivering a high-quality, high-frequency suburban passenger rail service in the Solent area and along the Sussex Coast.

This will provide a reliable alternative to road travel and improve connectivity between suburban areas and major employment centres, supporting economic growth while reducing congestion and emissions. Upgrading the suburban rail network will enhance accessibility, increase passenger capacity, and offer a competitive and sustainable option for regional travel.

4. Embedding high-quality, well connected active travel infrastructure into the design of new communities to support healthier lifestyles and reduce car use, especially for short trips. This includes delivering Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) as well as TfSE's Regional Active Travel Strategy and Plan (RATSAP) across the region.

Enablers

Key enablers include:

- Establishing local and national funding mechanisms to forward-fund transport projects that unlock planned growth.
This includes enhanced value capture mechanisms, where the uplift in property values from new infrastructure investments is used to fund transport improvements, as well as national schemes such as road user charging to provide sustainable revenue streams for long-term investment.
- Implementing local demand management and environmental measures, such as workplace parking levies, congestion charges, clean air zones, and local tolls on new major highways.

These measures will help manage traffic demand, improve air quality, and generate revenue that can be reinvested in public transport and active travel infrastructure. They should be designed to support sustainable travel choices without

disadvantaging those who rely on driving for essential journeys.

- Boosting regional and local planning capacity and capability to ensure local authorities have the means to deliver sustainable development.

Alongside delivering better planning outcomes, this will also ensure local authorities deliver timely planning policies and decisions for the benefits of promoters, residents, and stakeholders.

- Ensuring development delivers for people and the environment

The government's reforms to the planning system, such as the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, is another key opportunity to support responsible transport delivery. TfSE will work with partners to explore how future infrastructure projects can align with the objective of these reforms, balancing economic and housing growth with supporting biodiversity and environmental net gain.

Case Study: Best practice in sustainable development

Many places in the South East have demonstrated how well-planned development, supported by strategic transport investments, can drive sustainable outcomes. While not all projects achieve their full potential, several notable examples showcase best practices in urban and transport planning. For example, the Movement and Place Framework exemplifies best practice in integrating public health, transport, and public realm improvements. By recognising transport's role in placemaking, this framework promotes safer, people-centred environments. Similarly, by prioritising vulnerable road users and sustainable transport modes, especially in dense urban areas, the User Hierarchy supports sustainable travel choices and safer streets.

Examples of sustainable development projects that align with these Principles include:

- **Crawley and Horsham:** Leveraging growth to expand the successful Fastway Bus Rapid Transit system and establish a new Thameslink-served rail station.
- **Ashford:** Concentrating development around one of the region's best-connected hubs, while safeguarding the surrounding landscapes and natural resources.
- **Southampton and Portsmouth:** Densifying brownfield sites near transport hubs is set to enable doubled rail service frequencies for local services between Southampton and Portsmouth, while improved Bus Rapid Transit services will support regeneration around Gosport and Portsmouth, enhancing connectivity across the Solent.
- **Reading Green Park:** Combining medium density business and residential growth with a new rail station and high-quality active travel corridors to reduce reliance on the car.
- **Andover:** Providing new residents with free bus tickets to enable them to explore the local public transport system and avoid relying too much on the car.

Although the planning landscape is evolving with a focus on housing affordability, these projects demonstrate that the South East has effective tools to drive sustainable growth. Such developments not only support sustainable travel but also create opportunities to unlock funding, ensuring that both housing and transport needs are met in a balanced, sustainable way.

Global Policy Interventions

The following pan-regional interventions have been identified in this Strategy, which cut across multiple Missions. Delivering these

interventions will require action at all levels of government and industry – from national to local.

- **Region-wide Service Priorities:**
 - Improve incentives to use sustainable travel choices.
 - Refine timetables to support faster growing rail markets – including regional services.
- **Region-wide Maintenance Priorities:**
 - Reduce the maintenance backlog and improve roadworks management.
 - Secure long-term funding to identify, understand, and address resilience risks.
- **Region-wide Inclusive Infrastructure Priorities:**
 - Design infrastructure to better serve socially excluded groups.
 - Upgrade interchange facilities and widen step free access.
- **Region-wide Fares/Ticketing Priorities:**
 - Offer affordable fares and concessions.
 - Implement integrated fares and ticketing systems.
- **Region-wide Service Priorities:**
 - Deliver BSIPs and leverage new bus service delivery models.
 - Provide and enhance socially necessary public transport services.
- **Region-wide Low Emission Vehicles (LEVs):**
 - Roll out charging infrastructure.

- Increase roll-out of LEVs.
- Support renewal and recycling of LEVs and batteries.
- Region-wide Modal Shift and Demand Management:
 - Improve attractiveness and raise awareness of sustainable travel options through behaviour change campaigns.
 - Promote virtual access to reduce travel demand.
 - Explore the development of an equitable and practical national road user charging framework.
- Region-wide Ferry Decarbonisation
 - Support the transition of ferry operations from fossil fuels to low carbon fuels, including inland waterways.
- Region-wide Power Priorities
 - Ensure the region's power networks have the capacity and resilience to support the rail network, roll-out of electric vehicles, and development.
- Region-wide Beyond Transport
 - Support decarbonised energy.
 - Support initiatives to tackle embodied carbon.
- Region-wide Active Travel Priorities
 - Embed high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure into the design of growing communities.
 - Deliver Local and Regional Cycling and Walking Plans.
 - Promote active travel as a means of improving public health and wellbeing.

- Region-wide Planning Priorities
 - Promote integrated land-use and sustainable transport planning policies.
 - Build planning capacity and leverage local funding measures.
 - Support greater local and regional powers to deliver integrated transport, housing, and energy outcomes, building on new devolution deals across the South East.

Part 4 | Delivery

Introduction

This chapter outlines how TfSE and its partners will transform the strategic Vision into tangible results, ensuring the South East achieves its Vision and Goals.

This work builds on TfSE's significant achievements to date, including the SIP and Delivery Action Plan. These foundational documents have provided a clear framework for identifying and prioritising interventions and policies to achieve the Vision and Goals. The SIP sets out the necessary investments across the transport network, while the Delivery Action Plan provides a practical Route Map for bringing these interventions forward, ensuring alignment with local and national priorities.

In a context of financial constraints, fragmented resources, and increasing demand for public services, TfSE recognises the critical importance of collaboration. By working closely with central government, local authorities, transport operators, and industry groups, TfSE aims to unlock the full potential of the SIP and its associated interventions.

This chapter highlights TfSE's structured delivery framework, which includes strategic planning tools, funding mechanisms, and

capacity-building initiatives. It also emphasises the importance of monitoring progress and adapting strategies to align with changing circumstances. TfSE's focus on evidence-based decision-making and strong partnerships ensures the region is well-equipped to overcome challenges and seize opportunities.

Ultimately, this chapter serves as a framework for turning Strategy into action, detailing the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, as well as the tools and processes that will drive success. By leveraging these resources, TfSE is committed to building a transport network that delivers long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits for the South East.

Challenges and Opportunities

TfSE recognises that the resources and tools for delivering meaningful change are more constrained now than in 2020. While central government will remain a key player, success will also depend on active support and collaboration from regional and local authorities, as well as the private sector.

Severe financial pressures and rising demand for local public services have placed significant strain on authorities across the South East. Over the past decade, reductions in central government funding, declining revenues, along with increased costs and risks have further restricted the capacity to develop and implement large transport projects. Additionally, fragmented distribution of resources across different networks has led to siloed planning, making coordinated efforts more challenging. To address this, TfSE advocates for longer-term funding settlements to enable more effective planning.

To deliver the South East's Transport Strategy and SIP, TfSE and its constituent authorities must explore innovative funding solutions. This includes exploring options such as greater devolution, rail industry reform, and "beneficiary pays" models that create sustainable revenue streams. While promising, these approaches

will require significant political effort and may encounter opposition, underscoring the need for a united and strategic approach.

Delivery must also reflect the need to make schemes affordable and accessible to all, ensuring that the benefits of investment are shared fairly across communities. TfSE will work with partners to understand the practical implications for local delivery capability and capacity and seek to support where gaps exist through its Centre of Excellence.

Devolution in the South East is now gathering pace, with areas such as Hampshire and the Solent and Sussex and Brighton identified as priorities for the next wave of devolved powers. Over time, all areas across the South East may evolve into Mayoral Strategic Authorities with significant responsibilities for transport, planning, and economic development. This shift represents a major opportunity to align regional and local priorities more effectively and deliver integrated outcomes. TfSE stands ready to support its constituent authorities throughout this transition – helping to build capacity, strengthen partnerships, and ensure transport remains central to future devolution arrangements. .

In the meantime, TfSE can play a crucial role in enhancing transport planning capacity across the region. This includes supporting the development of a Centre of Excellence, providing partners with access to its analytical framework, and offering resources to support early-stage scheme development. By fostering collaboration and building local capabilities, TfSE aims to empower the South East to deliver its ambitions.

TfSE's Approach to Delivery

Delivering this Strategy requires a coordinated, strategic approach to planning, prioritisation, and progress monitoring. To achieve this, TfSE has established a clear framework for translating the Strategy into actionable interventions and policies.

SIP and Policy Position Statements

The 2020 Transport Strategy provided the foundation for the SIP, which identifies the interventions and policies needed to achieve the Vision and Goals. Supporting this, TfSE has prepared Policy Position Statements that outline the global actions required to implement the SIP effectively. The SIP will be refreshed in 2025 to reflect the latest Transport Strategy.

Delivery Action Plan

This is a detailed Route Map for achieving the SIP, especially for schemes prioritised for progress within the next three years. It clarifies leadership responsibilities, resource requirements, and TfSE's role in supporting delivery. Updated annually through partner collaboration, this plan remains dynamic and aligned with regional priorities.

Analytical Framework

TfSE's Analytical Framework underpins the evidence base for all strategic decisions, from decarbonisation and electric vehicles to freight and economic assessment. It is not just a support tool for delivery partners, but a core component of TfSE's approach to strategy development, prioritisation, and monitoring. The Framework will continue to evolve, ensuring decisions remain guided by robust, up-to-date data and analysis.

Prioritisation Framework

Recognising the complexity of delivering schemes through various funding streams, the Prioritisation Framework provides a structured methodology to rank SIP schemes against criteria such as strategic fit, deliverability, and impact. This ensures resources are directed where they will have the greatest benefit.

Support for Delivery Partners

TfSE works closely with partners to provide funding, resources, and technical tools for scheme development. Key initiatives include:

- **Scheme Development Funding:** Supporting the early stages of scheme development.
- **Centre of Excellence:** Building capacity and technical expertise across the region.

Monitoring, Reporting, and Refreshing

Progress is systematically tracked through annual updates to the Delivery Action Plan and reported in TfSE's Annual Report. The State of the Region Report, published biennially, provides a comprehensive overview of how the South East is performing on key economic, social, and environmental metrics. These insights ensure alignment with strategic aspirations and inform future updates to the Transport Strategy, SIP, and Delivery Action Plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

The delivery of this strategy will require the collective effort of TfSE and its partners. TfSE's delivery approach is based on a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each. The list below outlines how different delivery activities contribute to the broader strategic outputs necessary for achieving the Transport Strategy's Missions.

- **Central Government including Department for Transport (DfT):** Central Government, particularly the DfT, plays a critical role in enabling the delivery of TfSE's Strategy by providing funding, shaping supportive policy, and enacting regulatory changes. These elements are essential for implementing interventions and achieving the Strategic Goals outlined in the SIP. The DfT's support ensures alignment between national transport objectives and the priorities for the South East, enabling the delivery of transformative projects.

- **Strategic Authorities:** If the devolution landscape continues to develop, we expect Strategic Authorities, including Mayoral Combined County Authorities, will play an increasing role in transport and spatial planning and delivery.
- **Local Transport Authorities (LTAs):** LTAs are key to implementing TfSE's Strategy on the ground, as they manage local highways, public transport services, and active travel networks. They play a vital role in developing and delivering transport projects, such as highways improvements, bus interchanges, and active travel schemes. By aligning spatial and transport planning, LTAs ensure that local development is coordinated with regional transport priorities. TfSE supports LTAs by offering technical assistance, funding for early-stage scheme development, and access to its Centre of Excellence.
- **Local Planning Authorities (LPAs):** LPAs are instrumental in aligning spatial planning with TfSE's Strategy. They develop Local Plans that integrate housing, employment, and transport priorities, ensuring that growth is supported by sustainable transport infrastructure. By embedding TfSE's Vision into local policies, they help create well-connected communities that promote sustainable travel choices.
- **National Highways:** National Highways leads the delivery of improvements to the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which is critical to supporting regional connectivity and resilience. TfSE collaborates with National Highways to help shape the development of the Roads Investment Strategy, aligning investment with the strategic priorities of the South East. This partnership ensures that projects like junction upgrades and new road links address regional challenges such as congestion and freight movement.
- **Network Rail and Great British Railways:** Network Rail currently manages rail infrastructure in the region, while GBR is set to take on strategic functions in the medium term. TfSE will collaborate closely with central government to align national rail priorities with regional needs, focusing on enhancing rail connectivity and reliability. TfSE works with these bodies to ensure that the rail network supports the South East's economic and environmental goals, including decarbonisation and improved access to international gateways.
- **Active Travel England and Sustrans:** Active Travel England and Sustrans are essential partners in promoting sustainable travel through active travel infrastructure and Public Rights of Way. They have worked with TfSE on the Development of our Regional Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan that will help achieve the Strategy's Decarbonisation and Inclusion and Integration Missions. By integrating active travel into transport planning, they support the creation of healthier, more connected communities.
- **Transport operators and port and airport owners:** Operators of public transport, ports, and airports contribute directly to the delivery of TfSE's Strategy by providing essential services and infrastructure. These stakeholders are vital in enhancing strategic connectivity, transitioning to zero-emission fleets, and improving access to international gateways. TfSE liaises with operators through our Transport Forum and seeks to address the operational challenges they face through our ongoing thematic work programme.
- **Industry bodies and interest groups:** Industry representatives and advocacy groups play a critical role in delivering TfSE's Strategy by providing insights, expertise, and support for key initiatives. Their involvement helps to ensure that transport interventions align with broader

economic, social, and environmental objectives. By engaging with these groups, TfSE fosters collaboration and builds the case for investment in transformative projects that benefit the South East.

TfSE's Role

The lists below outline the key actions TfSE must take out until 2030 to achieve our Missions, and tackle known, cross-cutting delivery challenges. These actions will evolve and become more focused as we progress delivery of the Strategy.

TfSE is committed to keeping its Strategy relevant and effective. Following this refreshed Strategy, the SIP will be updated to align with the new Missions. TfSE also plans to refresh the Transport Strategy every five years, ensuring its approach remains adaptable to evolving challenges and opportunities.

The delivery of this Strategy will take the combined effort of TfSE and its partners.

The tables to the right and on the following page outline the key actions TfSE must take until 2030 to achieve our Missions, and tackle known, cross-cutting delivery challenges. These actions will evolve and become more focused as we progress delivery of the Strategy.

TfSE is committed to keeping its Strategy relevant and effective. Following this refreshed Strategy, the SIP will be updated to align with the new Missions. TfSE also plans to refresh the Transport Strategy every five years, ensuring its approach remains adaptable to evolving challenges and opportunities.

To support the **Strategic Connectivity** Mission, TfSE will:

- Continue to support the development of the business cases for schemes in our SIP.

- Deliver on the recommendations of our studies into intermodal transfer of freight from road to rail and warehousing supply in the TfSE area.
- Work with government and local partners to develop a coherent pipeline of infrastructure investment, so that infrastructure planning across transport and utilities is delivered in a joined-up manner
- Work with National Highways and Great British Railways to help set priorities for road and rail network.
- Work with local authorities and Active Travel England to secure funding for investment that improves first / last mile connectivity to transport hubs and services by walking and cycling.
- Proactively work with government and our international gateways to identify, support, and deliver improvements to connectivity.
- Deliver the forthcoming South East Rail Strategy, which will support continued investment in the rail network

To support the **Resilience Mission**, TfSE will:

- Work with our partners to identify the specific role that TfSE can best play in enhancing the resilience of the transport network.
- Develop an evidence base on key resilience risks affecting the strategic transport network across the South East, and quantify the impacts of these risks
- Make the case to government for enhanced and consistent funding to improve the operational resilience and maintenance of strategic and local transport networks.

- With Network Rail, National Highways, Government, and local authorities, identify opportunities for targeted investment in improving the operational resilience of the Strategic Road Network, and Major Road Network and key rail links.
- Work with Network Rail, National Highways, government, local authorities, and our environmental stakeholders to understand the potential for nature-based solutions (e.g. sustainable drainage systems) to improve the resilience of networks to extreme weather.

To support the **Inclusion and Integration Mission**, TfSE will:

- Work with our partners to ensure that the impacts on Transport Related Social Exclusion be embedded in scheme development at an early stage, including as part of statutory impact assessments.
- Work through the Wider South East Rail Partnership and our Bus Forum to deliver best practice in catering for the needs of socially excluded groups in operations.
- Further develop our evidence base on social exclusion, specifically on the impacts of different intervention types on reducing social exclusion, including impacts on specific groups.
- Include methodologies that prioritise engagement with socially excluded groups in transport policy making and scheme development on the Centre of Excellence.
- Share best practice on the application of consistent approaches to integrated ticketing and fares as part of our Centre of Excellence.

To support the **Decarbonisation Mission** TfSE will:

- Work with other STBs to enhance the Carbon Assessment Playbook and further embed it in the local transport scheme assessment process.
- Continue work with the freight sector to identify and deliver initiatives to accelerate freight decarbonisation.
- Support the roll out of the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Visualiser Tool to help local authorities identify suitable locations for publicly available charging points.
- Continue work to support the roll out of dedicated charging infrastructure to accelerate the electrification of commercial vehicle fleets.
- Commence a dedicated workstream on combined transport and energy investment opportunities across the South East, exploring infrastructure improvements and service models required to deliver radical decarbonisation of both sectors.
- Work with Network Rail on options to support the decarbonisation of the railway where diesel trains still operate.

To support the **Sustainable Growth Mission**, TfSE will:

- Work with local planning authorities, local transport authorities, and Homes England to identify and roll out opportunities for forward funding sustainable transport investment as a means of enabling sustainable growth.
- Through the Centre of Excellence, work with highway authorities to adopt more widely the 'Healthy Streets' approach across the South East.
- Horizon scanning for new transport technologies, providing advice on their potential impacts on transport and wider society, and recommend policy interventions needed.

- Provide case studies and access to data and analytical tools on successful integration of land use and transport planning, focussing on enabling sustainable travel, as part of the Centre of Excellence.

To help address **challenges in delivery**, TfSE will:

- Develop a funding playbook for strategic transport infrastructure investment, to identify alternative funding sources for such investment based upon a beneficiary-pays Principle.
- Work with government to advocate for increased, consistent funding to deliver the ambitions set out in this Strategy and our SIP.
- Continue to develop the TfSE Analytical Framework and Centre of Excellence in response to delivery challenges identified by our partners.

Funding and Financing

Multiple sources of funding and financing are needed to deliver this Strategy.

The list below outlines the key funding and financing options that will be called on to deliver this Strategy. This builds on detailed work undertaken by TfSE in developing its SIP

Public finance is likely to remain the key source of funding for highway and railway infrastructure in the future. Looking further ahead, to manage demand and invest in sustainable transport alternatives, new funding models will need to be pursued in future to secure finance to implement schemes.

