

KENT AND MEDWAY STRUCTURE PLAN

DEPOSIT DRAFT

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Strategic Planning Directorate
Kent County Council

Development & Environment
Directorate
Medway Council

Kent and Medway Deposit Structure Plan

Contents

Chapter		Page
1	Our Vision and Guiding Principles	
2	The Spatial Strategy for Kent and Medway	
3	Kent and Medway: Area Based Policies	
4	Protecting Our Natural Environment	
5	Promoting Quality of Life in Town and Country	
6	Fostering Prosperity	
7	Housing Provision and Distribution	
8	Promoting Quality, Choice and Accessibility in our Transport Network	
9	Climate Change and Managing Our Natural Resources	
10	Managing Our Waste and Mineral Resources	
11	Implementing the Structure Plan and Monitoring its Effectiveness	

Chapter 1: Our Vision and Guiding Principles

1.1 The role of the Structure Plan is to provide the strategic planning framework which will guide decisions on development, transport and environmental matters in Kent and Medway over the next 20 years. This Plan covers the period 2001-2021. It will shape the scale, location and form of private and public investment in Kent over that period and in doing so must interpret national and regional policies as they apply to Kent and Medway. These are currently aimed at fostering sustainable communities, promoting an “urban renaissance” by regenerating our towns and their centres and revitalising rural communities. The Structure Plan’s role in shaping development will be particularly crucial since two of the Government’s four growth areas for the South East, identified in *Sustainable Communities :building for the future*, Thames Gateway and Ashford are within Kent and Medway .

1.2 The need to accommodate major new growth in Kent and Medway of the highest quality and with all the requisite community services for health, education, recreation, transport and other functions, whilst protecting Kent’s environment, represents the greatest challenge to public services and government. Not only should the new communities be well balanced in terms of development and services but the investment they bring should help correct deficiencies of the past in existing towns and villages.

1.3 Under the Local Government Act 2000, Kent County Council and Medway Councils have the power to promote or improve the economic , social or environmental well-being of their area. The Structure Plan is an important tool in furthering these objectives and in enabling the people of Kent and Medway to The aim of this Structure Plan is to serve the economic, social and environmental interests of the people of Kent and Medway and to enable them to enjoy the healthy and high quality lifestyle to which they are entitled. This means bringing about healthier, safer, more prosperous communities with access to excellent education, jobs, transport, housing, health, leisure and cultural facilities. It also means ensuring that Kent’s environment is protected and enhanced for its own sake in the interests of this and future generations.

1.4 Kent’s distinctive character is one of the significant features that this Structure Plan seeks to retain and strengthen. Its distinctiveness is based on its size, peninsular position, heritage, and its long history as a single administrative unit which dates back at least to the Saxon Kingdom of Kent. Its long-standing role as a gateway between the UK and the European mainland has also helped to shape its character.

1.5 All places can of course claim to be unique but in the case of Kent and Medway this uniqueness is based on its popular reputation as “The Garden of England” - a character established through a combination of climate, geology and agricultural expertise. The coastal towns of East Kent, those along the Thames in North Kent, the rural Weald and the county’s many historic centres, all share an important sense of ‘*Kentishness*’. This Plan seeks to retain and strengthen the unique character of Kent’s countryside, biodiversity , built environment and heritage, both for their own sake and as a driver for inward investment, tourism and community pride.

Kent and Medway: A distinctive 'mosaic'

1.6 ~~Kent and Medway face a distinctive set of circumstances.~~ Kent has no single dominant urban area but consists of a number of medium sized towns and smaller centres. Different communities across Kent and Medway show significant differences in their prosperity and in the quality of their built environment. There is a strong inter-relationship between rural and urban areas. The future planning strategy for the County needs to respond to these differing needs and circumstances, protect the best of what there is and to revitalise those communities and areas in greatest need.

