Local Government Reorganisation Models – Housing Targets, Delivery & Projections

Introduction

The aim of this document is to support KCC's internal research on Local Government Reorganisation in Kent and Medway. The ability of the proposed unitary authorities to deliver on housing targets is part of the evidence base that is required in the final proposal to government and is the focus of this report.

This document brings together data from the 12 districts councils in Kent, Medway Council and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to examine the proposed housing targets for the 5 models, the developments that have been identified to meet these targets and the authorities' track record of delivering housing between 2017 and 2023. This analysis assumes that the proposed housing targets for new unitary authorities would reflect the targets of their constituent districts.

The 5 unitary authority models that are considered in this document are described below.

Model 1: A three unitary model made up as follows: West (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone); North (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway and Swale); East (Canterbury, Thanet, Ashford, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe).

Model 2: A four unitary model made up as follows: West (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone); North (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway); East (Canterbury, Swale, Thanet), South (Ashford, Dover, Folkestone & Hythe).

Model 3: A four unitary model made up as follows: Mid (Ashford, Swale, Folkestone and Hythe); West (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone,); North (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway); East (Canterbury, Dover, Thanet)

Model 4: A four unitary model made up as follows: Mid (Ashford, Swale, Maidstone); West (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells); North (Dartford, Gravesham, Medway); East (Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Thanet)

Model 5: A two unitary authority model made up as follows: West (Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Dartford, Gravesham and Medway); East (Canterbury, Swale, Ashford, Thanet, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe)

Analysis

In July 2024 the government released new proposed housing targets for local authorities for the 2025 calendar year onwards based on a new methodology.1 Table 1 shows the new annual housing targets for the 12 districts in Kent plus Medway which were finalised in the revised National Planning Policy Framework in December 2024[2].

Table 1: New Housing Targets per District/Local Authority (2025)

District/ Unitary Authority	New Annual Housing Target (2025)
Ashford	949
Canterbury	1,178
Dartford	716
Dover	789
Folkestone and Hythe	838
Gravesham	693
Maidstone	1,344
Medway	1,644
Sevenoaks	1,113
Swale	1,061
Thanet	1,145
Tonbridge and Malling	1,057
Tunbridge Wells	1,045

Table 2 shows what this new annual housing target would be for each of the 5 unitary authority models and compares this with the average number of dwellings completed each year between 2017-2023. This is based on data in the Housing Delivery Test[3] data from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government . This table shows the annual surplus/shortfall in each Unitary Authority model for the new housing targets if the average number of dwellings built annually over the last 6 years continued into the future.

Over the last 6 years, an average of 8,450 housing units have been completed across Kent & Medway each year compared to the new target of 13,572, a deficit of 5,122 houses with a completion rate of 62.3% of the new target. Model 4 has the biggest percentage point gap between the proposed unitary authority with the highest historic completion rate compared to the new target and the proposed unitary authority with the lowest completion rate, 88% compared to 45.3%. Model 5 has the smallest gap in the historic completion rate compared to this new target for the proposed unitary authorities, with East Kent and West Kent reporting 62.0% and 62.5% respectively. Model 1 has the second smallest gap with East Kent at 59.1% and North Kent at 67.5%.

[1] Mapped: Housing targets for each council under proposed method | Local Government Chronicle (LGC)
[2] National Planning Policy Framework
[3] Housing Delivery Test: 2023 measurement - GOV.UK

Table 2: New Annual Housing Target Compared to Average Annual Housing Units Delivered 2017-2023

LGR Model 1	New Annual Housing Target	Average Annual Housing Delivered (2017-2023)	Surplus/Shortfall Annual Average Housing Delivery 2017-2023 v New Target	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)
East Kent	4,899	2,895	-2,004	59.1%
North Kent	4,114	2,777	-1,337	67.5%
West Kent	4,559	2,778	-1,781	60.9%
Total	**13,572**	**8,450**	**-5,122**	**62.3%**

LGR Model 2	New Annual Housing Target	Average Annual Housing Delivered (2017-2023)	Surplus/Shortfall Annual Average Housing Delivery 2017-2023 v New Target	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)
East Kent	3,384	1,906	-1,478	56.3%
North Kent	3,053	1,977	-1,076	64.8%
South Kent	2,576	1,788	-788	69.4%
West Kent	4,559	2,778	-1,781	60.9%
Total	**13,572**	**8,450**	**-5,122**	**62.3%**

LGR Model 3	New Annual Housing Target	Average Annual Housing Delivered (2017-2023)	Surplus/Shortfall Annual Average Housing Delivery 2017-2023 v New Target	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)
East Kent	3,112	1,604	-1,508	51.6%
Mid Kent	2,848	2,090	-758	73.4%
North Kent	3,053	1,977	-1,076	64.8%
West Kent	4,559	2,778	-1,781	60.9%
Total	**13,572**	**8,450**	**-5,122**	**62.3%**

LGR Model 4	New Annual Housing Target	Average Annual Housing Delivered (2017-2023)	Surplus/Shortfall Annual Average Housing Delivery 2017-2023 v New Target	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)
East Kent	3,950	2,064	-1,886	52.3%
Mid Kent	3,354	2,951	-403	88.0%
North Kent	3,053	1,977	-1,076	64.8%
West Kent	3,215	1,457	-1,758	45.3%
Total	**13,572**	**8,450**	**-5,122**	**62.3%**