This could include beneficiary pays model, such as road user charging schemes, as a means of both managing demand in a 'pay as you go' model or as part of a 'mobility as a service' package, as

well as providing much needed funding for investing in sustainable transport alternatives.

Where demand management tools are proposed, TfSE will work with partners to ensure they are fair and proportionate.

TfSE will continue to identify and secure additional sources of funding to help deliver this Strategy.

- **Funding:** Money provided by users, investors, and/or government, which does not need to be reimbursed. Sourced from: private sector, local government, regional government, and the UK government. Dependent on/linked to: developer contributions; levies (e.g. business); and charges (e.g. cordons).
- **Financing:** Money provided by banks or other financiers with an expectation of a return on their investment. Sourced from: banks, lenders, investors, and the Public Loans Work Board. Dependent on/linked to: Revenue (fares, tolls) and underwriting.

Programme for Delivery

The 2023 SIP outlines how the interventions within it could be delivered. This will be refreshed to reflect this Strategy.

An updated high-level programme illustrating the potential timelines for the interventions included in this Strategy is provided in Appendix C. This will be further developed as part of the SIP refresh.

Monitoring and Evaluation

TfSE has established processes to oversee the development, delivery and benefits realisation arising from its Strategy and SIP.

This includes monitoring a set of indicators, which are outlined in TfSE's SIP and State of the Region Report. The list below outlines how these indicators map to the five Missions outlined in this Strategy.

Strategic Connectivity

- From the SIP
 - Improved journey times and reliability on the Strategic Road Network, Major Road Network and local roads.
 - Improved operating performance on the railway network, measured by Public Performance Measure (PPM) and other available passenger and freight performance measures, where available.
 - No transport schemes or interventions result in net degradation of the natural capital of the South East.
- From the State of Region Report
 - Rail and rail network reliability.
 - Average speeds for road and rail between key East-West locations.
 - One-hour public transport catchments to international gateways.

Resilience

- From the SIP:
 - Reduced delays on the highways network due to poor weather.
 - Reduced number of days of severe disruption on the railway network due to poor weather.
 - Metrics relating to reduced delay on road network suffering from road traffic collisions.

- Reduced delays on the highways network due to poor weather.
- Reduced number of days of severe disruption on the railway network due to poor weather.
- Metrics relating to reduced delay on road network suffering from road traffic collisions.

- From the State of Region Report:

- Road and rail network reliability.
- Percentage change in delays on the Southern Rail network caused by weather events.
- Average delay on key freight links.
- Road collisions per billion vehicle miles.

Inclusion and Integration

- From the SIP:
 - Increase in the number of bus services offering 'Smart Ticketing' payment systems.
 - Number of passengers using 'Smart Ticketing'.
 - Number of passengers using shared transport.
 - Reduction in NOx, SOx and particulate pollution levels in urban areas.
 - A reduction in the indicators driving the indices of multiple deprivation in the South East, particularly in the most deprived areas in the South East region.
 - Increase in the number of cross-modal interchanges and / or ticketing options in the South East.

- Reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured by road and rail transport.
- From the State of Region Report:
 - Accessibility scores in the TfSE geography.
 - Transport Related Social Exclusion scores.
 - Percentage of household income spent on transport.
 - Inflation of public transport fares.

Decarbonisation:

- From the SIP
 - Reduction in carbon emissions by transport.
 - A net reduction in the number of miles undertaken per person each weekday.
 - A reduction in the mode share of the private car (measured by passenger kilometres).
 - Reduction in non-renewable energy consumed by transport.
- From the State of Region Report:
 - Transport carbon emissions total/per capita.
 - Percentage split of vehicles by fuel type.
 - Electric or hybrid cars licensed.
 - Number of EV charging points in the South East.
 - Charging devices per 100,000 of population.

Sustainable Growth:

- From the SIP
 - The percentage of new allocated sites in Local Plans supported by high frequency bus, mass transit or rail.
 - Clear and quantified sustainable transport access and capacity for Local Plan allocated sites.
 - Increase mode share of trips undertaken by active travel.
 - Increase number of bikeshare schemes in operation in the area.
 - Increase in the length of segregated cycleways in the South East.
 - Increase in the length of the National Cycle Network in the South East.
- From the State of Region Report:
 - Adult activity levels and public health outcomes tied to active travel.
 - Percentage of households with three or more cars.
 - Rail and bus trips per person per year.
 - Average distance of travel.
 - Percentage of household income spent on transport.
- Cross cutting indicators from the State of Region Report:
 - Mode share of trips per person per Year in the South East.
 - South East and UK GVA growth from 2020.
 - Biodiversity net gain.



Note: This is a printout of an online questionnaire submission. Where answers are highlighted yellow or a cross is in the box, that indicates a positive response.

Transport for the South East draft Transport Strategy Public Consultation – for Organisations

Introduction

We are pleased to present the draft Transport Strategy for South East England, prepared by Transport for the South East (TfSE), the region's Sub-national Transport Body.

This strategy outlines a vision for the South East to be recognised globally for achieving sustainable prosperity and the highest quality of life.

You can view the full draft Transport Strategy and a summary document online or by requesting a paper copy.

Please consider these documents before submitting your response.

In addition to the strategy, an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal has been conducted to assess the strategy's impact on sustainability goals, including biodiversity, health, and access equity. We are also asking for comments on this.

You can view all documents online at tfse.org.uk

Feedback received in this consultation will be incorporated as part of the development of the final Transport Strategy which will be published in 2025.

You can complete this survey online at:

<https://tfse.engage-360.co.uk/>

You can also return a paper copy to us at the address below by **7 March 2025**:

Transport for the South East
County Hall
St. Anne's Crescent
Lewes
BN7 1UE

This survey should take around 20 minutes to complete.

Our privacy notice is provided at the end of this survey so you can see how we use your data.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.



About your Organisation

Q What is the name of your organisation?

Kent County Council

Q What type of organisation do you represent?

Local authority	☒
Business	☐
Charity of third sector	☐
Transport operator	☐
National partner	☐
Town or Parish Council	☐
Airport or Port	☐
Other	☐

If you answered 'other' above please tell us the type of organisation you represent

Q I confirm that I am authorised to respond to this consultation on behalf of my organisation

Yes ☒

No ☐

Q What is your name?

Simon Jones

Q What is your job title?

Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport - Kent County Council



Q Please tell us your email address

Joseph.Ratcliffe@kent.gov.uk

Challenges

Since TfSE published its first Transport Strategy in 2020, the context has evolved significantly. National and local policy changes, intensified decarbonisation efforts, post Brexit trade dynamics, and shifts in travel behaviour due to the pandemic all present new challenges.

Our research has identified several key challenges that need to be tackled if the region is to succeed.

You can find full details of the challenges our region faces on page 6 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and from page 25 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Q Do you agree that the challenges we have outlined above are the right ones that the Transport Strategy should be seeking to address?

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☒
Neither agree or disagree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Do you think there are any other challenges we should consider?

Financial challenges have not only impacted on the delivery of capital projects – there is a challenge that highway authorities across the South East are unable to maintain our highways to the standard that our residents expect. This has been made worse in recent years with high levels of inflation and funding not index linked so spending power on highways has reduced.

Q Are there any other comments you would like to make on the challenges?

These are not set out as “Challenges” in the Transport Strategy but rather the “Changing context of the South East” and “Case for Action,” and it would be helpful if consistent language could be used across all documents.

Where constituent members have adopted new Local Transport Plans (LTPs), this need not require a refresh of the regional Transport Strategy. Those Local Transport Plans should have regard to the TfSE Strategy. Where new infrastructure appears in those plans then the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) could be updated with an addendum to reflect that. Otherwise, with so many constituent bodies, the TfSE Transport Strategy will need to be updated very frequently, which would be a poor use of resources that could instead help towards frontline delivery of transport infrastructure.

Most of the contextual reasons identified are not region-specific. The Transport Strategy states that the local evidence base has been extensively researched and it could therefore be expected that this would have yielded more region-specific transport challenges.

When looking at the region's challenges (page 23 of the Transport Strategy), again many of these are national issues or difficult to address through transport. For example, housing affordability may even worsen with improved transport links! However, the recognition of challenges specific to this area, such as the east-west connectivity and international trade, is welcomed.

An important challenge that should be recognised is the backlog of local road maintenance and, relatedly, the need to include appropriate funding for maintenance of new infrastructure in capital project costs. This is covered in the context of the Resilience mission but it is certainly a challenge that needs resolving for the whole transport network to operate efficiently and should be included upfront in the strategy. It is clear that the maintenance backlog has become worse since the last strategy as funding is not index linked and the cost of works has increased given inflation, leading to continued reductions in maintenance budgets.

During the time period of this consultation there has been significant progress on devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Transport Strategy should consider including this as a challenge. It will not only materially change the local government landscape across the region, but (in the short term) create a disparity in the way highways and transportation services are delivered and planned across the TfSE area. It will also necessitate new Local Transport Plans at the Mayoral level, and changes to the way transport and land use planning interact.

Given this background, TfSE may want to reconsider whether to finalise this refresh of the Transport Strategy or pause it to consider how these new structures might affect priorities and delivery.

As an aside, TfSE will need to consider how its membership and hosting move forward in the new Local Government landscape, particularly as a result of the separation of Local Transport Authority and Highway Authority roles within the new Mayoral Strategic Authority – Unitary Authority structure (where this is happening).

Vision and Goals

Our vision is to create a region that not only leads the way in sustainable, net zero carbon growth but also offers its residents, businesses, and visitors the highest quality of life.

This vision is supported by three goals, addressing the pillars of sustainable development: fostering a competitive economy, improving social outcomes, and safeguarding the region's natural and historic environment.

Together, these goals ensure that growth in the South East is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

You can find full details of our vision and goals on page 7 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 35 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Q How strongly do you support the visions and goals in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Do you have any further comments on the vision or the goals?

The vision and goals align with the initial information on the Integrated National Transport Strategy (INTS) – a transport network that works for everyone and offers real opportunities. KCC supports the ambitious nature of the vision and goals but TfSE needs to consider how each can be achieved without detriment to the others.

KCC supports the six principles. Our recently adopted Local Transport Plan 5 also supports the vision and validate approach.



Strategic Connectivity Mission

Connectivity refers to the speed, frequency, and ease by which people and goods move between places. TfSE's focus is on strategic and regional connectivity, as local connectivity is led by our local authority partners.

You can find full details of our strategic connectivity mission on page 10 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 44 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Strategic Connectivity Mission



We will boost connectivity in the South East by enhancing strategic regional corridors and ensure all communities can access high-quality transport links and key services.

We will have succeeded when:

- ▶ The connectivity of all the South East's strategic corridors – in terms of journey times and reliability – is comparable to those corridors that serve London.
- ▶ Key towns, cities, and international gateways are as accessible by public transport as they are by car, and rail freight is as competitive as long-distance road freight.



Short-Term Priorities

We will improve the existing network to better serve passengers and freight by:

- ▶ Enhancing incentives for long-distance public transport through optimised fares, flexible ticketing, and improved amenities.
- ▶ Refining timetables to cater to leisure travel demand and minimising disruption from maintenance schedules.
- ▶ Advancing key connectivity projects to improve regional transport links.
- ▶ Restoring international rail services from Ebbsfleet and Ashford to ease pressure at St Pancras.
- ▶ Expanding rail capacity to support growth at Gatwick and Southampton airports.
- ▶ Safeguarding critical areas and aligning policies to enable long-term transport improvements.

Long-Term Priorities

We will focus on major upgrades and expansions to improve connectivity by:

- ▶ Upgrading the roads and railways serving the Brighton–Southampton coastal corridor to strengthen economic ties between the regions two largest built-up areas..
- ▶ Cutting journey times between London and less well-connected coastal communities.
- ▶ Improving ferry services to islands, including the Isle of Wight.
- ▶ Strengthening freight links from Southampton and the Channel Ports to the Midlands and North.
- ▶ Expanding rail connections to international gateways, including Heathrow and Gatwick.
- ▶ Reviewing the configuration of regional rail services to leverage opportunities at Old Oak Common.

Q How strongly do you support the strategic connectivity mission in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q How important are the key outcomes of the strategic connectivity mission to your organisation?



	Very important	Important	Neither important or not important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Journey time and reliability on strategic corridors is comparable to those serving London	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Key towns, cities and international gateways are as accessible by public transport as they are by car	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rail freight is as competitive as road freight	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q How strongly do you support the priorities which will enable us to improve strategic connectivity?

Short-term and long-term priorities are shown at the top of this page.

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Please tell us the one priority from the list at the top of the page you see as most important to achieving this mission?

The most important priority for Kent from the selection in the mission is the restoration of international rail services from Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations (note that it should be **both** stations not one or the other). KCC also strongly supports *Enhancing incentives for long-distance public transport by optimising fares, ticketing, and on-board amenities*.

In terms of the most important priority for achieving the mission, there is not a single priority that will alone achieve the mission but rather all work together to incrementally achieve better connectivity.

However, TfSE may want to reconsider where some priorities are placed within the Strategy as the Kent Bifurcation Strategy (the splitting of cross channel freight traffic between the M2/A2 and M20/A20 and improved links between the two strategic corridors) and delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing is a Strategic Connectivity priority as much as it is about Resilience. Furthermore, the resolving issues affecting the smooth operation of our international borders (including the impact the new Entry/Exit system will have) is also a priority affecting the region's Strategic Connectivity.



The resilience of the South East's transport network is vital to the region's economic, social, and environmental well-being.

You can find full details of our resilience mission on page 12 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 52 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Resilience Mission



We will safeguard the South East's connectivity and enhance the reliability and resilience of our transport systems for future generations.

We will have succeeded when:

- ▶ The transport network delivers comfortable, reliable journeys between key towns, cities, and international gateways.
- ▶ The transport network has the capacity and agility to manage, absorb, and recover from major disruptions quickly, and when the risk of major failures occurring is reduced.

Short-Term Priorities

We will strengthen the current network's resilience by:

- ▶ Assessing road disruption impacts and securing sustainable funding for maintenance.
- ▶ Establishing long-term funding pipelines for infrastructure renewals.
- ▶ Strategically planning for future risks to enhance network adaptability.
- ▶ Advocating for consistent funding for maintenance and prevention projects.
- ▶ Coordinating with utility providers to minimise disruption from roadworks.

Long-Term Priorities

We will focus on major upgrades and expansions to strengthen resilience by:

- ▶ Tackling rail bottlenecks in areas like Croydon and Woking to boost reliability on key corridors.
- ▶ Creating alternative routes, such as the Uckfield-Lewes line, to maintain connectivity during disruptions.
- ▶ Implementing the Kent Bifurcation Strategy to ease pressure on the Thames crossings and strengthen links between Channel and M25 – including improving Operation Brock and Stack.
- ▶ Resolving highway pinch points to improve flow for all users, including buses, boosting resilience to future risks.



Q How strongly do you support the resilience mission in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q How important are the key outcomes of the resilience mission to your organisation?

Very important	Important	Neither important or not important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know



The transport network delivers comfortable, reliable journeys between key towns, cities and international gateways

☐☒☐☐☐☐

The transport network has the agility to manage and absorb disruptions quickly

☒☐☐☐☐☐

Q How strongly do you support the priorities which will enable us to improve resilience?

Short-term and long-term priorities are shown at the top of this page.

Strongly support

☐

Support

☒

Neither support or do not support

☐

Oppose

☐

Strongly oppose

☐

Don't know

☐

Q Please tell us the one priority from the list at the top of the page you see as most important to achieving this mission?

The most important priority is to secure index linked sustainable funding for maintenance, which is a combination of the short-term priorities 2 and 4. Getting all infrastructure to a baseline acceptable level of condition will be the foundation for building up further resilience as well as for achieving the other missions. In Kent, the implementation of the Kent Bifurcation Strategy and Lower Thames Crossing is also a very high priority.

Note that the short-term priority of coordinating with utility providers will need to include reference to street works as well as road works.



Inclusion and Integration Mission

Creating an inclusive and integrated transport network should be a fundamental part of planning and decision-making. However, TfSE's engagement with socially excluded groups has revealed that many communities across the region still face barriers to access, putting them at risk of exclusion.

You can find full details of our inclusion & integration mission on page 14 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 60 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Inclusion & Integration Mission



We will create an inclusive, affordable, and integrated transport network across the South East, providing safe and seamless door-to-door connectivity for everyone.

We will have succeeded when:

- ▶ Everyone can affordably travel where they need to go when they need to go.
- ▶ Customer satisfaction with all aspects of the transport network is high across all sections of society.

Infrastructure Priorities

We will target infrastructure upgrades by:

- ▶ Designing inclusive infrastructure to improve accessibility for socially excluded groups.
- ▶ Enhancing connectivity in North and East Kent and East Sussex coastal areas to reduce social exclusion.
- ▶ Upgrading interchanges and providing step-free access at transport hubs for seamless connections.

Service Priorities

We will improve affordability and accessibility by:

- ▶ Offering affordable fares and concessions for vulnerable groups to improve accessibility.
- ▶ Simplifying fares with unified ticketing to lower costs and streamline journeys.
- ▶ Providing socially necessary transport to connect isolated communities with essential services.
- ▶ Implementing Bus Service Improvement Plans and exploring franchising models to better serve communities.
- ▶ Enhancing connectivity to islands and peninsulas, focusing on the Solent and Medway.



Q How strongly do you support the inclusion and integration mission in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q How important are the key outcomes of the inclusion and integration mission to your organisation?

Very important	Important	Neither important or	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know

not
important

Everyone can affordably travel
where they need to go and when

☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Customer satisfaction with the
transport network is high across
all sections of society

☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q How strongly do you support the priorities which will enable us to improve inclusion and integration?

Infrastructure and service priorities are shown at the top of this page.

Strongly support	☐
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☒
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Please tell us the one priority from the list at the top of the page you see as most important to achieving this mission?

Implementing the Bus Service Improvement Plans is probably the most important to achieving the aims of this mission. However, KCC also recognises the importance of affordable fares – particularly for families. Train fares especially have too many confusing options and the customer has to work out the most affordable route and time period to travel.



Decarbonisation Mission

The UK Government, TfSE, and all local authorities in the South East are committed to achieving net zero transport emissions by 2050.

You can find full details of our decarbonisation mission on page 16 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 68 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Decarbonisation Mission



We will lead the South East to a net zero future by 2050 by accelerating the shift to zero-emission travel, incentivising sustainable travel choices, and embracing new technologies to reduce emissions and combat climate change.

We will have succeeded when:

- ▶ All surface transport trips made across the South East are net-zero emission by 2050 (at the latest).
- ▶ We have not exceeded our carbon budgets for surface transport by 2050.
- ▶ The South East is seen as a world leader in decarbonising transport.



Short-Term Priorities

We will accelerate the transition to low-carbon transport by:

- ▶ Expanding Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure for private and freight vehicles.
- ▶ Increasing the availability of electric and hydrogen vehicles through collaborating with industry.
- ▶ Supporting EV and battery recycling to reduce the environmental impact of EVs.
- ▶ Improving public transport and active travel infrastructure to provide attractive sustainable travel options.
- ▶ Transitioning bus, freight, and ferry fleets to zero-emission vehicles.
- ▶ Promoting integrated land use and transport planning to minimise unnecessary car travel.

Long-Term Priorities

We will solidify the transition to a zero-emission system by:

- ▶ Decarbonising rail through delivering electrification, battery, and alternative fuel trains.
- ▶ Promoting low-carbon infrastructure with sustainable materials and practices.
- ▶ Supporting Government in the event they commit to roll out national road user charging, providing a financial incentive for more sustainable choices while reducing congestion.
- ▶ Working with industry to deliver a decarbonised, resilient power networks for rail and electric vehicles.
- ▶ Advancing alternative fuels for aviation and long-haul freight.