1.7 Kent has an outstanding wealth of historic towns but the quality of the built environment is variable. Many of the larger towns which are home to 70% of Kent's population require environmental improvements in inner residential areas and town centres. Many also need measures to encourage better public transport and to provide better routes for pedestrians. Some towns, especially in north and east Kent, have untapped potential to offer better employment and housing opportunities for the disadvantaged communities within them. There is a need to improve the quality of building design and public space and to make towns more attractive places in which to work and live.

1.8 Kent's countryside is one of the county's most important, but fragile assets. It helps make Kent special, it gives identity to its settlements and it is an important part of its sense of place. At the same time it is under intense pressure from changes in agricultural practice and from built development. It must be nurtured for the benefit of present and future generations and given strong protection. ~~from unnecessary and insensitive development.~~ Sensitive farm diversification, though will, be encouraged as a way of managing the rural landscape and improving the vitality of the rural economy .

1.9 30% of people live in Kent's smaller market towns, rural settlements or the wider countryside. The economic health and vitality of some of these settlements needs to be improved to respond to local needs. Some larger rural settlements provide local retail and community facilities and employment and fulfil the role of rural service centres. They justify greater recognition as focal points for necessary development, including small-scale residential and economic development and community facilities and services. Other rural settlements of a similar scale lack many basic services and this needs to be addressed. The emphasis for smaller villages and hamlets will be on maintaining their character and protecting them from inappropriate development.

Pattern of Development in Kent: Map of Towns and villages

1.10 The Kent economy has shown significant improvement over the past decade, highlighted by a fall in unemployment and greater diversification within the economy. However, there are still significant economic problems and disparities which need to be tackled and some areas still rely on poorly performing economic sectors. In terms of overall economic performance, employment growth and representation of key business sectors, the area does not compare well with the rest of the South East. This gap needs to be narrowed.

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

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

1.12 The tendency in recent decades to separate different land uses has resulted in relatively low development densities in suburban and commercial areas. This has led to longer journeys to work - and thus more air pollution - and a less 'local' pattern of services. The provision of community facilities and new job opportunities has also frequently lagged behind the construction of new housing.

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

1.14 Regional Planning Guidance (2001) confirmed the Thames Gateway (which includes most of North Kent) as a nationally and regionally important area for economic regeneration and for redeveloping previously used land. RPG also highlighted the growth potential of Ashford which Kent's planning strategy has long identified as a growth point for both housing and jobs. Its contribution will increase over the lifetime of this Plan and beyond. ~~The existing commitment to regeneration and economic diversification in the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield is maintained in this Structure Plan. These areas are identified as a regionally significant Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER).~~ The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan will be an important factor in the way Kent will evolve especially in the Thames Gateway and Ashford growth areas.

Sustainable communities : building for the future(2003)

"In partnership with local authorities and other stakeholders , to provide for major growth in the four growth areas identified in regional planning guidance for London and the rest of the South East in 2000 (RPG9):

- Thames Gateway
- Milton Keynes/South Midlands
- Ashford
- London- Stansted- Cambridge

"To bring together the best of design and planning to ensure that the built environment in new and expanded communities is of a high quality , and the surrounding countryside is protected and enhanced".

"To address public services and infrastructure needs to enable the new communities to function..."

1.15 The existing commitment to regeneration and economic diversification in the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield is maintained in this Structure Plan. These areas are identified as a regionally significant Priority Area for Economic Regeneration (PAER). This Plan has also taken account of emerging regional strategies in relation to transport, tourism, energy and waste.

1.16 The way the population is changing, including an increase in the number of smaller households and a more mobile labour force, means that Kent will require significant new development to meet the needs of existing residents and to ensure that Kent maintains or improves its economic competitiveness

1.17 Kent will be affected by climate change and the county will need to consider the impact of this change when planning the location of development, particularly in river corridors and coastal areas. Kent must also play its part in using natural resources such as water prudently and in promoting renewable energy and alternative forms of transport.