LGR Model 5	New Annual Housing Target	Average Annual Housing Delivered (2017-2023)	Surplus/Shortfall Annual Average Housing Delivery 2017-2023 v New Target	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)
East Kent	5,960	3,694	-2,266	62.0%
West Kent	7,612	4,755	-2,857	62.5%
Total	**13,572**	**8,450**	**-5,122**	**62.3%**

The 12 district councils and Medway Council provide Kent with information on the phased housing supply sites that has been identified for development over the next few years. This is collated in the Housing Information Audit[4]. Table 3 compares the total housing target[5] over the next four years (2025/26-2028/29) against this housing supply for the 5 unitary authority models. This shows that overall 48,532 units have been identified and are phased to be developed over this period compared to a target of 54,288, a deficit of 5,936 units.

The proposed unitary authorities East Kent and South Kent have sufficient sites identified to meet the proposed target in all scenarios, whereas West Kent reports significant shortfalls. Model 4 has the largest percentage point gap between the proposed unitary authority with the biggest surplus and the unitary authority with the biggest shortfall, a gap of 44.4 percentage points between East Kent (110.1%) and West Kent (63.6%). Model 5 has the smallest percentage point gap with East Kent reporting a forecast 105.9% completion rate compared to 75.9% for West Kent.

Table 3: New Annual Housing Target Compared to Phased Housing Supply 2017-2023

LGR Model 1	4 Year Housing Target*	4 Year Housing Supply 2025/2026 - 2028/2029	Surplus/Shortfall of 4 Year Target v Identified Sites	% of 4 Year Target Identified
East Kent	19,596	21,285	1,689	108.6%
North Kent	16,456	14,885	-1,571	90.5%
West Kent	18,236	12,182	-6,054	66.8%
Total	**54,288**	**48,352**	**-5,936**	**89.1%**

LGR Model 2	4 Year Housing Target*	4 Year Housing Supply 2025/2026 - 2028/2029	Surplus/Shortfall of 4 Year Target v Identified Sites	% of 4 Year Target Identified
East Kent	13,536	14,561	1,025	107.6%
North Kent	12,212	10,922	-1,290	89.4%
South Kent	10,304	10,687	383	103.7%
West Kent	18,236	12,182	-6,054	66.8%

[4] Five year land supply

[5]* This assumes that the current target is replicated over the next 3 years but are subject to revision by the MCHLG

Total	**54,288**	**48,352**	**-5,936**	**89.1%**

LGR Model 3	4 Year Housing Target*	4 Year Housing Supply 2025/2026 - 2028/2029	Surplus/Shortfall of 4 Year Target v Identified Sites	% of 4 Year Target Identified
East Kent	12,448	13,848	1,400	111.2%
Mid Kent	11,392	11,400	8	100.1%
North Kent	12,212	10,922	-1,290	89.4%
West Kent	18,236	12,182	-6,054	66.8%
Total	**54,288**	**48,352**	**-5,936**	**89.1%**

LGR Model 4	4 Year Housing Target*	4 Year Housing Supply 2025/2026 - 2028/2029	Surplus/Shortfall of 4 Year Target v Identified Sites	% of 4 Year Target Identified
East Kent	15,800	17,395	1,595	110.1%
Mid Kent	13,416	11,852	-1,564	88.3%
North Kent	12,212	10,922	-1,290	89.4%
West Kent	12,860	8,183	-4,677	63.6%
Total	**54,288**	**48,352**	**-5,936**	**89.1%**

LGR Model 5	4 Year Housing Target*	4 Year Housing Supply 2025/2026 - 2028/2029	Surplus/Shortfall of 4 Year Target v Identified Sites	% of 4 Year Target Identified
East Kent	23,840	25,248	1,408	105.9%
West Kent	30,448	23,104	-7,344	75.9%
Total	**54,288**	**48,352**	**-5,936**	**89.1%**

Summary of most challenging unitary areas

Table 4 shows the most challenging proposed unitary authority for each of the 5 models for the two key measures included in this report, the percentage of the new annual housing target that has been delivered on average over the last six years and the percentage of the four year housing target that has been identified for development and has been included in the Housing Information Audit.

Table 4: Most Challenging Unitary Authority for Each Local Government Reorganisation Option

LGR Model	% of New Annual Target Delivered Annually (2017-2023)	% of 4 Year Housing Target Identified in Housing Information Audit
Model 1 – 3 UAs	East Kent - **59%**	West Kent - **67%**
Model 2 – 4 UAs	East Kent - **56%**	West Kent - **67%**
Model 3 – 4 UAs	East Kent - **52%**	West Kent - **67%**
Model 4 – 4 UAs	West Kent - **45%**	West Kent - **64%**
Model 5 – 2 UAs	East Kent - **62%**	West Kent - **76%**
Kent & Medway	Kent - 62%	Kent - 89%

It should be noted that grouping up districts can result in housing delivery challenges in some areas to be masked by other more successful areas. This doesn't necessarily resolve local housing need in the areas that most need it when looking at a smaller geographical scale.