Q How strongly do you support the decarbonisation mission in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☐
Support	☒
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q How important are the key outcomes of the decarbonisation mission to your organisation?

Very important	Important	Neither important or not important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know

All surface transport trips are net zero emission by 2050



	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We have not exceeded our carbon budgets by 2025	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
The South East is seen as a world leader in decarbonising transport	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q How strongly do you support the priorities which will enable us to improve decarbonisation?

Short-term and long-term priorities are shown at the top of this page.

Strongly support	☐
Support	☒
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Please tell us the one priority from the list at the top of the page you see as most important to achieving this

KCC considers that the priorities to support the uptake of EVs will be most important, and this is strongly supported in Kent's Local Transport Plan 5. This includes short term priorities 1, 2 and 3. However, improving public transport and active travel infrastructure will also be important and necessary for supporting decarbonisation and there should also be a priority to develop a suitable fare strategy that encourages journeys to move from the private car to public transport.



Sustainable Growth Mission

The sustainable growth mission aims to deliver prosperity without harming the welfare of future generations. It supports the UK Government's first mission, to "kick start economic growth".

You can find full details of our strategic growth mission on page 18 of the draft Transport Strategy summary document, and page 76 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Sustainable Growth Mission



We will champion transport interventions that unlock investment opportunities, enable sustainable growth, and create healthy, vibrant, and well-connected communities.

We will have succeeded when:

- ▶ Population growth and economic development in the South East is underpinned by sustainable transport and infrastructure,
- ▶ The South East has created well-connected communities with easy access to key services and employment opportunities.

Policy Enablers

- We will promote integrated land use and transport planning and enablers by:
- ▶ Concentrating development in areas with strong transport infrastructure.
 - ▶ Coordinating housing and transport planning across authorities.
 - ▶ Leveraging value capture and other mechanisms to forward-fund transport.
 - ▶ Using demand management measures to improve air quality and fund services.
 - ▶ Strengthening local planning capacity.

Transport Intervention Priorities

- We will prioritise essential transport projects to support sustainable growth by:
- ▶ Expanding concessionary schemes to make sustainable travel more affordable.
 - ▶ Developing mass transit systems in high-density areas to improve access and reduce congestion.
 - ▶ Enhancing Sussex Coast and Solent suburban rail services to compete with road travel.
 - ▶ Delivering Local Cycling Walking Improvement Plans and embedding active travel in all new developments..



Q How strongly do you support the sustainable growth mission in the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q How important are the key outcomes of the sustainable growth mission to your organisation?



	Very important	Important	Neither important or not important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Population growth and economic development is underpinned by sustainable transport and infrastructure	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The South East has well connected communities with easy access services and employment	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q How strongly do you support the priorities which will enable us to improve sustainable growth?

Transport Intervention priorities are shown at the top of this page.

Strongly support	☒
Support	☐
Neither support or do not support	☐
Oppose	☐
Strongly oppose	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Please tell us the one priority from the list at the top of the page you see as most important to achieving this

Developing mass transit systems in high density areas, such as the Fastrack Bus Rapid Transit network in Kent Thameside and newly in Dover. Alongside this, to ensure that journeys are made on public transport, KCC considers that expanding concessionary travel to make sustainable travel more affordable must also be a high priority.

Q Do you have any further comments on any of the five missions?

Strategic connectivity:

The mission will have been achieved when the strategic corridors have journey times and reliability comparable to corridors serving London. However, not all of our rail corridors into London are as reliable or fast as they should be. Some routes have actually gotten slower in recent years (for example, Maidstone East into London Victoria).

Similarly, success is when rail freight is as competitive as long-distance road freight. This is important to us as an organisation – our own Local Transport Plan 5 proposes to work with the industry, Network Rail and government to make the case for investment to make this possible (such as rail gauge enhancements). The priority in the Transport Strategy is to strengthen freight links with reference to capacity constraints but it should be recognised that full scale infrastructure upgrades are needed too, and this is not something TfSE or constituent bodies have any control over (beyond making the case). For lots of industries, the double handling from unloading goods

wagons and transferring to road haulage for the last part of the journey also affects the competitiveness of rail. These factors make succeeding in this mission highly improbable.

Long term priority 4 should also reference the domestic rail network. Long term priority 5 states that a new chord is needed near Redhill but Network Rail have not committed to this being the only possible solution.

Short term priority 4 should say Ebbsfleet AND Ashford, KCC supports services being reinstated to both.

The Bakerloo Line Extension should be a short-term priority for the South East. It will not provide significant support for this Mission as it will release capacity for commuter trips rather than enhancing strategic connectivity. A short-term priority for TfSE should not be a scheme that has such minimal benefit to the TfSE area.

The section would benefit from some further explanation of how some of these priorities will be delivered, although perhaps that is more the role of the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP)? For example, the review of timetables and incentivisation of sustainable travel choices.

There are some priorities that cut across both the Strategic Connectivity and Resilience Mission and could be promoted in both. Specifically, the Kent Bifurcation Strategy and delivery of the Lower Thames Crossing currently fall under Resilience but they also support the region's connectivity to the Midlands and North and also internationally.

Resilience:

This section should place greater emphasis on clearing the maintenance backlog on the region's highway network within the short-term priorities or a slight change of context to priority 4, which currently implies that this is about coastal erosion and other more specific issues rather than general maintenance.

The mission is aimed at the "strategic transport network" but all journeys start and end on local roads so these also need to be resilient – if you cannot get to the strategic network then you still cannot make your journey.

KCC is looking to investigate the economic costs of street works and road works, particularly emergency street works for which there is a broad definition. The support of TfSE in undertaking this work would be welcomed, and it is the first short term priority in the resilience section. Alternatively, KCC would be able to support TfSE carrying out this study so that it has a regional perspective. A trial could be undertaken on the A25 in Kent to test any of the recommendations or proposals that might come out of the study. This has the support of the local MP.

Inclusion and integration:

The context and outcomes for this mission relate to inclusion in the sense of creating an equitable and accessible transport system (from a physical and mental health perspective as well as in terms of affordability). However, the 3rd infrastructure priority is about improving interchange facilities at stations and public transport hubs, which is about integrated transport. The context and outcomes of this section could be widened to talk more about an integrated transport system, in line with the



emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy. Alternatively, the mission could be split to cover the two separate aspects in more complete detail.

The fares and ticketing interventions need more context in how they might be applied – how much do local government boundaries currently affect passengers ability to travel? Generally, local government has no role in ticketing and it's down to the geographical range of different operators, how central government set/regulate fares (where applicable) and, in the case of rail, tickets are not operator-specific anyway.

Arguably intervention 3 under 'fares, ticketing and service priorities' could be combined with intervention 4 since the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIPs) and emerging models of operating the bus network will be inherently linked with the provision of socially necessary services.

There should be more priorities for the physical integration of transport – such as provision of transport hubs and roll out of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) pending successful outcomes from where it's trialled across the region. Integration across modes naturally improves accessibility and inclusion for all transport users, for example digitisation of timetables into multimodal journey planners removes a potential barrier where transport users are unable to read or match up timetables.

Decarbonisation:

This mission goes beyond what the region can achieve in isolation and therefore makes it extremely difficult to achieve. Norway is on track to be the first country to only sell new electric vehicles but it has done this by increasingly taxing Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles and providing a far superior Electric Vehicle (EV) charging network than the UK has. These demand action by central government.

From developing Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5), KCC has demonstrated that a derived local carbon budget cannot be met with the proposals currently in the plan. Further, there is not the current national directive to meet a local budget. Without that requirement, any one area is unlikely to be able to make the very tough choices to get there.

Long term priority 6 is to support the government in the development and delivery of a national road user charging proposal. However, KCC would prefer TfSE to commit to making representation that reflects the positions of its constituent members should any government proposal come forward on this matter, such as to address the reduced taxation income from reduced fuel duty receipts due to increased uptake of electric vehicles.

Other priorities, such as ensuring the region's power network has sufficient capacity and resilience, are necessary but it is unclear how TfSE will be able to influence this.

Under the three-pronged approach to decarbonisation, it says that High Speed One (HS1) opening ensured that Eurostar replaced the London-Paris air route. However, Air France alone runs at least 5 flights a day from London to Paris and Eurostar now does not serve the Kent Stations. A priority from the Strategic Connectivity mission to reinstate services from Ebbsfleet and Ashford could be reiterated in this section.

Sustainable Growth:



The key enablers for this mission will require changes in national policy or more devolution to local leaders (pending the implementation of the English Devolution White Paper). KCC does not currently support workplace parking levies, congestion charging or tolls on new roads (outside of the existing national policy for tolled estuarial crossings). If these are put forward, then their interaction with the Inclusion and Integration mission should be considered as there will need to be viable and affordable alternatives to the private car, which these measures would affect.

Ultimately this mission will be heavily influenced by the proposals in the English Devolution White Paper, which reintegrates land use and transport planning. However, we broadly support the “infrastructure first” principle on which this mission focuses.

Global Policy Interventions

You can find full details of our global policy intervention on page 84 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Q How strongly do you agree that the global policy interventions are needed?

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☒
Neither agree or disagree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Are there any other global policy interventions you think should feature in the Transport Strategy?

Road safety should feature as a global priority – whatever mode someone is using, they should feel and be safe. This includes personal safety on the transport network.

Trials and rollout of new technology that helps achieve the missions, subject to suitable regulation and safety provisions.

The rail freight priority should appear in this section as cross-regional (indeed, national).

The Transport Strategy should also include reference to the region's vast Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network and how this can be supported and improved to encourage active travel.

Delivery

The following tables outline the key actions TfSE must take out until 2030 to achieve our missions, and tackle known, cross-cutting delivery challenges.

You can find full details of TfSE's roles as part of our delivery plan from page 91 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Q How strongly do you agree with the actions that TfSE has set in the Delivery Plan?



Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☒
Neither agree or disagree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

Q If you disagree or strongly disagree please tell us more about this?

KCC agrees with the actions that are set out for TfSE and its partners in order to deliver the Strategy. However, many of them are dependent on 3rd parties' willingness to work with TfSE. Ultimately, TfSE must actively identify funding for the interventions they want 3rd parties to deliver or there must be a sound business case that demonstrates a return on investment, unless such action is mandated by national government.

Under the Resilience mission, one of the roles for TfSE is to identify its role in strengthening resilience when this has effectively been done by the other actions below it.

Indicators

There are a number of indicators we propose to use to measure the progress of the strategy.

You can view the full table of indicators on page 96 of the full draft Transport Strategy document.

Q Are the indicators that we have identified the right ones to measure?

Yes	☐
No	☒
Don't know	☐

Q If you have answered 'no' above, please tell us more

The strategy is built on the principle of environmental net gain, but the indicator in Strategic Connectivity is the first mention of it in the whole Strategy and seems unconnected to the aims of this mission. As infrastructure schemes will be required to demonstrate biodiversity net gain, perhaps this is best measured across all missions?

Further, the key outcome in the strategic connectivity mission is to increase modal share using sustainable travel options but this would not be measured by the journey time reliability/performance of the road and rail networks. Arguably, reliability will increase modal share on any network but it is modal share itself that should be measured so some of these proposed indicators are not directly related.

Metrics relating to recovery time after road traffic collisions is not an appropriate measure as this is largely determined by the severity of the collision, unless this 3rd metric in the table actually pertains to fewer road traffic collisions (it is unclear). Likewise for road collisions per billion vehicle miles, unless there are measures to improve road safety included in the resilience Mission.



Reference to road safety is currently absent from any of the priorities despite it falling under the Social Goal and Target Zero being an outcome of the Inclusion and Integration mission – but to achieve that outcome there need to be some priorities working towards it.

The Resilience mission should also include a falling value of the maintenance backlog as an indicator.

The air quality objectives in the Inclusion and Integration mission are not specifically related to the measures of successfully achieving the mission (on page 53 of the strategy). Although well-being is part of the stated outcome it is not clear if this specifically encompasses human health. The air quality section on page 55 is more in terms of modal shift, but again this is not related to the successful delivery of the mission or the key outcome as it is described. A greater focus on integrated transport leading to modal shift and hence more sustainable transport would benefit air quality, and so perhaps this should be reflected in the Strategic Connectivity mission or Decarbonisation mission.

Adult activity levels under the Sustainable Growth mission will need some quantification to rule out conflating factors – are people that move to more active travel-friendly estates more likely to be active anyway, for example?

This section needs some clarity on what denotes success. These are measurable indicators but don't have any baseline data or targets set.

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree that the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal represents a thorough assessment of the draft Transport Strategy?

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☐
Neither agree or disagree	☐
Disagree	☒
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Do you have any specific comments regarding the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal?

Mitigation measures detailed in the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) are thin and not proportionate to the scale of the challenge posed by current emissions, nor to increased emissions from new transport infrastructure projects. Measures are insufficient both in number and in scale of impact.

There is insufficient detail about how emission mitigation will be achieved. For example, more information is needed about the inclusion of low energy/renewables in projects and the adoption of climate-resilient construction methods.

Interdependencies are not fully taken into account. The Strategy's success is dependent upon modal shift but doesn't provide evidence to support how this will be influenced from a supply-led



perspective. Modal shift by business and residents is wholly interdependent with economic and health factors. For the TfSE strategy to be successful, it will need tight integration with wider strategies capable of exerting a stronger pull on demand-led behaviour.

Flood Risk Management is considered in the Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) and “Sustainable Drainage Schemes and natural flood risk management measures” are to be considered as mitigation measures going forward through the production of Flood Risk Assessments (FRA), which would seem appropriate. As it stands, the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs’ (DEFRA) own Non-Statutory Technical Standards all require FRAs to be produced and for the use of Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SUDS) to be incorporated in major projects.

Objective ‘ISA 6’ considers the water environment, including water quality. Polluted surface water runoff from highways is a concern which is receiving greater attention than ever before. Whilst the considered topics such as Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services, Water Environment, and Climate Change and GHG Emissions within the ISA consider flooding from a risk management perspective and in relation to water quality associated with construction activities, more could be done with regards to:

- Considering the quality of surface water runoff in association with the operational phase of a highway.
- That the possibility of water reuse should be maximised as much as possible (particularly for irrigation and landscape management purposes).
- That long term management and stewardship arrangements that consider the maintenance of these systems need to be carefully considered and established.

Whilst the matters above will be somewhat technical in nature (with guidance to be found in the Ciria SUDS Manual C753), the principle of surface water being managed effectively with regards to pollution control for the lifetime of a highway, for it to be considered as an asset, and that SUDS associated with a highway should maximise the multiple benefits from a biodiversity and amenity viewpoint, could be strengthened within the Transport Strategy and ISA.

Overall Views

Q To what extent do you agree that the draft Transport Strategy sets out an ambitious yet achievable strategy to improve transport across the South East?

Strongly agree	☐
Agree	☒
Neither agree or disagree	☐
Disagree	☐
Strongly disagree	☐
Don't know	☐

Q Are there any additional comments you would like to make on the draft Transport Strategy?

Overall, KCC fully supports the vision and missions. The Strategy has a strong focus on sustainable travel and accords with much of KCC's recently adopted fifth Local Transport Plan (LTP5). However, some of the ambitions/priorities are a little unrealistic or rely on the willingness of 3rd parties (including private utility companies) to work with TfSE.

KCC does not support all of the individual priorities, as has been set out in this response, but the bold approach to setting the vision for how transport should function in the region is good. That said, KCC would prefer for TfSE's workstreams to become more action oriented and focus on the development of schemes so that constituent authorities are in a better position to deliver them, ultimately delivering on the Strategy itself.

TfSE will need to review the emerging Integrated National Transport Strategy and forthcoming 10 Year Infrastructure Plan, as well as Industrial Strategy, when these are published throughout 2025. All of these policies will have a bearing on the priorities of the TfSE Transport Strategy (which should seek to deliver on these national strategies).

TfSE will also need to take stock of the recent announcements on Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution to Mayoral Strategic Authorities. This is going to lead to unprecedented change in the structure of local government across the South East and, temporarily, disparities in the way highways and transportation functions are managed. More fundamentally, it will also necessitate changes in the membership and, potentially, administration of TfSE. This will need to be a key workstream.

The structural changes that will be taking place will do so at different speeds across the geography and there will be disruption to the way services are run as staff navigate changes to their employment and roles. The Transport Strategy should recognise that this will inevitably impact on the timescales for delivery of the missions. Although the current draft refers to Devolution, the understanding of what is to come has moved on significantly since written.

Finally, given the rapidly evolving policy and local government landscape, TfSE should be flexible in its proposed timeline to adoption of the new Transport Strategy so that this can be done at the most appropriate timing.

Privacy Notice – Transport for the South East Transport Strategy Refresh

Overview

This Privacy Notice covers the responses to the public consultation of our draft Transport Strategy we are delivering as part of our Transport Strategy Refresh.

Transport for the South East and our host authority East Sussex County Council takes data protection seriously. Please be assured that your information will be used appropriately in line with data protection legislation, will be stored securely and will not be processed unless the requirements for fair and lawful processing can be met.

What information is being used?

In order to ensure we accurately reflect the demographic and geographic range of our region, and to keep interested parties updated with this project we will collect the following information:

Personal Data:

Name

Email address

How will your information be used?

Your name and email address will be used so we can monitor and identify duplicate responses, and where agreed so we can contact you at future stages of this project, either to seek your further views or share the outcomes of your involvement as the strategy develops.

All data will be assimilated and pseudonymised for reporting purposes.

We aim to maintain high standards, adopt best practice for our record keeping and regularly check and report on how we are doing. Your information is never sold for direct marketing purposes.

Our staff are trained to handle your information correctly and protect your confidentiality and privacy.

Your information **is not** processed outside of the European Economic Area.

What is your legal basis for processing this information?

Our legal basis for processing your data is consent.

How long will your information be kept for?

Your information will be kept for the duration of this project. You will have the option to remain on our stakeholder database beyond this and if you consent to this we will retain your name and email address until you withdraw consent.

How will your information be stored?

Your information will be stored on our secure systems and accessed only by authorised Transport for the South East officers.

Sharing your information

Your data will be shared with our contracted consultants for analysis purposes.

Your rights

Under data protection legislation, you have the right:

- to be informed why, where and how we use your information
- to ask for access to your information
- to ask for your information to be corrected if it is inaccurate or incomplete
- to ask for your information to be deleted or removed where there is no need for us to continue processing it
- to ask us to restrict the use of your information
- to ask us to copy or transfer your information from one IT system to another in a safe and secure way, without impacting the quality of the information
- to object to how your information is used



- to challenge any decisions made without human intervention (automated decision making)

Please visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/your-council/about/keydocuments/foi/data-protection for further details.

How to find out more or complain

Should you have any further queries on the uses of your information, please speak directly to our service:
tfse@eastsussex.gov.uk

To complain about the use of your information, please contact our Customer Services Team at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus/complaints or our Data Protection Officer at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/your-council/about/key-documents/foi/data-protection/data-protection-officer.