Community Strategies

1.18 Both Kent and Medway Councils have worked closely with a wide range of partners to produce Community Strategies under the Local Government Act 2000. These set out shared objectives and priorities for Kent and have informed the themes and core principles within this Structure Plan. In turn the Structure Plan will be a key way in which the community strategies are taken forward.

The Kent Partnership's Vision for Kent – 2002 endorsed a number of objectives for Kent: It set out a vision of Kent as "A County..

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

- *where the difficulties of traffic and transport are tackled for the benefit of all*

Source: Vision for Kent

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

Source: More to Medway

Key Themes and Core Principles for the Structure Plan

KEY THEME:

Nurturing Kent and Medway's Environment and Resources

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

- Taking care in the way the natural environment is used to provide leisure, recreational, cultural and educational opportunities for local communities.

KEY THEME:

Fostering Prosperity and Well Being

- Increasing economic opportunity and reducing economic disparities within Kent, by working towards regeneration and improved economic performance in North Kent, the coastal towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield.
- Pursuing targeted economic development, including support for high value added activities and skills development, business clusters and knowledge based industries to boost the competitiveness of the Kent economy and existing businesses.
- Securing employment led growth and development, especially within the areas in North and East Kent which require regeneration.
- Helping existing businesses to grow and provide new jobs.
- Providing for sustainable growth in the economically successful parts of Kent, whilst addressing the pockets of deprivation which occur within them.
- Sustaining and improving the economic health and vitality of Kent's rural communities and helping the rural economy to diversify.
- Making the most of the role of Thames Gateway as a national and regional priority for economic growth, regeneration and infrastructure investment and recognising in this respect the pivotal role of the main urban areas of North Kent and Medway.
- Promoting Ashford as a regional growth point whilst ensuring that the economy of East Kent in particular also benefits.
- Promoting sustainable tourism which capitalises on Kent and Medway's assets.

KEY THEME:

Securing Quality, Investment and Infrastructure for Regeneration and Development

- Providing attractive new communities which are safe, secure and convenient places for people in which to live and work and which encourage a sense of place and local distinctiveness.
- Regenerating and revitalising Kent's principal urban areas, through neighbourhood renewal, redevelopment and improving key inner urban locations.

- Balancing the provision of homes, jobs, infrastructure and community services and making sure they are provided at the right time. Ensuring development brings with it improvements in services and infrastructure.
- Promoting and investing in efficient transport that will serve future needs, tackle congestion, avoid unacceptable damage to the environment and make best use of the existing road and rail infrastructure.
- Insisting on high quality design that uses land, water, energy and other resources more efficiently and provides for changing lifestyles and preferences.
- ~~Encouraging a sense of place, local distinctiveness and the provision of safe, secure convenient and attractive places for people to live and work.~~
- Maintaining the character and separation of settlements through retention of the Green Belt and definition of strategic gaps.

KEY THEME:

Enhancing choice, opportunity and accessibility

- Ensuring that planning policies and practice in Kent and Medway promote social independence and take into account the needs of all sections of the community.
- Providing sufficient housing of a suitable range, quality and diversity for the people of Kent and Medway.
- Concentrating development at the principal urban areas that are the major focal points for jobs, public services and transport facilities.
- Promoting more mixed use developments of the right pattern and density that uses land efficiently, increases accessibility, reduces the need to travel, particularly by car, and is planned to meet social, cultural and economic needs.
- Ensuring that decisions on development and transport make it easy for people to reach local services and jobs and provide a choice of transport for people and goods.
- Ensuring that access to all buildings, transport and services is improved for everyone while avoiding undue impact on buildings of important heritage value.

Achieving Sustainable Development

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

carrying out their roles in development control and development plan preparation and making decisions about the future pattern of development the local authorities and other regulatory agencies will need to assess proposals in the light of the criteria in Policy SP1. The expectation is that developers, landowners, other agencies in the private and public sectors will work to pursue the objectives of this policy.