You can also contact the ICO for further information or to make a complaint:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF

Phone: 0303 123 1113 (local rate) or 01625 545 745 if you prefer to use a national rate number or you can report a concern on the ICO website at <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

Transport Strategy for the South East

July 2025

21 July 2025

Prepared by

Tresor Consulting for

Steer

14-21 Rushworth Street

London SE1 0RB

+44 20 7910 5000

www.steergroup.com

Prepared for

Transport for the South East

County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

Control Information

Author/originator: US

Reviewer/approver: EC

Client Reference: 009 TfSE Transport Strategy Refresh

Steer Reference: 24481601

Version control / issue number: 2.0 [26th July 2025]

Distribution: James Gleave, Mark Valleley, John Collins

Steer has prepared this material for Transport for the South East. This material may only be used within the context and scope for which Steer has prepared it and may not be relied upon in part or whole by any third party or be used for any other purpose. Any person choosing to use any part of this material without the express and written permission of Steer shall be deemed to confirm their agreement to indemnify Steer for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Steer has prepared this material using professional practices and procedures using information available to it at the time and as such any new information could alter the validity of the results and conclusions made.

Non Technical Summary

Transport for the South-East (TfSE) is undertaking a refresh of its Transport Strategy first adopted in 2020. This report sets out the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) undertaken for the Transport Strategy. The ISA aims to identify and mitigate environmental and social impacts at a strategic level. It is subject to public consultation alongside the Transport Strategy.

In terms of sustainability policy in England, the last five years since the Strategy was developed, has seen a growing emphasis on both environmental net gain and the need to decarbonise. Transport is the largest single contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the UK. Development and operation of transport infrastructure and traffic have impacts on biodiversity and environmental quality (including air, water and soils).

The South East of England is Britain's gateway to the world. Its dynamic economy, scenic landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and proximity to London and mainland Europe make it one of the most prosperous and desirable regions for living, working, and visiting in Britain. While parts of the TfSE Region are densely populated, large areas are highly designated for the biodiversity, heritage and landscape value and important for the sustainable growth of the Region.

The Strategy has five 'missions' which set a route map for improving strategic connectivity, strengthening resilience, enhancing integration, decarbonising the transport system, and unlocking sustainable growth. They aim to deliver beneficial outcomes by reducing congestion and air pollution; providing affordable and accessible public transport; reducing the impacts of climate change; enabling better physical and mental health through active travel; and providing users with better access to jobs, education, leisure and other opportunities.

In order to deliver these missions, a number of interventions have been identified. The majority of these were previously assessed as part of work undertaken for the Region's Strategic Investment Plan. Interventions that require new transport infrastructure can have significant negative effects on natural capital, biodiversity, historic environment, landscape, water, soils, air quality, noise and greenhouse gases. However, they can also deliver positive effects, including on the same sustainability aspects. Positive effects include air quality, greenhouse gases, safety, health, equalities and the economy.

New interventions and measures proposed in the updated Strategy do not substantially change previous assessments undertaken. For many of the interventions, a precautionary approach is taken to the assessment. This takes into account the presence of sensitive environmental features and potential for construction and operational effects of different types of transport. Potential negative impacts predicted at this stage can be avoided or reduced through further project-level design and assessment. For larger projects with predicted significant effects in the Strategy, this will involve environmental impact assessment as part of consenting.

Health and equalities considerations, as well as information from a Habitats Regulations 'screening' of likely effects on protected sites for nature conservation have informed the overall assessment.

Table of Contents

Non Technical Summary	3
Table of Contents	4
1. Introduction	6
Integrated Sustainability Appraisal	6
Purpose of Report	8
2. TfSE Strategy Refresh	9
Background	9
Strategy Update	11
Relationship to other plans	12
3. Methodology	13
Stage A Scoping	13
Stage B: Assessment	14
Stages C & D: Reporting and Consultation	14
Stage E: Monitoring	14
Limitations and Assumptions	14
4. Overview of the Environment	16
Policy Context	16
Overview of the TfSE Region	17
Sustainability context	17
5. Assessment	21
Strategic Connectivity	22
Resilience	22
Inclusion and Integration	23
Decarbonisation	24
Sustainable Growth	24
Results of the ISA	25
Review of cumulative effects	35
6. Mitigation and Monitoring	38
Appendix A – Health and Equalities Assessments	41
Equalities Information to Support Assessment	41
Health Information to Support Assessment	53
Appendix B ISA Assessments	57

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 TfSE Area	6
Figure 1.2: Processes within Integrated Sustainability Appraisal	7
Figure 2.1 Global Policy Interventions	10
Figure 2.2 TfSE Strategy and relationship with other plans	12

List of Tables

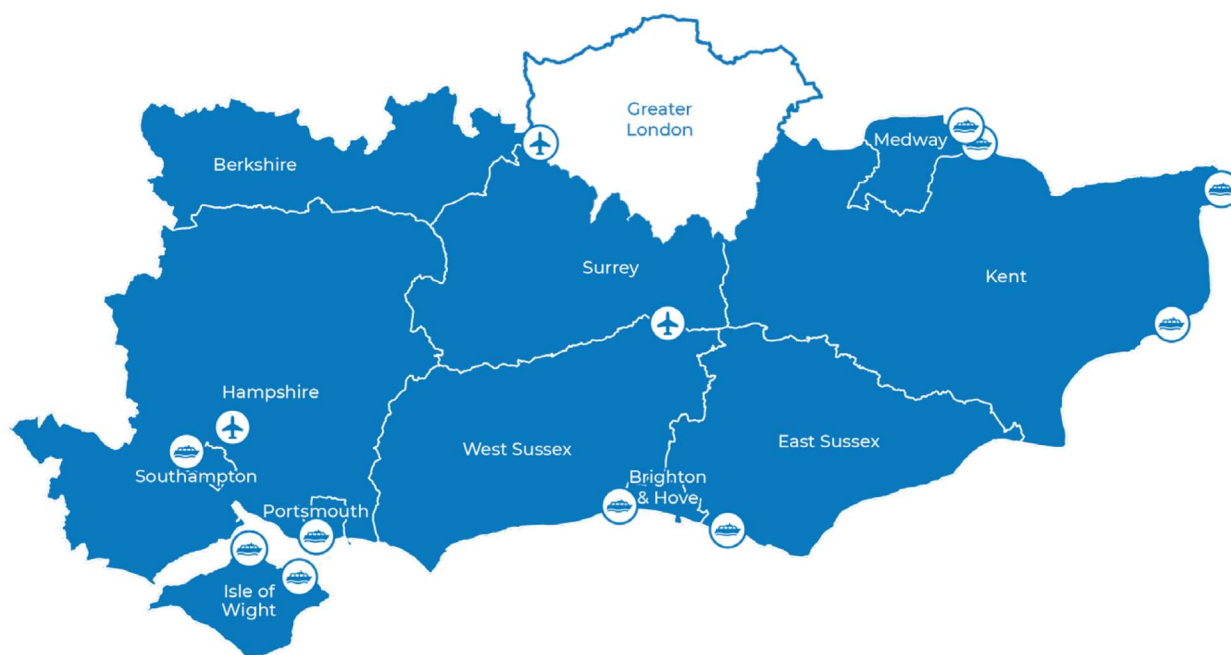
Table 4.1 Sustainability Appraisal Framework	18
Table 5.1 Results of the ISA	26
Table 5.2 Sources of cumulative effects at a strategic level	35
Table 6.1 Mitigation and Monitoring	38

1. Introduction

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is undertaking a refresh of its thirty-year Transport Strategy published in 2020¹. The ambitious Vision for the Transport Strategy was to deliver a high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network that offers seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and give residents and visitors the highest quality of life. After five years, the Transport Strategy is being refreshed to ensure strategic priorities are still being met in the changing policy, demographic, socio-economic and environmental context of the area.

The TfSE area is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** and encompasses the entirety of Kent, Medway, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Surrey, East Sussex, West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and the six Berkshire authorities (West Berkshire, Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, and Wokingham).

Figure 1.1 TfSE Area



A map of the Transport for the South East area

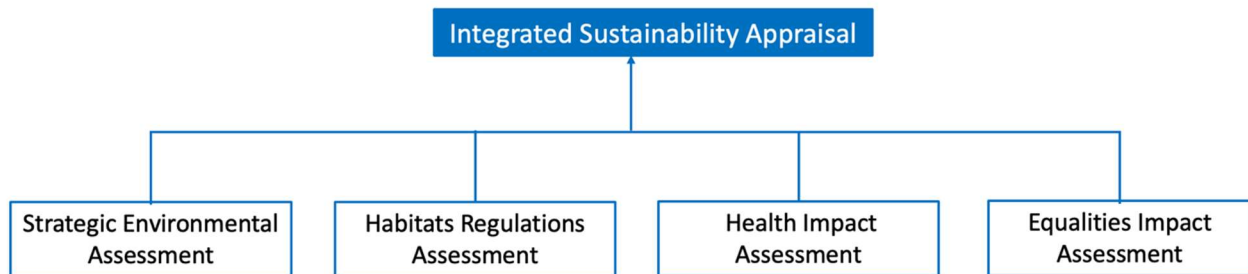
Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) is being undertaken as part of the strategy refresh. The ISA combines several sustainability appraisal processes, so that environmental and social impacts are identified and mitigated as part of strategy development. This Scoping Report sets out the first stage of the ISA process.

¹ <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-work/transport-strategy/>

The components of the ISA process are set out in Figure 1.1 below and each process is then briefly described.

Figure 1.2: Processes within Integrated Sustainability Appraisal



A diagram showing component processes of Integrated Sustainability Appraisal

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

SEA is used to describe the application of environmental assessment to plans and programmes in accordance with the "Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations" (SI 2004/1633, known as the SEA Regulations). The SEA Regulations place an obligation on authorities to undertake SEA for certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

HRA is undertaken under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017² (SI 2017/1012, known as the Habitats Regulations) for plans or projects which are not directly connected to the management of the site and would be likely to have a significant effect on a European Site designated for nature conservation, either alone or in combination with other plans. These comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar sites.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

Health Impact Assessment is a process to identify the likely health effects of plans, policies or projects and to implement measures to avoid negative impacts and / or promote opportunities to maximise the benefits. An HIA is not a statutory requirement, however, Planning Practice Guidance³ states that planning can create environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles and that a HIA is a useful tool when there are expected to be significant impacts.

Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)

EqIA is undertaken under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that plans, policies or projects do not discriminate or disadvantage people. It applies to people with the following 'personal protected characteristics': age, disability, gender, gender reassignment,

² Updated by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

³ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019, Guidance – Healthy and Safe Communities. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.

Purpose of Report

This report represents the draft ISA undertaken according to the SEA Regulations and best practice⁴. It documents the SEA process, as well as drawing on the results of the HIA, EqIA and HRA. It is subject to public consultation alongside the Transport Strategy.

⁴ Government guidance on Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/strategic-environmental-assessment-and-sustainability-appraisal>

2. TfSE Strategy Refresh

Background

Transport for the South-East (TfSE) published its thirty-year Transport Strategy in 2020⁵, with a vision and three goals based around Economy, Society and the Environment. An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal⁶, including SEA, HRA, EqIA and HIA was undertaken alongside the Strategy.

To identify the interventions that would be needed to deliver the Transport Strategy, five area studies were undertaken⁷:

- Outer Orbital Study
- Inner Orbital Study
- South Central Radial Study
- South East Radial Study
- South West Radial Study.

Each of the Area Studies investigated the issues, challenges and opportunities that were identified in the Transport Strategy in more detail. An ISA was undertaken for interventions in each Area Study⁸.

The Area Studies identified a shortlist of interventions which have formed the basis for the Strategic Investment Plan.

Strategic Investment Plan

The Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) was submitted to Government in March 2023⁹ and provides a framework for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services, and regulatory interventions from now to 2050.

Place-based interventions comprise 24 multi-modal packages, including rail, mass transit (buses or ferries), active travel (e.g. walking, wheeling, cycling, horse-riding) and highways. These were previously assessed under the Area Studies ISAs.

The mass transit system supports multi-modal travel and seamless transfer between modes which includes rail and bus services. The SIP is also supportive of first and last mile improvements, to widen the area that benefits from mass transit interventions. To avoid increasing congestion, improve road safety, increase access to affordable transport

⁵ <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-work/transport-strategy/>

⁶ TfSE, Steer and WSP, April 2020: Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, Post Consultation Draft: <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/useful-documents/transport-strategy/>

⁷ <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-work/area-studies/>

⁸ The ISA for each area study is available on individual area study pages accessed via: <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-work/area-studies/>

⁹ TfSE, March 2023, A Strategic Investment Plan for the South East: <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/our-work/strategic-investment-plan/>

options, and further support decarbonisation, highways opportunities in the SIP have a particular focus on those facilitating freight and bus movements to make the best use of the roads in the region.

These packages are a step-change away from traditional “predict and provide” capacity enhancements of previous decades. They support not only strategic movement of vehicles but our places and communities. They have been refined to minimise increases in carbon emissions and the impact of these interventions on the wider environment, but all highway packages do result in small increases. A Delivery Action Plan sets out those interventions to be delivered in the next three years¹⁰.

In addition to specific interventions, the SIP introduced six global policy interventions (also see Figure 2.1 below):

- Decarbonisation
- Public transport fares
- New mobility
- Road user charging
- Virtual access
- Integration

Figure 2.1 Global Policy Interventions



¹⁰ TfSE, June 2023, Delivery Action Plan:

https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/app/uploads/2023/10/20231004_TfSE_AreaStudies_DeliveryActionPlan_Report_1.7-Blue-titles-added-to-maps-003.pdf

Some of the interventions from the SIP, in addition to the global policy interventions have been further prioritised in the updated strategy.

Strategy Update

Since TfSE's first Transport Strategy, the context within which the strategy operates has changed. These changes broadly fall into three groups:

- 1) Changes to national and local policies
- 2) Changes to travel behaviour, resulting from the pandemic
- 3) Progress since the publication of the first strategy including Area Studies and SIP described above.

The vision statement has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders and sets out the overall direction of the Transport Strategy and forms the basis of the three goals and five missions that underpin it:



The Strategy comprises five key missions that TfSE will prioritise to achieve its Vision:

- Strategic Connectivity
- Resilience
- Inclusion and integration
- Decarbonisation
- Sustainable Growth

Each mission is linked to outcomes, in addition to a number of priorities and interventions. Further information can be found in Chapter 5 and Appendix A and B of this Report.

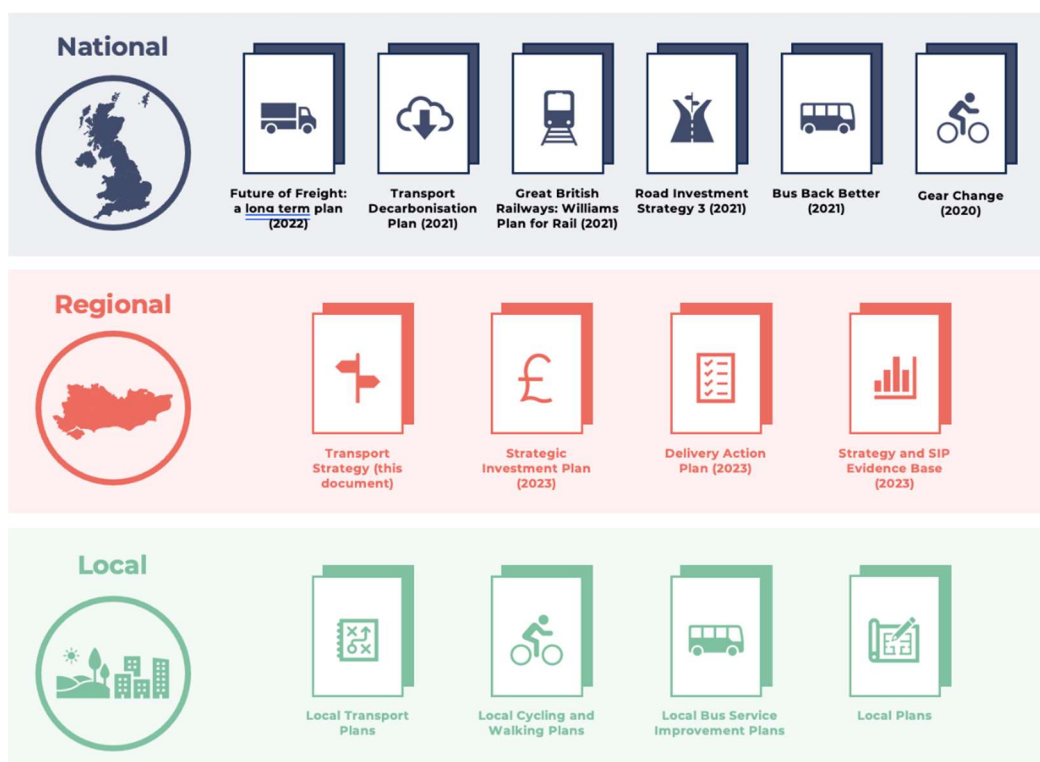
Relationship to other plans

Figure 2.1 below shows how this document sits at a regional level in relation to national and local plans. There are a number of key transport strategies and plans at the national level which have helped to drive the refresh of the Strategy. Chapter 4 also sets out key sustainability legislation and policy taken into account in the Strategy refresh.

The TfSE constituent local authorities will use the Strategy and associated plans in local planning. This includes the 16 Local Transport Authorities and associated Local Transport Plans.

The specific transport interventions set out in the Transport Strategy are also being delivered by other organisations, including National Highways and Network Rail. The policy framework for the delivery of these major schemes is the National Networks National Policy Statement (NPS)¹¹ and as such these major schemes have been assessed within the related Appraisal of Sustainability¹².

Figure 2.2 TfSE Strategy and relationship with other plans



¹¹ Department for Transport, March 2024

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65e9c5ac62ff48001a87b373/national-networks-national-policy-statement-web.pdf>

¹² Ramboll/ WSP, February 2024,

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66279715d29479e036a7e5e1/nnpns-aos.pdf>

3. Methodology

The ISA methodology, tends to be driven by the SEA process and other sustainability assessments are incorporated into this. The stages set out in this section cover:

- Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on scope;
- Stage B: Developing and refining strategic alternatives and assessing their effects;
- Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report
- Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan or programme alongside the Environmental Report; and
- Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the plan or programme on the environment.

Stage A Scoping

Consultation on the scope of the ISA was undertaken via a Scoping Report issued in August 2024 to the statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England). The Report set the scope and context of the ISA through:

- An overview of the development of the Strategy and reasons for update;
- The relevant updates to legislation and policy, baseline information and future trends, whilst identifying key issues and opportunities for the appraisal of the Strategy; and
- The framework to be used for the sustainability appraisal.

The Scoping Report responds to the requirements of Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations (Box 1 below) and a brief summary is provided in Chapter 4.

Box 1. SEA Requirements covered in the Scoping Report.

- a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes.*
- b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme.*
- c) The environment characteristics of areas likely to be significantly effected.*
- d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 2009/147/EC (Conservation of Wild Birds) and 92/43/EEC (Habitats Directive).*
- e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation*

There were no responses to the consultation, the Scoping Report has been published for information alongside the Draft Transport Strategy.

Stage B: Assessment

The SEA Regulations require that the likely significant effects on the environment arising from the plan and its alternatives are described and evaluated (regulation 12(2)).

The Strategy has been refreshed from an updated Evidence base and a number of 'challenge statements' set out in the ISA Scoping Report representing issues and opportunities to be addressed. Chapter 2 of this report sets out how the Strategy has evolved. For the purposes of this assessment, the main alternatives are:

- 1) the 2020 Strategy, subsequent Area Studies and SIP; and
- 2) the refreshed Strategy and any new interventions introduced.

The SEA Regulations cover the effects on the environment on issues such as: *biodiversity, population, human health, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage and landscape* (Schedule 2, paragraph 6).

While not specifically required by the SEA Regulations, sustainability objectives are a recognised way of considering the environmental, social and economic effects of a plan or programme and comparing the effects of alternatives. The objectives are developed using the sustainability issues identified in Chapter 3. The objectives were used to assess the TfSE Strategy and identify likely sustainability effects. Further information on the methodology used for assessment is provided in Chapter 5.

Stages C & D: Reporting and Consultation

This report sets out the results of the ISA, incorporating SEA, HIA, EqIA and HRA. It constitutes the "Environmental Report" under the SEA Regulations. The ISA accompanies the draft Strategy for public consultation and will also be sent to the consultation bodies.

A Statement will be prepared following the consultation period to summarise how responses to consultation and the results of the ISA has influenced the development of the Strategy, in addition to other information required under Regulation 16.

Stage E: Monitoring

Chapter 6 of this report sets out monitoring required under SEA Regulation 17. Key metrics are incorporated into TfSE's State of the Region Report¹³, which is intended to be updated every two years using available data to monitor how the region is changing in relation to economic, social and environmental objectives.

Limitations and Assumptions

The ISA covers the TfSE Region and level of assessment undertaken is proportionate to the scale of the Strategy. At this level, it is not possible to assess interventions alongside

¹³ Transport for the South East State of the Region 2023 Report:
<https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/state-of-region-report/>

design information and a precautionary approach which uses sensitivity of the corridor combined with type of intervention is used as set out at Chapter 5.

The interventions assessed are delivered through Local Authority Transport Plans, or national bodies such as National Highways and Network Rail. Further assessment will need to be undertaken, particularly at a project level as part of delivery.

The assessment assumes that construction of any infrastructure follows existing best practice and applicable environmental legislation and guidance (for example legislation for protected species and construction best practise). Therefore, it is assumed that construction of small scale infrastructure including improving footpaths and cycleways, online bus, rail and highway (minor online works) infrastructure would generally not give rise to significant environmental effects, unless adjacent to a sensitive receptor such as a designated site. Larger infrastructure such as new railways, roads and dualling and offline mass transit may have some significant effects, and these are identified in the assessment.

4. Overview of the Environment

This chapter provides an environmental overview of the TfSE Region and a summary of the issues and opportunities associated with change over the plan period. The Scoping Report, also issued for consultation, provides further information, including a full review of the environmental characteristics, evolution of the environment, existing problems and relevant legislation, policies and plans, including any environmental protection objectives (Appendix A of the Scoping Report).

Policy Context

In terms of sustainability policy in England, the last five years since the Transport Strategy was first developed, has seen a growing emphasis on both environmental net gain and the need to decarbonise.

Goals set out within the national 25 Year Environment Plan¹⁴ are focused on enhancing natural capital and ecosystem services, including enhancing the natural environment, clean air and water, mitigation and adaptation to climate change. This is also reflected in the requirement for environmental targets and biodiversity net gain in the Environment Act 2021. The interaction between green spaces and health is also noted.

Nature Positive 2030¹⁵ was produced in 2021 by the UK's five statutory nature conservation bodies and sets out how pledges to protect 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030 can be achieved. Local Nature Recovery Strategies¹⁶ need to be prepared by authorities to identify priorities for nature recovery and propose associated actions in identified locations by March 2025. Despite these commitments, there are continuing trends of biodiversity decline.

Section 245 of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023 states that public bodies, while performing their functions in relation to or so as to affect a National Park or National Landscape, have a duty to 'further the purposes' of these landscapes.

The Department for Transport released its plan to decarbonise transport in 2021¹⁷. Decarbonising all forms of transport comprised increasing cycling and walking, zero emissions buses and coaches, zero emissions cars, vans, motorcycles and scooters, decarbonising railways, maritime and aviation sectors. It also included multi-modal decarbonisation covering change in fuels, freight and logistics, the role of technology and places.

¹⁴ HM Government (2018) A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

¹⁵ Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency, 2021, Nature Positive 2030: <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-role/the-uk/nature-positive-2030/>

¹⁶ Defra, 2023, Local Nature Recovery Strategies Policy Paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-nature-recovery-strategies/local-nature-recovery-strategies>

¹⁷ Department for Transport, 2021, Decarbonising Transport, A Better Greener Britain: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/610d63ffe90e0706d92fa282/decarbonising-transport-a-better-greener-britain.pdf>

Overview of the TfSE Region

The region is densely populated along the northern border surrounding London and its south coast, including conurbations such as Southampton and Brighton. There are also a network of towns along major rail corridors to London, including Ashford, Basingstoke, Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath, and Newbury/Thatcham.

Outside these areas, population density is relatively low and the region is highly designated for its biodiversity, heritage and landscape interests. There are in the region of 300 internationally designated and 1,250 nationally designated sites for nature conservation. Canterbury Cathedral is a World Heritage Site and there are two World Biosphere Reserves (Brighton & Lewes Downs, Isle of Wight), defined by UNESCO as 'learning places for sustainable development', in particular interactions between social and ecological systems. There are approximately 2,200 nationally important Scheduled Monuments, in addition to over 50,000 Listed Buildings, designated for their heritage value. Two National Parks (New Forest and the South Downs) cover approximately 20% of the total TfSE area, in addition there are eight National Landscapes in the region.

There are numerous other environmental designations, in addition to other valuable assets, such as clean air, water resources and high quality agricultural soils. Environmental protection and enhancement is an important part of sustainable growth.

Sustainability context

From a review of relevant policy and baseline information in the TfSE Region, including trends over time, sustainability issues and opportunities were identified for the Strategy. Sustainability objectives were then formulated to guide the assessment.

Table 4.1 below sets out the sustainability issues, opportunities and objectives used for the assessment of the Strategy.

Table 4.1 Sustainability Appraisal Framework

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities Identified	Sustainability Objective
Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services	- Transport policy and its implementation can impact or enhance environmental targets, including net gain. - There is an opportunity to integrate a natural capital and ecosystem services approach into development of transport policy and its implementation.	ISA 1: To maintain and enhance the provision of ecosystem services from the region's natural capital and deliver environmental net gain.
Biodiversity	- There is potential for impacts to designated sites for nature conservation as well as the potential to contribute to wider nature decline, through impacts on habitats and species. - Any impact on biodiversity will need to meet requirements for net gain, this may be challenging for delivery of some projects. - There is also potential to support nature recovery, for example through changing travel behaviour, or supporting improvements in priority areas.	ISA 2: To protect and enhance habitats, species, valuable ecological networks and ecosystem functionality in the region, including through nature recovery and biodiversity net gain.
Historic Environment	- Direct and indirect impacts on the significance of internationally, nationally and locally designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their settings. - Opportunities to enhance the historic environment, including engagement through improved access.	ISA 3: To protect and minimise harm to the historic environment, and to maximise opportunities for enhancement, including setting of assets and provision of access.
Landscape and Townscape	- There is huge development pressure on designated landscapes in the TfSE area, including their setting, and transport could directly and indirectly affect these. - There is also potential for erosion of landscape and townscape quality. - Transport infrastructure, particularly active travel, can provide greater opportunities to connect people with the natural environment.	ISA 4: To protect and enhance the quality of the region's distinctive landscapes/ townscapes and provide opportunities to connect people with them.

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities Identified	Sustainability Objective
Water Environment	Increased urban run-off from infrastructure and traffic flows affects quantity and quality of surface water run-off. Design of transport infrastructure can help improve water resources.	ISA 6: To protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality.
Air Quality	- Emissions to air affects human health, in addition to biodiversity. - Emissions from transport, including highways, ports and airports are sources of key air pollutants, including nitrogen and particulate matter in the TfSE area. Transport policy therefore has a role to play in meeting air quality targets.	ISA 7: To protect and enhance air quality by reducing transport related emissions.
Climate Change and GHG Emissions	- Transport is the largest contributor to the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and has a key role to play in mitigating climate change. - Climate change (extreme heat, flooding and storms) can impact transport infrastructure and there are opportunities to improve resilience.	ISA 8: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximise resilience to climate change.
Noise and Vibration	- There is a concentration of transport hubs and networks in the TfSE area, which can lead to environmental noise exposure affecting both people and wildlife. - There are opportunities for reducing road noise, through both technology and reducing road traffic.	ISA 9: To reduce exposure to transport related noise and vibration.
Soils and Resources	- There is potential for deterioration in quality of, and loss of soils, including the best and most versatile agricultural land from transport policies and projects. - Transport policy has potential to maximise use of existing transport infrastructure, there is also potential use of resources and generation of waste in transport-related construction.	ISA 5: To promote the use of brownfield land and existing infrastructure, protecting soils and increasing resource efficiency.

Topic	Key Sustainability Issues and Opportunities Identified	Sustainability Objective
Population and Equalities	- The TfSE area has a growing population and associated increase in use of transport infrastructure. - Access to affordable and efficient transport and accessibility of different types of transport is important for different groups of people including the elderly, young people, less able bodies, those on lower incomes, in urban centres or geographically isolated.	ISA 10: To increase the capacity and efficiency of the transportation network to support demographic changes, including improving access by equalities groups and deprived communities.
Health	- While regionally, the TfSE area as a whole performs well in terms of health indicators, there are localised issues, including areas of high deprivation, exposure to transport-related air pollution and noise. - Transport has a role in improving both physical and mental health. Active travel in particular can promote physical exercise, reduce obesity levels and provide opportunities for access to greenspace.	ISA 11: To protect and enhance physical and mental health through active travel, access to public transport, and reductions in pollution.
Community Safety	- High levels of serious injuries and fatalities on the TfSE road network compared to the rest of the UK. - There are opportunities to increase active travel through improved safety in design. - Crime levels on public transport are a concern and may be a barrier, for example females travelling after dark.	ISA 12: To promote safe transport through reducing accidents and improving safety of active travel and personal security, particularly on public transport.
Economy	- Transport is an important factor in productivity in the TfSE area. - There are opportunities to provide better links to education and employment, including urban areas and coastal towns.	ISA 13: To promote a strong economy through the transport network with better access to opportunities.

5. Assessment

The assessment identifies likely effects arising from missions, priorities and associated interventions to be delivered under the Strategy. This approach ensures that all significant effects are captured, whereas reliance on missions and priorities alone may under-represent impacts in delivery.

This approach also means that the assessment is relatively high level as it uses previous ISA work for interventions in the SIP. The methodology draws on transport typologies and sensitivity of corridor described below, and project design information is limited. The assessment also identifies where new interventions are proposed to meet priorities.

The assessment of interventions within the SIP is based on:

- 1) A sensitivity assessment - Using the approximate locations provided, each of the interventions was mapped using GIS against the indicators such as environmentally protected sites as well as socio-economic information.
- 2) A typology assessment – based on 15 different types of transport such as new highways, on-line highway improvements, active travel, enhanced bus services etc.

Adjustments were made to align with the ISA Objectives and information from other assessment processes. Considerations for equalities and health assessments are set out in Appendix A. The results of the HRA are reported in a separate document and have been incorporated into this assessment. The HRA screening process has reached a similar conclusion to the previous HRA undertaken for the Transport Strategy. Further detailed assessment is necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Habitats Regulations. Further design information on the interventions and consultation with Natural England would be required.

This means that the assessment of individual interventions may not reflect further detail that may be available at other tiers in the hierarchy (see Figure 2.1), such as Local Transport Plans or project level assessments. However, it does mean that the assessment is based on a worst-case scenario as it hasn't yet applied design evolution anticipated to reduce impacts.

The full assessment is presented in Appendix B. New interventions are identified as alternatives to those previously presented in the SIP. They are considered alternatives under the SEA Regulations as they introduce new aspects as part of the Strategy refresh. Appendix B sets out whether priorities will be implemented in the short-term (ST) or long-term (LT). Interventions such as timetabling and service provision are generally short to medium term and reversible. Effects associated with implementation of infrastructure are considered long-term and permanent.

A summary of the significant positive and significant negative effects for each of the Missions is presented below. This is followed by a summary of effects for each of the sustainability objectives.

Strategic Connectivity

Mission Statement: *We will boost connectivity in the South East by enhancing strategic regional corridors and ensure all communities can access high-quality transport links and key services.*

Significant negative effects are likely for the short-term priority to deliver or initiate well-developed schemes that enhance road and rail connectivity, and longer-term priorities for upgrading the region's key coastal corridors and improving journey times between London and key coastal communities. These arise for environmental objectives (natural capital, biodiversity, historic environment, landscape, water, soils, air quality, noise, greenhouse gases) for some of the major road and some of the major rail schemes in the SIP. This includes the A27 Arundel Bypass, the A27 Lewes to Polegate, and some of the A27 junction improvements, in addition to new rail links to Medway and Heathrow. It should be noted that a precautionary approach has been taken and some effects may be addressed through detailed design. Effects are less likely to be significant for some of the on-line infrastructure modification schemes or those in a less sensitive location. There are also opportunities to improve highway and rail corridors for biodiversity and nature recovery.

Significant positive effects are also predicted for air quality, safety and the economy for the short-term priority to deliver or initiate well-developed schemes that enhance road and rail connectivity, particularly where these reduce congestion and remove level crossings. Safety improvements to the A21 are also significant for the long term priority to improve journey times between London/M25 and coastal communities. Disadvantaged groups (equalities) and the economy will benefit from fare incentives to use public transport for long distance transport and isolated groups from improving access to islands and peninsulas (health, equalities). Positive effects on these objectives are also anticipated where highways schemes reduce congestion and intervention move freight from highways to rail, improving air quality, and have safety and economic benefits.

The short-term priority to reinstate international rail services and **new intervention** on the existing Ebbsfleet and/or Ashford line would not require new infrastructure so no effects on the majority of environmental objectives are predicted, although there may be increased rail noise and reduced noise from highway traffic. This would also have positive effects on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions. **Significant positive** effects were anticipated on the economy through increased connectivity for business and tourism.

Resilience

Mission: *We will safeguard the South East's connectivity and work to maintain and enhance the reliability and resilience of our transport systems for future generations.*

While they improve resilience, including during climate change related events, priorities such as developing alternative corridors, tackling pinch points, delivering the Kent Bifurcation Strategy and other resilience measures can lead to **significant negative effects**. This is where significant new highway or rail works are proposed (e.g. Lower Thames Crossing, A29 Realignment, A22 Uckfield Bypass Dualling and Corridor

Improvements, Kent Lorry Parks, reopening of the Spa Valley Line), such as leading to potential habitat loss/ severance, impacts on species, loss or damage to heritage assets, including their setting, visual intrusion into high quality landscapes, loss of soils and natural resources, and pollution to water or increase in flood risk. For highways schemes in particular, while easing congestion improves air quality, schemes can also induce traffic with significant negative effects on air quality, noise and greenhouse gas emissions.

Significant positive effects are also predicted for some of these priorities, particularly in relation to objectives for the economy, safety, health and equalities (South West and Brighton mainline, Lower Thames crossing). Significant positive effects were also predicted for climate resilience (ISA8) for short-term priorities related to highways maintenance and utility works, infrastructure renewal, planning for future risks, in addition to long-term priority related to resilience of Region's power networks. These priorities also had positive effects on objectives for community safety and the economy, no effects on other objectives were predicted.

Environmental effects from the **new** intervention to renew the bridge to Hayling Island are unknown as will depend on the nature of the renewal, for example structural repairs to the existing bridge or an entirely new bridge. The bridge is in a sensitive location crossing the Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar, SAC and SPA and is also adjacent to the Chichester Harbour National Landscape. Other sustainability objectives are likely to remain unchanged as a result of a bridge renewal. Lane rental schemes are likely to have positive effects in relation to minimising road works, reducing congestion and improving air quality, safety and economy.

Inclusion and Integration

Mission: *We will create an inclusive and integrated transport network in the South East that offers affordable, safe, seamless, door-to-door connectivity for all users.*

While the mission aims to improve connectivity for all users, **significant negative effects** on natural capital, biodiversity and the historic environment are predicted for some of the ferry services and highway interventions. This is largely due to sensitivity of location (e.g. Solent and Thames Estuary) and potential for disturbance to wildlife, decrease water quality, and small scale works in the marine environment. For larger-scale infrastructure (A21 dualling or bypasses in East Sussex), while improving safety, there are likely be effects on biodiversity and natural capital from habitat loss and severance, which can be challenging to provide environmental net gain, and loss or impact on setting of designated and non-designated assets.

Significant positive effects are predicted for equalities, safety, health, air quality and the economy. Geographically isolated groups in areas such as North and East Kent, islands, coastlines and peninsulas will benefit from better connectivity. Similarly providing affordable transport and integrated ticketing enables more people to use public transport. Mass transit interventions such as those for the Sussex Coast, Eastbourne/ Wealden, Hastings/ Bexhill and South East Hampshire are likely to reduce traffic emissions, improve access to employment and facilities, and provide significant mental health benefits.

The **new priority for better design of infrastructure and services**, such as providing accessible step-free stations and hubs, for socially excluded groups had significant positive effects on equalities, and also positive effects on health for these groups and the economy as may better enable the workforce. There was no effect on other sustainability objectives.

Decarbonisation

Mission: *We will lead the South East to a net zero future by 2050 by accelerating the shift to zero-emission travel, incentivising sustainable travel choices, and embracing new technologies to reduce emissions and combat climate change.*

Significant negative effects were confined to major rail infrastructure in potentially sensitive corridors for natural capital, biodiversity, and/ or historic environment including HSI link to Medway, New Strood Rail Interchange and Waterside Branch Line. At this stage the effects are precautionary and may be reduced by project level design.

There were numerous **significant positive effects** associated with delivery of rail schemes, mass rapid transport and active travel schemes. These were a result of modal shift and benefits for air quality, equalities, health, safety and the economy.

Priorities which promoted low emissions technology had **significant positive** effects on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, including rolling out EV charging infrastructure, low emissions vehicles, and use of alternative fuels. Priorities which support road user charging were also predicted to have significant positive effects.

New interventions involving decarbonisation of the Thames Valley Branch Line and electrification of the line between Newbury and Taunton may involve some small scale habitat loss, with potential minor impacts on heritage and landscape depending on level of intrusion from new infrastructure.

Sustainable Growth

Mission: *We will champion transport interventions that unlock investment opportunities, enable sustainable growth, and create healthy, vibrant, and well-connected communities.*

Like the decarbonisation mission, **significant negative effects** were confined to major rail infrastructure in potentially sensitive corridors for natural capital, biodiversity, and/ or historic environment including HSI link to Medway, New Strood Rail Interchange and Waterside Branch Line. At this stage the effects are precautionary and may be reduced by project level design.

There were numerous **significant positive effects** associated with delivery of rail schemes, mass rapid transport and active travel schemes. These were a result of modal shift and benefits for air quality, equalities, health, safety and the economy.

Priorities to deliver integrate land-use and transport planning, focusing development in areas with existing or planned infrastructure is likely to have **significant positive** effects on health and well-being from active travel, including benefits of walking or cycling to onward travel by public transport. Expanding public transport and concessionary fares

and subsidy schemes will encourage more people to use public transport with significant positive effects on equalities and the economy.

There were no new interventions under this mission.

Results of the ISA

Table 5.1 below sets out the results of the ISA for each of the Sustainability objectives.