Policy SP1: Conserving and enhancing Kent's environment and ensuring a sustainable pattern of development

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

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

Chapter 2: A Spatial Strategy for Kent and Medway

Introduction

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

Key Spatial Issues

- An imbalance of development pressures and wealth and investment across Kent
- Responding to the decline of town centres
- The impact of London on housing markets
- Accommodating growth pressures in a sustainable way
- Responding to the decline in rural services
- Resisting development pressures on the countryside

Spatial Strategy

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

Kent and Medway: External Relationships

2.2 Whilst coastline and the sea forms the greater part of Kent's boundary. the future of Kent and Medway will be significantly influenced by their relationship with surrounding areas particularly: London, neighbouring counties and the European mainland.

London

2.3 The prosperity of Kent and Medway is closely linked with that of London. A significant proportion of the capital's working population commutes from Kent into central and outer London. Almost 100,000 (12% of the Kent and Medway workforce) commute to London with the proportion as high as 38% (15,900) in Dartford and 34% (18,900) in Sevenoaks.

2.4 It is important for the social and economic vitality of Kent's communities that the number of commuters leaving the county each day to work elsewhere should not become too large. Increased levels of commuting would also place further pressure on Kent's transport system particularly the rail service, which is already stretched. The proximity of London creates particular pressures of housing demand and cost in West and North Kent. It is difficult to provide an adequate range of housing, particularly affordable housing and accommodation for key public and private sector workers. A sufficient range and quality of job opportunities provided locally can lessen the need for people to commute to work and help to counter any trend towards dormitory settlements. Balancing the provision of jobs and housing in London is essential in managing pressures in Kent.

2.5 Kent has reasonable but slow access to London by rail. Long rail journey times from East Kent to London are a particular issue. Road links are poor and congested. Access from the west of London to the centre is very much better than from the east and this disadvantage needs to be tackled. London can have the effect of 'blocking' Kent from the rest of the country, particularly the Midlands, the North and Eastern England, thus heightening the effect of the county's peninsular location. It is important to improve transport links with the rest of the UK to allow the county's businesses and European traffic to more easily reach wider markets.

2.6 Kent receives both direct and indirect economic benefits from its proximity to London. Some businesses relocate to Kent or expand into the county from London and continue to require access to the capital. Kent also provides services for residents of London (such as retailing at Bluewater and other centres). Kent's attractions and service providers also benefit from the custom of visitors and tourists travelling through Kent en route to the capital.

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

Neighbouring Areas

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

2.9 Common issues shared with neighbouring authorities include housing demands and pressure on transport infrastructure as a consequence of commuting to London. There are also common transport issues such as management of orbital transport movement around London including prospective additional crossings of the Thames east of London and movement along the South Coast

Europe

2.10 Kent is at the heart of the most economically successful and densely populated part of Europe which gives businesses ready access to large markets. The European Union has encouraged Kent and the Nord - Pas de Calais region to share issues of common concern through successive rounds of the Interreg programme, but there is scope to increase co-operation between Kent and the rest of Europe.

2.11 Kent is the UK's main gateway to Europe. Since the opening of the Channel Tunnel in the 1990s, the volume of international freight transport passing through the county has risen greatly and further growth is expected. Most of this freight travels on Kent and Medway's two east-west motorways which results in significant environmental pollution, particularly noise and poor air quality, as well as considerable congestion. The gateway role does, though, provide significant benefits for tourism and commerce. Promoting alternative routes outside Kent, together with a shift to less environmentally damaging methods of transport within the county such as rail would help to relieve the pressure on the county's trunk roads and communities.

Concentration of development at the urban areas

2.12 Urban areas are home to 70% of Kent's population. The county has four relatively large urban areas - Medway, Dartford with Gravesend/Northfleet (Kent Thameside), Maidstone, (together with the urban areas within the Medway Gap) and Thanet. In addition Ashford is identified in Regional Planning Guidance as a focus for accelerated growth. These urban areas offer the best prospects for successful public transport and greater self-sufficiency for jobs and services, reducing the need for longer journeys. They will provide the majority of development opportunities in Kent and Medway within the 20-year time scale of this Plan. Furthermore the Government expects the growth areas (Thames Gateway and Ashford within Kent) to be drivers of change and increased prosperity for the whole region.