Table 5.1 Results of the ISA

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
Natural capital, ecosystem services	ISA 1: To maintain and enhance the provision of ecosystem services from the region's natural capital and deliver environmental net gain. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on natural capital. Potential for significant negative effects were identified where short and long-term priorities for major road and rail infrastructure from the SIP can affect natural capital and ecosystem services. Infrastructure such as a new HSI rail link to Medway, Southern access to Heathrow, A27 Improvements at Arundel, Lewes to Polegate, Lower Thames Crossing and Kent Lorry Park are more likely to affect a range of services such as food production, flood alleviation and water quality. Negative effects are also predicted for smaller-scale habitat loss and disturbance. Positive effects through natural capital enhancements are possible through the connection of green spaces and protection of habitats linking population centres which may otherwise be lost or severed through a lack of maintenance or through other development.
Alternatives	There is some uncertainty around the effects of bridge renewal to Hayling Island and effects on habitats and water resources. There may be minor effects from electrification of the Newbury to Taunton on the South West Main Line relating to overhead lines and any associated infrastructure.
Biodiversity	ISA 2: To protect and enhance habitats, species, valuable ecological networks and ecosystem functionality in the region, including through nature recovery and biodiversity net gain. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on biodiversity. Potential for significant negative effects were identified where short and long-term priorities for major road and rail infrastructure from the SIP has the potential to affect biodiversity. Examples include new HSI rail link to Medway, Southern access to Heathrow, A27 Improvements at Arundel, Lewes – Polegate and Kent Lorry Park. They could result in significant disturbance during construction (noise, vibration and dust) as well as the loss of land, which could both lead to damaged and segregated habitats. Coastal environments are particularly sensitive, so potential effects such as disturbance of wildlife and impacts on water quality from ferry services (e.g. new Sheerness to Hoo, Medway to Swale) is also predicted on a precautionary basis. Negative effects are predicted for smaller-scale habitat loss and disturbance.

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	Active travel schemes across the region associated with priorities for integration and sustainable growth have potential to result in positive effects . Although new routes could involve small scale loss of habitat (potentially larger with strategic mobility hubs), they could also be designed to enhance biodiversity, e.g. through creation of linking corridors, though new habitat would take time to establish. As with all linear infrastructure, habitat fragmentation could occur, but the scale of walking and cycle paths means any fragmentation would be minor due to the width of paths. Improvements to existing routes, as well as highway and rail corridors, create an opportunity to enhance habitats and ecological networks.
Alternatives	New interventions proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the previous assessment. There is some uncertainty around the effects of bridge renewal to Hayling Island in relation to Chichester and Langstone Harbours Ramsar, SAC and SPA but this will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Habitat Regulations and potential for disturbance from electrification between Newbury and Taunton from overhead lines.
Historic Environment	ISA 3: To protect and minimise harm to the historic environment, and to maximise opportunities for enhancement, including setting of assets and provision of access. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on the historic environment. Significant negative effects have potential to arise where major road and rail infrastructure from the SIP is proposed in sensitive areas or involves large-scale earthworks. There is potential for effects on buried (designated and non-designated) archaeology and historic landscapes but also on the setting of other historic assets such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, historic parks and gardens, conservation areas and undesignated assets of importance. Risks are greater for schemes such as A27 Arundel, Flimwell and Hurst Green Bypasses, Kent Lorry Park and Lewes – Polegate. Minor negative effects can occur from refurbishment or small-scale interventions due to components such as lighting, signage and overhead lines, which can also have a visual impact, particularly in areas of high heritage value (such as schemes near Arundel, Lewes and Brighton). There is potential for positive effects where reduced congestion, particularly in urban areas can improve setting and reduce deposition of particulate matter from traffic emissions on built heritage (A2 Dover access, additional rail freight paths to Southampton). Place-making interventions such as those at Canterbury and Medway can also improve cultural interpretation or access.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. There is some uncertainty around the effects of bridge renewal to Hayling Island in relation to setting of heritage assets (Scheduled Monuments or marine deposits) as this will be dependent on project design. There may be minor negative effects from

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	electrification between Newbury and Taunton on the South West Main Line, mainly from visual intrusion from overhead lines.
Landscape and townscape	ISA 4: To protect and enhance the quality of the region's distinctive landscapes/ townscapes and provide opportunities to connect people with them. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on landscapes and townscapes. Significant negative effects have potential to arise where major road and rail infrastructure from the SIP is proposed in corridors which potentially affect the South Downs National Park and National Landscapes, in addition to undesignated locally important landscapes. These can arise from loss of greenfield land and vegetation, but also components such as lighting, signage, and overhead lines. Risks are greater for schemes such as A27 Junctions and offline improvements at Arundel and Lewes – Polegate, new HSI rail link to Medway, and Eastbourne upgrade. The Waterside Branch Line could have significant negative effects on the New Forest National Park. Negative effects on visual amenity can also arise from small-scale interventions. However, positive effects may also arise from rail and other mass transit interventions by reducing vehicular traffic in landscapes, and related reduction in noise and visual disturbance. Place-making in urban centres (Canterbury and Medway) and active travel interventions across the region improve connections between people and townscapes/ landscapes.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. There is some uncertainty around the effects of bridge renewal to Hayling Island in relation to Chichester Harbour National Landscape as this will be dependent on project design. There may be minor negative or positive effects from installation of infrastructure to support electrification between Newbury and Taunton on the South West Main Line, mainly from visual intrusion.
Soils and resources	ISA 5: To promote the use of brownfield land and existing infrastructure, protecting soils and increasing resource efficiency. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on soils and resources. Significant negative effects were identified for the A27 Arundel and Lewes – Polegate interventions from the SIP. They are likely to result in large scale loss of soils, and potentially affecting best and most versatile agricultural land.

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	There is potential for deterioration in quality of, and loss of soils for other schemes, for example, the A29 Realignment, A27 Tangmere, A27 Fontwell, A27 Worthing and A27 Arundel interventions are all located in areas of high agricultural land value and have therefore resulted in negative effects. For several of the priorities and associated interventions, effects are uncertain, mainly due to the level of scheme information available. If development makes use of existing infrastructure, including the road network through reallocation of road space, there's potential for positive effects, however, if land take is required along with significant infrastructure and resources, there's potential for negative effects. The majority of infrastructure is likely to result in the use of resources and production and disposal of waste in construction.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not change the assessment. As new interventions are likely to be minor and associated with existing infrastructure, no effects on soils and resources were identified.
Water environment	ISA 6: To protect and enhance surface and groundwater quality. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on the water environment. Significant negative effects are predicted for large scale road schemes (such as A27 Polegate-Lewes and A27 Arundel), which have potential to increase surface water runoff and flood risk; and have impacts on surface water and groundwater, particularly from physical alteration as a result of development. Transport-related cumulative effects on potable water during operation are likely to be limited as interventions generally do not consume large amounts of water. Smaller-scale interventions may have effects similar to those listed above but are less likely to be significant and/or more able to be mitigated. Interventions such as new or an increase in ferry operations (e.g. new Sheerness to Hoo, Medway to Swale) may also have minor negative effects on water quality during construction of facilities and potentially operation. There is potential for positive effects from highway improvements, which provide opportunities to improve existing drainage network, reducing polluted run-off and potential for contamination as standards are upgraded.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. There is some uncertainty around the effects of bridge renewal to Hayling Island in relation to the marine environment. There are unlikely to be effects from other new interventions as these are based on existing infrastructure.
Air quality	ISA 7: To protect and enhance air quality by reducing transport related emissions The assessment of the Strategy has resulted in mixed effects on air quality.

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	Significant negative effects were identified for previous interventions included in the SIP comprising the A27 Arundel bypass, A27 Lewes to Polegate, and potentially the Kent Lorry Park long term solution, which could potentially increase vehicular traffic and associated emissions. For other smaller-scale highways schemes in the SIP, minor negative effects were predicted. Mixed positive and negative effects were common, where interventions are delivered in order to reduce congestion, these improve local air quality at junctions and pinchpoints, or reallocate lanes for public transport, but may also induce vehicular traffic. Examples include Smart Motorways M3 Junction 9, A34 Safety enhancements and A27 Junctions. Significant positive effects were predicted for mass transit interventions which are likely to induce high levels of modal shift such as Southampton Mass Transit, Future Phases South East Hampshire Rapid Transit, and Netley Line Service Enhancements. Significant positive effects were also identified for some of the rail schemes which reduce traffic congestion, such as removing level crossings at Totton and Mount Pleasant. Rail schemes also improve air quality through encouraging modal shift, although some interventions are likely to increase emissions during construction (e.g. HSI Link to Medway, Crossrail extension). Other interventions that support modal shift and have positive effects include active travel, and use of public transport. These will contribute to improving air quality (e.g. M27 Junction 5 / Southampton Airport Strategic Mobility Hub, Kent, Medway and East Sussex Mass Transit, Medway Active Travel Enhancements).
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. Enhancements to the existing Ebbsfleet Rail infrastructure and decarbonisation/ electrification of rail lines will have positive effects on air quality.
Climate change and greenhouse gases	ISA 8: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximise resilience to climate change. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on climate change and greenhouse gases. Significant negative effects were identified for bypass and dualling schemes on the A27 and A21 which could increase uptake of vehicular traffic and lead to negative cumulative effects from the Strategy. Large-scale construction for some interventions is also likely to have greater impacts from embodied carbon. For some highways interventions reallocation of road space for public transport (e.g. bus priority measures) and active travel (e.g. cycle lanes) may also have positive effects as encourage alternative modes. Examples include Basingstoke Mass Rapid Transit and Blackwater Valley Mass Rapid Transit. For many transport corridors, there are areas at risk from flooding and erosion, particularly on the south coast, and a precautionary negative effect is predicted, although the Resilience mission seeks to address this. Climate change generally negatively effects the operation of the rail and road network through flooding, snowfall, high temperatures and

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	wind. The West Coastway CMSP (Long distance) and M275 Junction 1 are examples of interventions located in areas prone to flooding. Climate change adaptation measures would need to be specific to each development. Similar to air quality, the impact of mission priorities and associated interventions on greenhouse gases and climate change effects, would also give rise to positive effects where there is modal shift, cumulatively these are likely to be significant. Active travel, smart motorways, and public transport interventions will contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Priorities to reduce fares for long distance transport, road user charging, research on alternatives fuels and decarbonisation would have significant positive effects.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. The intervention to improve highway maintenance would have significant positive effects in relation to climate resilience, enabling infrastructure to better withstand climatic events.
Noise	ISA 9: To reduce exposure to transport related noise and vibration. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on noise. Significant negative effects were identified for the A27 Arundel and Lewes – Polegate interventions from the SIP due to introduction of new sources of traffic noise. However, there may be positive effects from transport schemes such as active travel which could potentially support a modal shift and contribute to improving noise pollution. Efficient rail travel has the potential to reduce noise pollution through the reduction in traffic noise and easement of congestion. However, there is the potential at certain locations for noise levels to increase, with the introduction of more services at a higher speed. The assessment of some interventions in the SIP has identified a number of uncertain effects on noise and vibration. The frequency of new services is not yet known, but if there is a large increase in capacity the level of noise could be significantly increased.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. There are likely to be positive effects from Thames Valley Branch Line decarbonisation and Newbury – Taunton electrification, and potentially some minor negative effects from increased services.
Equalities	ISA 10: To increase the capacity and efficiency of the transportation network to support demographic changes, including improving access by equalities groups and deprived communities.

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	The assessment of the Strategy refresh has identified generally positive effects on equalities, Appendix A sets out further information to support the assessment. Most missions, priorities and interventions will provide greater connectivity to transport users, in particular missions for strategic connectivity, inclusion & integration and sustainable growth, will help communities gain greater access to jobs, services and facilities. Negative effects on equalities are associated with similar assessment for air quality and noise as set out above and may disproportionately affect older people, infants and people with some disabilities. Significant positive effects are predicted for geographically isolated groups from ferry enhancements, including to the Isle of White and Southampton to Ryde. In addition, disadvantaged groups and people less likely to own a private vehicle, such as the elderly or young people, will benefit from transport interventions such as Reading Mass Transit, A4 Reading-Newham-Slough and Blackwater Valley mass rapid transport schemes. Affordable fares, concession schemes and integrated ticketing also enable these groups to better access jobs, services and leisure opportunities.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. The priority for better design for people with reduced mobility (e.g. the elderly, disabled or pregnant women) would contribute to significant positive effects.
Health	ISA 11: To protect and enhance physical and mental health through active travel, access to public transport, and reductions in pollution. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has resulted in mixed effects on health, Appendix A sets out further information to support the assessment. Negative effects on health are associated with a similar assessment to air quality and noise as set out above. There are distinct health risks associated with exposure to particulates or sources of transport noise for sensitive or vulnerable groups. There is potential for minor negative effects at certain locations, for example the A27 Junctions. However, the majority of missions, priorities and interventions in the Strategy will have positive effects on health. Significant positive effects are predicted from active travel interventions which encourage physical activity, reducing health conditions such as obesity. Significant positive effects would arise from some ferry enhancements, due to access to education, work, social, leisure and cultural opportunities which in turn contribute to overall health and wellbeing. Other public transport interventions including strategic mobility hubs, mass rapid transport and rail schemes have positive effects, some of which are significant. For example, there are significant positive effects predicted for Eastbourne/Polegate Strategic Mobility Hub, Hastings / Bexhill Mass Rapid Transit, and Newbury / Thatcham Bus

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	Enhancements as well as other schemes. These have benefits such as active travel for first mile/ last mile, in addition to well-being from the socio-economic benefits listed above.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. There are positive effects from Thames Valley Branch Line Decarbonisation and Newbury – Taunton electrification. In addition, the improved wellbeing from the priority to provide better accessible design for people with reduced mobility (e.g. the elderly, disabled or pregnant women) would contribute to positive effects.
Community Safety	ISA 12: To promote safe transport through reducing accidents and improving safety of active travel and personal security, particularly on public transport. The assessment has generally identified positive effects on community safety as new interventions will be built to a high standard of safety. There may be some mixed effects as a precautionary approach, for example where there are personal safety concerns where design has not sufficiently progressed. Level crossings present a safety risk for all users and Network Rail believe that the best way of reducing level crossing risk is to eliminate the crossing completely by closing it. Significant positive effects were predicted for removal of level crossings (Mount Pleasant and Totton). Several highway interventions have been designed to improve road safety, including A21 Safety Enhancements, A22 Corridor Schemes . Other highway interventions will enable safe active travel interventions to be brought forward. Active travel schemes would also result in positive effects. Provision of off-road routes for cyclists and pedestrians will reduce the number of collisions involving them. People are more likely to choose active travel for journeys if there are suitable networks to travel on.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. The enhancement to the Ebbsfleet Rail Line and highways maintenance, and electrification/decarbonisation of rail all contribute to safety.
Economy	ISA 13: To promote a strong economy through the transport network with better access to opportunities. The assessment of the Strategy refresh has identified generally positive effects. Significant positive effects are likely to arise from affordable public transport fares, road and rail schemes such as the A27 Arundel bypass, A27 Lewes to Polegate, Lower Thames Crossing, Brighton Main Line 100mph operations, Sussex Coast Mass Rapid Transit, Eastbourne / Polegate Strategic Mobility Hub, Southampton Mass Transit, Waterside Branch Line, as well as other interventions.

ISA Topic	Summary of Assessment
	Positive effects are predicted where interventions may enhance long term economic prosperity by facilitating the building of a strong, low carbon economy, and by providing reliable and affordable transport choice to support growth. Economic centres would benefit from increases in rail passenger numbers and more reliable rails services achieved through upgrades to stations, electrification and improved interchanges. Access to employment centres could be enhanced through transport improvements, encouraging continued economic growth. Greater connectivity and capacity across the SE Region may also help to facilitate increased tourism opportunities, contributing further to the local and regional economy.
Alternatives	New interventions and measures proposed in this strategy do not substantially change the assessment. The enhancement to the Ebbsfleet Rail Line, Hayling Island Bridge renewal, and electrification/decarbonisation of rail all contribute to providing greater access to social and economic opportunities.

Review of cumulative effects

The SEA Regulations require that cumulative effects are considered when identifying likely significant effects. Cumulative effects arising from multiple sources within the Strategy are covered in Table 5.1 above. However, cumulative effects can also arise where several policies, plans or projects have a combined effect on an objective.

A review of plans and policies identified sources of potential cumulative effects and these are set out in Table 5.2 below.

It should be noted that at the strategic level, this list is not exhaustive and cumulative effects arising from individual projects and plans should be revisited as part of project level assessment. For example, noise, dust and visual have a combined effect which can only be determined at the project level.

Table 5.2 Sources of cumulative effects at a strategic level

Policy or Plan	Potential for cumulative effects
TfSE Transport Strategy	There is potential for cumulative regional impacts on all topics from development of multiple corridors. The nature and extent of the effects will depend on final schemes selected but, in particular, there is potential for cumulative effects from multiple new road or rail schemes.
National Networks National Policy Statement, DfT, 2024	The National Networks NPS supports both development of major rail infrastructure (including new and re-opened alignments) and also road improvements (including adding additional lanes to existing dual and single carriageway trunk roads, adding new slip roads, and improving junctions). An expanded network of strategic rail freight interchanges will also be developed. The Appraisal of Sustainability for the National Networks NPS recognises that some developments will have adverse local impacts on noise, emissions, landscape / visual amenity, loss of greenfield/ agricultural land, biodiversity, cultural heritage and water resources. A number of the interventions covered in the Strategy will also fall under the NPS, but there may be additive effects for additional interventions not covered in this Strategy.
Airports National Policy Statement, DfT, 2018	Expansion at London Heathrow in addition to making best use of existing aviation capacity (e.g. London Gatwick) is likely to increase transport requirements for all modes. The Appraisal of Sustainability for the Airports NPS identifies a number of significant adverse effects on communities, quality of life, biodiversity, noise, soil, water, air quality, carbon, waste and resources, historic environment and landscape.
Other nationally significant infrastructure in the Region	The National Networks NPS and Airports NPS are described above. However, further nationally significant infrastructure projects also have potential for cumulative effects across the Region, during construction and operation. The Planning Inspectorate publishes a list of potential projects: https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/project-search
Local Plans	Local plans are prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA), usually the Council or the national park authority for the area. They provide a vision for the future of each area and a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities. Allocations for

	economic and residential development are likely to stimulate transport demand and conversely improvements in economic transport corridors are likely to stimulate development. Sustainability Appraisals undertaken for Local Plans have similar topics to those listed for this ISA and identify potential for significant effects.
Local Transport Plans	Local Transport Plans enable Local Authorities to plan for transport in their areas. They can identify both strategic policy and implementation plans for delivering this policy. Therefore, like the Transport Strategy they identify policy options for implementing transport improvements, including different modes of transport. They also prioritise a number of areas and schemes for development over the plan period. Sustainability Appraisals undertaken for Local Transport Plans have similar topics to those listed for this ISA and identify potential for significant effects.

The review of plans and policies has identified a number of areas for cumulative effects:

- **Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services** – There is potential deterioration in quality, and severance / loss of connectivity of ecosystems and green infrastructure, with consequent reductions in ecosystem service provision. This may be particularly prevalent where there is development from a number of sources (e.g. from local plans) close to population centres, or that stimulated by transport corridors.
- **Biodiversity** – There is potential for cumulative loss, damage or fragmentation of statutory and non-statutory wildlife sites and habitats. Although it is assumed that protected species would be mitigated at a project level, there are wider impacts on biodiversity. Net gain over multiple development plans may be difficult to achieve.
- **Historic Environment** – There is potential for cumulative direct and indirect impacts on internationally, nationally and locally designated heritage assets, including their settings. This is in addition to cumulative effects on undesignated and unknown assets, the latter being potentially important.
- **Landscape and Townscape** – There is potential for cumulative direct and indirect impacts on designated landscapes and townscapes, including their settings. There is also potential for cumulative erosion of the character and quality of the South East's landscapes and townscapes.
- **Soils and Resources** – There is potential for cumulative deterioration in quality of, and loss of soils, including the best and most versatile agricultural land. There would be a cumulative use of resources and production and disposal of waste in construction.
- **Water Environment** – There is potential for cumulative increase in surface water runoff and flood risk; and impacts on surface water and groundwater, particularly from physical alteration as a result of development. Transport-related cumulative effects on potable water are likely to be limited.
- **Air Quality** – There may be cumulative benefits from transport initiatives in the SE in improving air quality, but increased uptake of vehicular traffic (especially in the short term) may worsen air quality in some areas.
- **Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases** – There may be cumulative benefits from transport initiatives in the South East in reducing greenhouse gases, but increased development is also likely to increase transport related greenhouse gas emissions, particularly where this leads to increases in vehicular traffic. Climate change

adaptation measures are likely to be specific to each development, but there may be cumulative benefits if implemented region-wide.

- **Noise and Vibration** – There are likely to be cumulative effects arising from noise of increased development, particularly transport related development such as road and rail, with cumulative effects on health and wellbeing, tranquillity and wildlife.
- **Health** – There may be cumulative effects, both positive and negative (depending on schemes implemented), from multiple transport schemes on health outcomes related to social isolation, physical inactivity and obesity. There may also be cumulative effects on health relating to air quality and noise.
- **Equalities** – There may be cumulative benefits from the integration of multiple transport interventions enabling more reliable and comfortable public transport, which is accessible by walking and/or cycling.
- **Community Safety** – There may be cumulative benefits (depending on scheme design) on fear of crime and transport related accidents, due to opportunities to improve safety standards on all forms of transport.
- **Economy** – there are likely to be cumulative economic benefits in relation to development in the South East due to links between transport and productivity in the Region.

6. Mitigation and Monitoring

The SEA Regulations require that mitigation measures are considered to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects on the environment. Mitigation measures include both proactive avoidance of adverse effects and actions taken after potential effects are identified.

The SEA Regulations also require that monitoring is undertaken so that the significant effects of implementation can be identified and remedial action taken. The monitoring also helps measure the performance of the environmental outcomes of the Strategy and includes metrics from the TfSE State of the Region Reporting¹⁸. Monitoring appears in italics in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Mitigation and Monitoring

Topic	Mitigation/ Monitoring	Delivery mechanism
Natural Capital and Ecosystem Services	- Design of new transport to take into account natural capital and ecosystems services. - Design of new transport infrastructure should seek environmental net gain such as pollination, flood risk management, clean air, carbon reduction, infrastructure resilience, and connecting people with nature, as well as other place-making and visitor economy objectives. <i>Monitoring: Environmental net gain metrics (minimum of 10%)</i>	EIA Project level design Biodiversity net gain calculation
Biodiversity	- Optioneering and design of infrastructure should avoid or minimise impact on designated sites, habitats and species. - Linear infrastructure can provide long distance, strategic, nature recovery networks if managed in such a way as to promote biodiversity. <i>Monitoring: Biodiversity net gain metrics (minimum of 10%)</i>	Ecological impact assessment (including as part of EIA) Biodiversity net gain calculation Project level design
Historic Environment	- Optioneering and design of infrastructure should avoid or minimise impact on heritage assets and designations, including setting. - Staged archaeological evaluation and <i>archaeological monitoring</i>.	Heritage impact assessment (including as part of EIA) Archaeological investigation and monitoring.

¹⁸ <https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/state-of-region-report/#:~:text=This%20first%20iteration%20of%20the,Transport%20for%20the%20South%20East.>

Topic	Mitigation/ Monitoring	Delivery mechanism
Landscape and Townscape	• Optioneering and design of infrastructure should avoid or minimise impact landscape/ townscape, historic environment and nature conservation designations. • Design of new transport infrastructure should retain and enhance ecosystem functionality and green (as well as blue) infrastructure. • <i>Monitoring: Local authority green infrastructure mapping</i>	Landscape and visual impact assessment (including as part of EIA) Project level design Local Plan evidence base
Soils and Resources	• Optioneering and design to minimise greenfield land-take. • <i>Monitoring: Loss of Best and most versatile agricultural land to transport infrastructure.</i>	EIA Project level design
Water Environment	• Optioneering and design to take into account quality of water resources and areas of flood risk. • Sustainable Drainage Schemes and natural flood risk management measures. • Environmental net gain to improve quality of aquatic systems. • <i>Monitoring: Transport related reasons for not achieving good ecological status.</i>	Flood Risk Assessment Project level design River basin management plans. Water Framework Directive assessments
Air Quality	• Design to increase opportunities for active travel, public transport and rail freight. • <i>Monitoring: NOx and particulate pollution levels in urban areas.</i> • <i>Monitoring: Mortality linked to air pollution</i>	Included in Strategy Missions Local authority air quality monitoring TfSE State of the Region Report
Climate Change and GHG Emissions	• Efficient use of materials, low energy and renewables in infrastructure (e.g. lighting, provision of vehicle charging). • Carbon emissions modelling for Local Transport Plan and individual projects. • Optioneering and design to avoiding areas of flood and erosion risk. • Use of materials for construction and maintenance to incorporate climate resilience and design life. • <i>Monitoring: CO2 emissions from transport.</i> • <i>Monitoring: Mode share of trips per person per year.</i> • <i>Monitoring: Percentage change in weather events affecting the rail network</i>	Included in Strategy Missions Environmental assessment Carbon assessment (and major projects) Carbon accounting (e.g. for major construction projects) Project level design and procurement TfSE State of the Region Report
Noise and Vibration	• Choice of materials and project level design (route options, bunding, screening etc). • <i>Monitoring: Number of noise important areas in the South East</i>	Noise assessment Project level design

Topic	Mitigation/ Monitoring	Delivery mechanism
Population and Equalities	• Accessibility for all including those with reduced mobility considered in design. • Affordability considered in public transport and new mobility interventions. • <i>Monitoring: Transport-related social exclusion (TRSE) metrics.</i>	Included in Strategy Missions Project level Equalities or Diversity Impact Assessment TfSE State of the Region Report
Health	• Integrate opportunities for active travel in design. • <i>Monitoring: mode share of walking and cycling.</i> • <i>Monitoring: Adult activity levels</i>	Included in Strategy Missions TfSE State of the Region Report
Community Safety	• Community and personal safety measures, such as lighting, information provision and layout, considered in design. • <i>Monitoring: Number of people Killed and Seriously Injured by road transport.</i>	Project level design
Economy	• No mitigation required. • <i>Monitoring: TfSE transport and the economy metrics.</i>	Included in Strategy Missions. TfSE State of the Region Report

Appendix A – Health and Equalities Assessments

Equalities Information to Support Assessment

Introduction

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) considers the impact of a project or policy on persons or groups of persons who share characteristics which are protected under section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 ("protected characteristics") and might also include others considered to be vulnerable within society such as low-income groups. It is an information gathering tool which enables decision makers within public bodies to implement their equality duty under the Equality Act 2010: to advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

This assessment looks at the following 'equalities groups' which cover both protected characteristics under the Act and other groups (*):

- Gender
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Deprivation*
- Social isolation*

Protected characteristics for gender reassignment and sexual orientation have not been included in the assessment due to a lack of available data relating to effects on these groups. Marriage and civil partnership is not included because the parts of the act covering services and public functions, premises and education do not apply to that protected characteristic¹⁹. For the purposes of this assessment deprivation covers deprived groups across all equalities categories listed, for example people with disabilities are more likely to also suffer from deprivation as they may be less economically active.

The sections below provide an overview of these groups in the South East from the Strategy Evidence base and then looks at the implications the Strategy outcomes and delivery on them.

¹⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-for-public-authorities>

Snapshot of the South East

According to the 2021 Census population for the South East was 9,278,100, growth of 7.25% over a 10-year period from 2011²⁰. The percentage of the population aged 65+ is slightly higher in the South than for England as a whole (19.5% compared with 18.4%) and slightly lower for the 20-35 age bracket (18% compared with 19.6%). 51.1% of the population is female and 48.9% male.

Ethnic and religious background data are set out in Table A.1 & Table A.2 below.

Table A.1 Ethnic Diversity in the South East

Ethnic group	% South East	% England
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	7	9.6
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	2.4	4.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	2.8	3
White	86.3	81
Other ethnic group	1.5	2.2

Table A.2 Religion in the South East

Religion	% South East	% England
No religion	40.2	36.7
Christian	46.5	46.3
Buddhist	0.6	0.5
Hindu	1.7	1.8
Jewish	0.2	0.5
Muslim	3.3	6.7
Sikh	0.8	0.9
Other religion	0.6	0.6
No religion	40.2	36.7

²⁰ ONS Local Statistics (2024). South East: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/areas/E12000008/> (included in this area are Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes but indicative of issues in the TfSE study area)

In terms of disability under the Equality Act (mental or physical impairment that has a substantial and long-term effects on ability to do normal day-to-day activities), 16% of the population in the South East identified themselves as disabled in the 2021 Census.

The TfSE Evidence base notes that in relation to Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), socioeconomic outcomes tend to be weaker in the east of the region and strongest in the north-west. Areas with the highest deprivation are primarily urban, especially concentrated in larger southern towns in cities, such as South Hampshire, Brighton and Folkestone. A band of more deprived rural areas runs north-south through central Kent. The least deprived areas are mostly peripheral to the region's major economic hubs, especially those with strong connections to London in the North West of the area.

Assessment

The assessment looks at:

- 1) at a plan level, whether the missions are likely to affect equalities groups by reviewing relationship between the desired outcomes for each mission against the equalities groups to ensure they aren't disproportionately or differentially affected; and
- 2) at a strategic project level, reviewing whether the types of interventions in the Strategy are likely to have effects on equalities groups. These considerations were then used to support the assessments at Appendix B.

The following key is used to determine the relationship between outcomes and the effects on equalities groups for the first part of the assessment.

Symbol	Definition
✓	Outcome is likely to have a positive effect on the equalities group in comparison with the general population.
0	Outcome is unlikely to have an effect on the equalities group in comparison with the general population.
✗	Outcome is likely to have a negative effect on the equalities group in comparison with the general population.

Table A.3 and A.4 below set out the results of the assessment, a summary of the results is presented below.

Outcomes are predicted to either have no effect on equalities groups or a positive effect. None of the outcomes were predicted to have a negative effect.

Outcomes which increased customer confidence, reduced severance and improve the public realm were likely to benefit all equalities groups, as they may have less confidence using the transport system and benefit from safe spaces for social interaction. Outcomes that give rise to reduced emissions (through reduced congestion, modal shift or decarbonisation) are likely to have greater benefit to groups who may be more sensitive to air pollution than others due to respiratory illnesses, certain disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, younger and older people. In addition, areas of

deprivation are often associated with urban environments which are more likely to suffer from poor air quality. Outcomes that increase public transport, benefit groups that are less likely to own a private car and rely on alternative transport modes. These groups include the elderly, young people and economically-deprived. Economic outcomes have greater potential to benefit deprived or socially isolated groups.

Depending on design, types of project intervention (highways, rail, active travel etc), may have positive and negative effects on equalities groups. These are reflected in the ISA assessments in Appendix B.

Table A.3 Equalities Assessment of Outcomes

Outcomes	Gender	Religion	Age	Dis-ability	Pregnan-cy	Race	Deprivat-ion	Isolation
Strategic Connectivity								
The key outcome is to increase the modal share of both passenger and freight journeys using sustainable travel options on strategic corridors between the South East's major economic centres and international gateways. This will enable the South East's population and economy to grow while minimising the adverse impacts of transport on society and the environment.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
Reduce congestion, improve air quality, reduce severance, improve safety, and contribute to the overall satisfaction of transport users. In turn, it should strengthen public transport demand and revenues, placing the bus and rail industries on a more sustainable financial footing.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
Extend access to employment opportunities as well as commercial and public services to wider population catchments, particularly in rural and coastal areas, ensuring economic growth and inclusivity across functional economic zones.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	✓
Resilience								
The key outcome of this mission is to reduce the effects of disruption on the strategic transport network. By tackling these disruptions, we can deliver good punctuality and reliability across the network.	0	0	0	✓	✓	0	0	0
Reliable journeys are critical to user confidence, and reducing delays will enhance the overall performance of both passengers and freight customers. Ensuring more predictable and reliable journey times will also support economic productivity, as businesses and individuals rely on consistent travel and delivery schedules.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
Reduce disruption to all users of the transport network from planned engineering works and maintenance. While such works are necessary to ensure	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0

Outcomes	Gender	Religion	Age	Dis-ability	Pregnan-cy	Race	Deprivat-ion	Isolation
the continued safety, reliability, and improvement of the network, they often lead to service delays, cancellations, and inconveniences for all transport network users.								
Contribute to greater customer satisfaction. When users experience fewer delays, smoother journeys, and consistent service levels, they are more likely to trust and depend on public transport. This not only benefits residents but also supports the South East's economic growth by attracting businesses and visitors to the region.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
Reduce the cost of transport to users and, in the long-term, government. Costs arising from compensation claims, damage to infrastructure and vehicles should be easier to control with a more resilient transport system. A more efficient, cost-effective system benefits all stakeholders by freeing up resources to invest in further enhancements and expansions.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Inclusion and Integration								
Increased customer satisfaction across all user groups, ensuring that everyone can access and use the transport network confidently and comfortably	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increased proportion of accessible and step-free stations and hubs , making the entire network more inclusive for users with mobility needs, parents with pushchairs, and the elderly.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
Improved safety across the transport network , aiming for a "Target Zero" for killed and seriously injured incidents. This will be achieved through better infrastructure design, enhanced safety measures, and targeted initiatives that prioritise the safety of all users, especially vulnerable road users.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	0	0
Higher percentage of the population engaged in physical activity , supported by better active travel options (walking and cycling) and enhancements to the public realm. This will contribute to healthier lifestyles and reduce reliance on private vehicles for short trips.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0

Outcomes	Gender	Religion	Age	Dis-ability	Pregnan-cy	Race	Deprivat-ion	Isolation
Improved air quality by encouraging a shift from private car use to more sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling, and public transport, thereby reducing emissions and pollutants.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
Reduction in severance and improvement of the public realm , creating more cohesive communities where residents can move safely and comfortably through shared spaces. This includes addressing barriers like busy roads and railway lines that can divide communities and hinder access to services.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reduced real-term percentage of household income spent on housing and transport costs , ensuring that residents have affordable access to housing and mobility options, making the region more equitable.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Decarbonisation								
The key outcome of this mission is to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by transitioning to zero-emission vehicles and energy, increasing the use of sustainable travel modes, and reducing the overall reliance on fossil fuel journeys across the South East.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
By 2050, we aim for 100% of private vehicles to be zero-emission , with intermediate targets of 35% by 2030 and 80% by 2040. Similarly, all buses will need to be zero-emission by 2035, and rail services decarbonised by 2050. Some local authorities in the South East want to move faster than the milestones set at a national level.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
Promoting active travel for short journeys and increasing the mode share of both bus and rail for longer journeys. This is especially important in the shorter term as it will help limit our emissions while most cars are still powered by fossil fuels.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0

Outcomes	Gender	Religion	Age	Dis-ability	Pregnan-cy	Race	Deprivat-ion	Isolation
Freight transport must also play its part in achieving decarbonisation. Through increased rail freight use, optimised logistics, and adapting clean technology and fuels, we will contribute to overall emission reductions in this critical sector. This will also help to ease pressure on the region's roads while supporting sustainable economic growth.	0	0	✓	✓	✓	0	✓	0
Establish the South East as a leader in this field , attracting overseas investment and creating new jobs in the region	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Decarbonisation								
The key outcome of this mission is that any major development is supported by improvements to transport infrastructure and services, especially for sustainable transport.	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	0
Ensure all major developments (e.g. 3,000 dwellings or an expansion of more than 20%, or a major generator/attractor of demand e.g. hospital, stadia) have high quality public transport services (2-4 services per hour) and high-quality active travel infrastructure.	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	0
Increase the percentage of the population and jobs within a 1,500-metre radius of a public transport access point offering a metro-level service frequency of at least 4 services per hour.	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓	0
Ensure a higher percentage of the population can reach all key services within a 30-minute travel time , whether by public transport, walking, cycling, or driving. This includes access to healthcare, education, shopping, and leisure facilities.	0	0	✓	0	0	0	✓	0
Promote the development of well-connected new and growing places by aligning housing and employment growth with high-quality public transport and active travel corridors , as well as good highway access. This will support the creation of vibrant, sustainable communities where residents and businesses can thrive.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Increase the percentage of new dwellings within 10 minutes of metro-level public transport services and high-quality active travel routes. Ensuring that new	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Outcomes	Gender	Religion	Age	Dis-ability	Pregnan- cy	Race	Deprivat- ion	Isolation
developments are located in places that offer residents a wide range of sustainable travel options.								

Table A.4 Equalities assessment of transport typologies

Type of intervention	Equalities considerations for assessment of interventions
Highways	Road users, including both private car and public transport users, will benefit from more capacity and greater journey time reliability through the re-distribution of traffic. Strategic improvements to roads are likely to have a beneficial impact on public transport and will therefore benefit people using these facilities to access education, employment and/or health services, particularly those beyond their local neighbourhood. These include younger and older people, people with disabilities, as well as the unemployed. However, the provision of new roads may also increase air pollution. This is particularly detrimental to people with respiratory illnesses, certain disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, younger and older people, who may be more sensitive to air pollution. Highway works may also result in beneficial or adverse impacts for active travel users should journey lengths, barriers to travel, or levels of perceived severance change. This is relevant to those with limited mobility, including older people, those with disabilities which restrict mobility, and parents/carers using push chairs.
Rail	Rail users will benefit from more capacity and potentially faster train times or more frequent services, leading to greater journey reliability. Improved availability and accessibility of public transport in the region will benefit those without a personal car (this includes people those who may be unable to drive a car due to their age or poor health). Strategic improvements are likely to have a beneficial impact on people using rail networks to access education, employment and other services beyond their local neighbourhood, particularly younger and older people, people with disabilities, as well as the unemployed.

Type of intervention	Equalities considerations for assessment of interventions
	Improvements to stations and carriages can better accommodate those with limited mobility (such as the disabled, elderly and people using push chairs). Ensuring information is available both visibly, audibly and in multiple languages is important for those with sight or hearing impairments or those who may not understand the English language. By providing alternative options to freight transportation via rail will reduce road congestion. This may also improve local air quality with a reduction in freight vehicles on the road network, and particularly benefit people with respiratory illnesses, certain disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, younger and older people who may be more sensitive to air pollution.
Bus and mass transit	Improved availability and accessibility of public transport in the region will benefit those without a personal car (this includes those who live in more deprived areas and the unemployed), or who may be unable to drive a car due to their age or poor health. Improved quality and service of public transport may attract more users, reducing private car use. This would have knock on benefits of a cleaner environment by reducing air pollution, particularly for people with respiratory illnesses, certain disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, younger and older people who may be more sensitive to air pollution. Improvements of access to bus and light rail stops/stations will accommodate those with limited mobility (such as the disabled, elderly, and parents/ carers using push chairs). Ensuring information is available both visibly, audibly and in multiple languages is important for those with sight or hearing impairments or those who may not understand the English language. Bus and tram stops should be designed to accommodate users who need seating, such as the elderly or those with a disability.
Ferry	All users would benefit from greater connectivity from both new and improved services. This would particularly benefit geographically isolated groups in coastal areas or on islands, enabling greater access to education, employment, health services and leisure. Increased tourism can also benefit deprived groups in these areas. Design of services, particularly where these are for foot passengers, need to be accessible for those with reduced mobility, including the elderly and some disabilities.
Active travel (walking & cycling)	The provision of new cycling and walking infrastructure could encourage the public to opt for a sustainable travel option instead of vehicle reliant services. This could lead to improved air quality in urban areas, which would benefit people with respiratory illnesses, certain disabilities, pregnancy and maternity, younger and older people who may be more sensitive to air pollution.