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

2.14 There are exceptional opportunities in Thames Gateway, Thanet and other East Kent coastal towns to tackle deprivation and improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of residents. If these opportunities are to be fully effective it is vital that major developments benefit existing communities as well as new ones.

2.15 The spatial strategy seeks to concentrate development in the 5 major or 12 other principal urban areas listed in Table SS1 and identified on the Key Diagram. The re-use of previously developed land will be a priority, particularly within the central parts of our towns and through many of the strategic locations for development identified by this Plan. Developments should aim to encourage a mix of uses with new housing provided at a higher density than has been the case in recent years and supported by public transport facilities. New releases of greenfield land will be kept to a minimum and be at

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

a reduced level in comparison with recent years although there will be a continuing need for some additional greenfield land e.g. to support the growth of Ashford. Overall the strategy will serve to resist pressure on the urban fringe and avoid suburbanisation of the countryside.

Table SS1: Major and Principal Urban Areas in Kent

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

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

2.16 Other than at the principal urban areas and the strategic development locations identified by this Plan (Chapter 3), any significant development will be concentrated at the rural service centres, identified on the Key Diagram and in Table SS2. These centres have been identified on the basis of not only their size but the range of day to day services and facilities that they support. Proposals to support the local rural economy or address local housing needs at other, smaller rural settlements, capable of supporting a sustainable pattern of development, will be identified through Local Development Documents.

Table SS.2: Rural Service Centres

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

Policy SS1: Spatial Priorities for Development and Investment in Kent

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

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

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

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

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

Any significant Development at rural settlements, justified through Policy SS3, should be concentrated at the rural service centres identified on the Key Diagram. Proposals for development at other rural settlements, identified in Local Development Documents, should demonstrate that such development would be sustainable.

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

The strategic development requirements of this Plan should be met in a manner that provides for balanced and timely residential, employment, leisure and community development and infrastructure provision while at the same time conserving and enhancing the quality of Kent's environment.

A Sequential Approach and prioritising use of previously developed land

2.17 This Plan endorses the aim of using previously developed land and buildings, before developing green field sites as a key ingredient in bringing new life to urban areas, particularly in town centres and inner urban areas. Regional Planning Guidance suggests that at least 60% of all new development outside London should be provided on previously developed land or by converting or reusing existing buildings. The scale and character of Kent's urban areas and the prospects for the use of previously developed or damaged land have played an important part in arriving at the strategic distribution of development requirements within Kent. Policy targets for the use of previously developed land for housing are included elsewhere (Policy HP3). The release of new greenfield land will be kept to a minimum and will be phased, so that it does not undermine the successful development of previously developed land in each area.

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

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

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

Town Centres and Inner Urban Areas

2.18 Town centres should be lively and prosperous. The central parts of our urban areas need upgrading to make them better places in which to live, work and enjoy leisure time. Town centres and inner urban areas, which have a choice of transport and good access to services and jobs, are ideal locations for mixed-use development at relatively high densities.

2.19 Within these areas retail, leisure, and housing uses may compete for available sites. Retail and leisure development should have priority in the core of town centres, which should be defined in Local Development Documents. They require convenient access from a wide area, benefit from being close to one another and add to the attractiveness of centres.

2.20 Local Development Documents should also establish a pattern of mixed use which protects and improves residential amenity and public safety. Existing non-conforming industrial or service uses can make it more difficult to use land effectively or to plan for mixed use development in inner urban areas particularly if they do not sit happily alongside residential development. Provision should be made for such non-conforming uses to be relocated elsewhere.