Type of intervention	Equalities considerations for assessment of interventions
	The modal shift from private cars to active travel will provide health benefits to those who choose this option. New and improved cycleways and walkways facilitate exercise and for those who may have felt they cannot walk/cycle in their area due to a lack of access to safe walk and cycle routes. Access to green areas or open space may be facilitated because of new/improved cycle and walkways which also provides health benefits. However, people with limited mobility (such as persons with a disability which restricts participation and the elderly) may not experience the benefits from active travel (walking and cycling), depending on the level of use that is possible for them. Developments should cater for all levels of mobility so as not to exclude people who are unable to participate in active travel, for example ensuring walkways and are step-free, non-slip and visually appropriate to enable wheelchairs users, and those with reduced mobility or limited vision to access routes.
Other (ticketing, information, mobility hubs)	The provision of public transport facilities could improve mobility in the region and accessibility to employment, education and / or health services for people who live outside urban areas or who cannot make door-to-door trips by public transport. Supporting people without access to private cars to use alternative modes of travel (taxis, private hire vehicles, public transport, active travel) will benefit people who cannot drive due to health reasons or their age, as well as those that do not own their own car. The provision of public transport schemes would particularly benefit people suffering deprivation, as well as socially isolated individuals needing access to community services and facilities. Improving the quality of streets, public realm, and wayfinding signage will benefit all groups of people. It is assumed that design standards will be adhered to and specific consideration of certain types of disability such as wheelchair users, the deaf and blind would be given when designing improvements to public realm to ensure that there is no potential for adverse impacts on these vulnerable users. Safety in design should consider the needs of people with limited mobility and ensure that neighbourhood facilities are accessible to all users, as well as acknowledge the potential for localised crime, which may be targeted at faith, race or gender groups. Consideration should be given to all travel users to ensure everyone is included in any campaigns to promote behaviour change. For example, over reliance on web-based information, or e-ticketing, might disadvantage older people or people on low incomes who do not have regular internet access.

Health Information to Support Assessment

Introduction

A wide range of factors can contribute to a person's health including the physical, social and economic environment, in addition to a person's individual characteristics and behaviours. The World Health Organisation states that to a large extent, factors such as where we live, the state of our environment, genetics, our income and education level, and our relationships with friends and family all have considerable impacts on health, whereas the more commonly considered factors such as access and use of health care services often have less of an impact²¹.

Transport interacts with a number of these factors including:

- **Environmental conditions** – usually this includes aspects such as transport noise and air quality. Exposure to air pollution can also cause a range of health impacts, including effects on lung function; exacerbation of asthma; increases in respiratory and cardiovascular disease and lung cancer. Interactions between health and transport noise have shown that this can cause both physical and wellbeing effects. These include hypertension, cardiovascular disease, sleep disturbance stress and annoyance.
- **Socio-economic conditions** – Transport is an important facilitator of social inclusion and wellbeing. Transport barriers can be intimately related to job opportunities. If transport is (or is perceived to be) too expensive, then people are not able to make the journeys they need to get into work or move into education/training.
- **Lifestyle factors** – Transport can influence physical and mental health. Regular physical activity, including walking and cycling, provides significant benefits for health through improving muscular and cardiorespiratory fitness, maintaining healthy body weight and reducing risk of a range of conditions and diseases. It also improves mental health by reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression. Transport can increase anxiety through aspects such as driver stress and isolation, poor information and connectivity on public transport.

The sections below provide an overview of health in the South East from the Strategy Evidence base and then sets out the health effects of delivering the Strategy to be included in the ISA.

Snapshot of the South East

The 2021 census showed that 50% of residents in the South East considered themselves to be in 'very good health', 34% in 'good health' 11.8 in 'fair' health, 3.3 % in 'bad' health

²¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/determinants-of-health#:~:text=The%20determinants%20of%20health%20include,person's%20individual%20characteristics%20and%20behaviours.>

and 0.9% in 'very bad' health. Selected indicators of health in the South East are shown in Table A.5 below.

Table A.5 Indicators of Health in the South East²²

Indicator	Period	Region	England
Life expectancy at birth (male)	2022	80.6	79.3
Life expectancy at birth (female)	2022	84.1	79.2
Under 75 morality rate from cardiovascular diseases	2023	62.1	77.4
Killed and seriously injured (KSI) on England's roads	2023	89.8*	91.9*
Percentage of physically active adults	2021/22	70.5%	67.3%
Percentage of adults (aged 18 plus) classified as overweight or obese	2021/22	62.7%	63.8%
Year 6 prevalence of obesity (10-11yrs)	2022/23	19.4%	22.7%
Deprivation score	2019	15.5	21.7
% of people in employment	2022/23	78%	75.7%

* Value is estimated per vehicle miles

The data shows that in terms of life expectancy and circulatory diseases, the South East is generally better than the national average. While childhood obesity is generally lower than the average, it is increasing.

The Health Profile for South East England 2021²³ states that mental health and wellbeing have deteriorated. Between 2019/20 and 2020/21, the proportions of people in the South East reporting high anxiety, low happiness, low satisfaction and low worthwhile all increased compared to the previous five years. The percentage of adults overweight or obese continued to rise from 59.7% in 2015/16 to 61.5% in 2019/20, with the highest percentages in Medway, Portsmouth and Kent. The prevalence of high blood pressure in the South East has shown little change from 13.6% in 2015/16 to 14.1% in 2020/21. High blood pressure is associated with heart and kidney disease and strokes.

Assessment

At a strategic project level, the health assessment reviews whether the types of interventions in the Strategy are likely to have effects on health. These considerations were then used to support the assessments at Appendix B.

²² Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (2024) Local Authority Health Profiles: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/qid/1938132701/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/302/are/E10000011/yr/3/cid/4/tbm/1> (this data also includes additional local authorities (Bracknell Forest, Buckinghamshire, Reading, Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham) but indicative of TfSE)

²³ Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2022) Health Profile for the South East of England 2021: <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/static-reports/health-profile-for-england/regional-profile-south-east.html> (indicative of issues in the TfSE study area)

Table A.6 Health assessment of transport typologies

Type of intervention	Health considerations for assessment of interventions
Highways	New roads would likely increase capacity and number of vehicles moving through areas which may increase air quality and noise impacts on health for nearby receptors. Online improvements will help to ease congestion, reducing driver stress, but could also lead to an increase in capacity. In the long-term emissions also affect health and well-being through the impacts of climate change. The creation and expansion of the road network may not promote the use of active transport methods which may have negative effects on physical activity and health. Road schemes should aim to safely incorporate and expand footpath and cycleway infrastructure wherever possible to promote more active means of transport including the strategic road network. Design should reduce any severance from road schemes by enhancing access for all users, including pedestrians, horse riders, and people with disabilities or health conditions. Highway works are likely to benefit from improved road safety as they will be designed to modern standards. The provision of new roads may lead to increased access to areas of employment.
Rail	New railway lines may increase impacts on health related to noise and air quality by bringing transport routes closer to receptors, however the overall effect of rail on noise and public health is considerably lower than roads. Rail improvements encourage modal shift and may afford benefits to health of the South-East population with improvements to air quality. Electrification and decarbonisation of rail reduces potential impacts on air quality and noise levels. Long-term this also benefits health and well-being through the impacts of climate change. Public transport interventions often increase users' total physical activity levels (e.g. by walking/cycling to rail stations) which may have benefits to health, access and physical activity. There is also potential to improve well-being through social interactions. Measures such as secure cycle storage should be included in any station upgrade to encourage active travel. An increase in uptake of rail services within the South East has the potential to reduce the number of vehicles on roads which may have a positive effect on road safety. New rail lines, service and station improvements will increase accessibility and access, also providing greater access to employment.
Bus and mass transit	Improvements to bus services and provision of mass-transit has the potential to increase the attractiveness and reliability of travelling by public transport for passengers. Any increase in bus usage, as well of use of new light rail transit schemes, could have beneficial effects on air quality and noise as well as road safety, with a potential reduction in the number of vehicles on roads in the South East. Electrification of buses or trams reduces impacts on health, through air quality and noise levels. Long-term this also benefits health and well-being through reducing the impacts of climate change.

Type of intervention	Health considerations for assessment of interventions
	Public transport interventions often increase users total physical activity levels (e.g. by walking/cycling to and from bus/tram stops) which may have benefits to health, access and physical activity. There is also potential to improve well-being through social interactions.
Ferry	Improvements to ferry services, including new routes has the potential to increase the attractiveness and reliability of travelling by ferry for passengers. Modal shift from using private vehicles has beneficial effects on health in relation to air quality and noise. Long-term, reducing emissions (including through electrification) also benefits health and well-being through reducing the impacts of climate change. Public transport interventions often increase users total physical activity levels (e.g. by walking/cycling to and from ferry terminals) which may have benefits to health through access and physical activity. There is also potential to improve well-being through social interactions.
Active travel	New or improved cycle and pedestrian infrastructure will encourage active travel and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists which may also indirectly result in a reduction in road congestion by providing attractive and reliable alternatives. In addition, modal shift to more active transport may have benefits to health-related conditions associated with noise and air quality in the South East, particularly around major urban centres and transport hubs. Long-term this also benefits health and well-being through reducing the impacts of climate change. Walkable environments should be prioritised in new residential developments and should be integrated into existing pedestrian networks, providing physical activity and social interaction. Improving walking and cycling networks between urban areas and greenspace, including the surrounding countryside will also provide physical and mental health benefits. Walkways and cycleways should be improved and designed, to enable access and health benefits of all users, including those with reduced mobility.
Other (ticketing, information, new mobility)	Integrated ticketing and provision of information will reduce journey anxiety. Access to bike or scooter schemes, in addition to provision for active travel at mobility hubs will support positive health effects described above.

Appendix B ISA Assessments

Assessment tables are provided as a separate document and use the following key:

Key to Effects	
++	Potential for significant positive effects
+	Potential for minor positive effects
-	Potential for minor negative effects
--	Potential for significant negative effects
+/-	Potential for both positive and negative effects
?	Uncertain effects
0	Negligible or no effects

This page is intentionally left blank

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Transport for the South East - KCC endorsement of Transport Strategy for the South East

Responsible Officer

Katie Pettitt - GT TRA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Tim Read - GT TRA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Growth Environment and Transport

Responsible Service

Major Capital Programme Team

Responsible Head of Service

Tim Read - GT TRA

Responsible Director

Haroona Chughtai - GT TRA

Aims and Objectives

Background:

Kent County Council (KCC) was a founding member of the Sub-national Transport Body (STB), Transport for the South East (TfSE), participating and funding TfSE since 2017. In July 2020 a decision (20/0010) was taken to support the TfSE Proposal to Government for Statutory Powers, including endorsing its first Transport Strategy. TfSE's Board agreed in July 2024 to update its Transport Strategy, which was subject to public consultation from December 2024 to March 2025. KCC, as a member of the Partnership Board, is currently being requested to endorse the new Transport Strategy.

KCC contributed to the Draft Transport Strategy through its representative and various working groups. KCC gave generally positive consultation response, highlighting alignment with Kent's Local transport Plan 5 but requested some changes and timeline flexibility given the significant changes across local government in Kent.

By endorsing the Transport Strategy, KCC will benefit from being a part of the voice of the wider South East when the new Transport Strategy is presented to government. Schemes and interventions in the Transport Strategy that are in Kent will therefore have increased visibility with the Department for Transport. Although KCC would be endorsing the new Transport Strategy as a whole, some of its content does not

apply to the KCC area, such as improving ferry services to the Isle of Wight.

Overview of the new Transport Strategy:

The Transport Strategy outlines TfSE's role and the context for updating the Transport Strategy, this included policy change, travelling impacts post Covid-19 pandemic and impacts on trading post-Brexit. It highlights the current challenges facing the south-east which include poor east-west connectivity, lack of funding for transport interventions and reducing productivity.

The overarching vision for the new Transport Strategy is:

"Our Vision for the South East to offer the highest quality of life for all and be a global leader in archiving sustainable, net zero carbon growth."

The Strategy prioritises five main missions: Strategic Connectivity, Resilience, decarbonisation, Inclusion and Integration. Each mission is underpinned by clearly defined outcomes, as well as short- and long-term priorities that facilitate the achievement of the outcomes.

The Transport Strategy explains how it will be delivered, highlighting both challenges and opportunities. It emphasises the importance of regional collaboration with partners such as transport providers, government and universities.

The following EQIA evaluates the equality implications to KCC in taking the decision to endorse the TfSE new Transport Strategy for the South East.

EQIA Overview:

The EQIA finds that the overall goals and outcomes of the strategy are expected to be either neutral or beneficial for protected characteristic groups. However, specific projects or actions proposed within the strategy could have both positive and negative impacts on equalities groups and would be required to be individually assessed.

In addition to the benefits that all users (KCC residents) will gain from endorsing the new Transport Strategy for the South East, individuals with certain protected characteristics should also experience additional advantages. The protected characteristics expected to see improvements include:

- ❑ Age (increased design consideration for accessibility and increased confidence in independent journeys)
- ❑ Disability (improved design considerations for increased accessibility and safety)
- ❑ Pregnancy and maternity (reduced emissions and improved health)
- ❑ Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion (improvements to public realm could reduce fear of hate crimes for vulnerable groups).

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Transport for South East (TfSE) alongside its consultant team of Arup and Steer ran a consultation for 12

weeks from December 2024 to March 2025 on their Draft Strategy. They conducted a range of consultation and engagement activities with the aim to encourage meaningful engagement and to update the Transport Strategy accordingly. They consulted with a full spectrum of stakeholders. This included the TfSE Partnership Board, Key Partners, socially excluded groups, expert working groups and the wider public. Feedback was received from 742 individuals and 69 organisations, with 94% of organisations and 74% of individuals who responded either strongly supporting or supporting the vision and goals in the strategy. The final version of the Transport Strategy has been reviewed by KCC and is considered to have adequately addressed KCC's consultation response.

The TfSE Partnership Board is comprised of representatives from all member local authorities across the South-East, as well as representatives from Network Rail, National Highways and Transport for London. The Partnership Board has played an integral role in the refinement of the strategy through the following activities of engagement:

- Partnership Board Meetings where comments were invited.
- A dedicated Task and Finish Group was established and collaborated with the TfSE officer team through four sessions to enhance and refine the content of the Draft Transport Strategy.
- Engagement Workshop prior to the Partnership Board's meeting on the 22nd July 2024.

Key stakeholders were invited to participate in a series of workshops, during which the content of the strategy was collaboratively developed. This consisted of:

- Two scenario planning workshops in April and May 2024
- Three strategy development workshops in August, September and October 2024
- Challenge definition workshop on the 11th April 2024
- Informal Fireside Chats throughout October and November 2024

TfSE, supported by Arup, held two online workshops for socially excluded groups using the Double Diamond approach to improve inclusivity within the strategy. In total 16 individuals took part. The first workshop focused on identifying the challenges faced by socially excluded individuals. Participants shared their experiences and feelings of using different modes of transport and created a challenge statements, which identified a problem, the impact of this problem and how it made the individual feel. The Second workshop 'Develop and Do' focused on assessing the Challenge Statements according to their scale and impact. The data collected helped shaped the transport Strategy by understand real-world barriers to transport experiences and offer inclusive solutions.

TfSE ran an online survey via its Your Voices platform to gather public feedback across the South East. The objective was to reach a demographically and geographically representative sample. To promote the survey, TfSE issued press releases on news outlets, podcasts and social media channels. Full details are available in the Your Voices Survey Report.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers
Residents/Communities/Citizens Residents/communities/citizens
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
Yes
Details of Positive Impacts
By endorsing the Transport Strategy, KCC will benefit from being part of the voice of wider South East when the new Transport Strategy is presented to government. This collective representation increases the visibility of Kent-based schemes and interventions with the Department for Transport, helping to promote inclusive and accessible transport outcomes. The new Transport Strategy proposes a range of Missions that if implemented will have positive outcomes for all users, but specific positive impacts have been identified for the following protected characteristics: ☐ Age ☐ Disability ☐ Pregnancy & maternity ☐ Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion Age: The Strategy aims to enhance connectivity, facilitating improved access to essential services such as schools and hospitals for both older and younger individuals. Additionally, by reducing congestion and related emissions, the strategy seeks to benefit older and younger individuals that are particularly vulnerable to respiratory illnesses. Improvements to the public realm are intended to boost confidence among older and younger people, encouraging independent journeys using public services. Disability: The Strategy aims to implement inclusive design principles, ensuring the infrastructure is safer and more accessible for people with mobility impairments. Additionally, it supports a joined-up transport network meaning it would be more accessible for disabled users to navigate between different modes of transports with fewer barriers, more consistent service reliability and increased access to services. Pregnancy & Maternity: The strategy aims to reduced congestion and related emissions will be beneficial for those pregnant or with small children as it will improve both maternal and child development health. Sex, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Race and Religion: The strategy promotes improvements to the public realm, and this can reduce fear of hate crimes for vulnerable groups and encourage the use of public transport services. Next steps for any proposals taken forward: There are no current negative impacts identified for any protected characteristic. Endorsing the Transport Strategy does not guarantee funding or delivery of individual projects. However, as funding becomes available and projects progress, a full Equality Impact Assessment will be carried out at the appropriate design stages to evaluate potential positive, neutral, or negative impacts and recommend mitigations where required.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – Draft Agenda and Work Programme (Updated September 2025)

Item	Cabinet Committee to receive item
Draft Budget	Annual (Jan & Nov)
Corporate Risk Register	Annual (March)
Winter Service Policy	Annual (September)
Environment Agency - Presentation	Bi-Annual (Nov)
Southern Water - Presentation	Bi-Annual (Nov)
Climate Change Adaptation Plan	Annual (next one in 2026)

4 th November 2025		
No.	Item	Additional Comments
	<i>Introduction/verbal announcement</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
	<i>Apologies and Substitutes</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
	<i>Declarations of Interest</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
	<i>Minutes of the meeting held xxx</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
	<i>Performance Dashboard</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>
Page 587	• <i>Draft Budget</i>	<i>Annual (Due Nov)</i>
	• <i>Environment Agency</i>	<i>Annual (Due Nov)</i>
	• <i>Green Finance</i>	<i>Targeting Nov</i>
	• <i>Southern Water</i>	<i>Annual (Due Nov)</i>
	• <i>Gravesend-Tilbury Viability Update</i>	<i>Targeting Nov</i>
	• <i>Report on Water Supply and Sustainability</i>	<i>Targeting Nov</i>
	<i>Work Programme</i>	<i>At each meeting</i>

- NB: Provisional Placements Prior to Agenda Setting

Key Decisions for Consideration that have not yet been allocated to a meeting	
<i>KD-Sustainable Drainage Partnership with Southern Water (ECE)</i>	<i>TBC</i>
<i>Key Decision -Unspecified Landscape Item A (H+T)</i>	<i>TBC</i>
<i>Key Decision -Unspecified Landscape Item B (H+T)</i>	<i>TBC</i>

Items for Consideration that have not yet been allocated to a meeting	
Highway Verge Improvements for Biodiversity	TBC
Lower Thames Crossing Update	TBC
Countryside Parks Management Plan	Requested 06/01/25 TBC
Met Office Update on Projections for Climate Change	TBC
Secure a sustainable future for display/Long term storage of KCC Archaeological Archives	TBC
Energy Performance Certificates	TBC
Electric Vehicle Charging Update	TBC
Southern Water Joint Working	TBC