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

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

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

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

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

Suburban Communities

2.21 The legacy of past under investment in some of our communities, often in suburban areas, can be seen in degraded environments and an absence of facilities. Piecemeal development can add to their disjointed appearance. Developers, local authorities and public service providers should seek to improve the way that such areas function and to enhance their environment and traffic management

Policy SS5: Enhancing existing communities

Measures must be taken to improve the physical environment, functioning and appearance of the suburbs of the major/principal urban areas including landscaping, traffic management and the provision of services and facilities that serve local needs

Rural Communities

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

“Kent Countryside 2000” found that:

- Jobs in traditional rural industries continue to decline and rural services have to compete - often unsuccessfully - with larger towns.
- People living in rural areas travel to urban areas and London for work.
- House prices have risen beyond the means of many local people and there is very limited social housing.
- Some sections of the rural community suffer deprivation and the problems of isolation are made worse where public transport is poor.

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

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

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

Policy SS56: Development at rural service centres and other rural settlements

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

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

- c) ***For large rural settlements which lack local services, a rural services standards assessment should be undertaken. The need for and provision for service improvements should be identified in community strategies and Local Development Documents.***

2.26 Beyond the rural service centres many smaller rural settlements offer a limited range of facilities and services. The emphasis here will continue to be on restraint beyond the limits of existing built development. Small scale development may, in exceptional cases, be justified if it provides affordable housing to meet an identified need within an individual community, and/or improves community infrastructure, allows a farm business to diversify or supports an appropriate expansion of an established rural enterprise (see Chapters on Fostering Prosperity and Housing Provision). Within the Green Belt provision for such uses will be governed by Policy SS9.

Policy SS67: Development in the countryside

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

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

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

MANAGING AND RESTRAINING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Metropolitan Green Belt

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

- Preserving open country between the edge of Greater London and the urban areas of Medway, the Medway Gap and Tunbridge Wells;
- Near London, curbing the growth of Dartford and Swanley and the settlements in the Darent Valley and preserving their separate identities.
- Maintaining the separation between Gravesend and the Medway Towns;
- Restricting the expansion of settlements south of the A2 to prevent further suburbanisation and preserve their identity;

- Restraining expansion between and around Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Tonbridge;
- Containing the western edge of the Medway Gap urban area and limiting development in the transport corridor towards London;
- Preventing Sevenoaks and settlements in the Weald from expanding outwards.

2.28 No significant changes to the Green Belt are proposed in this Plan. The extent of the approved Green Belt lies some 12 to 15 miles from the built up edge of Greater London, as shown on the Key Diagram and defined in Policy SS8. Detailed boundaries are defined in local plans/local development documents. The Dartford Borough Local Plan Review applies Policy MGB2 of the 1996 Kent Structure Plan and includes changes to the boundary of the Green Belt to exclude Eastern Quarry, and consequentially St Clement's Valley.

Policy SS78: Extent of the Green Belt

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

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

2.29 Appropriate uses within the Green Belt are well established through national policy guidance and case law. Mineral extraction need not be incompatible with the Green Belt provided that high environmental standards are maintained and sites are well restored. The location of waste management facilities within the Green Belt may also be appropriate where consistent with the 'proximity principle' for locating waste management capacity close to its source and where facilities could contribute to increased recycling/recovery of waste, for example small scale composting. Disposal of waste on land, where this represents the Best Practicable Environmental Option (see Chapter 9) need not be inappropriate development if it maintains openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within the Green Belt.

2.30 There is a positive role for the Green Belt to play in providing for increased access to the countryside and for outdoor leisure and recreation. Uses should also help to protect landscape and wildlife interest, keep land in agricultural and forestry use, and improve derelict or damaged land near towns.

Policy SS89: Uses Appropriate within the Green Belt

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

- ***Agriculture or forestry;***

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

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

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

Any development permitted within the Green Belt should be designed and sited to maintain the open character of the area and should not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

Strategic Gaps

2.31 It is important to keep the urban areas of Maidstone, the Medway Gap and the Medway Towns separate by designating a 'strategic gap'. The specific purposes of the gap are to separate:

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

Its role is also to:

- prevent existing settlements joining together. On the West Bank of the Medway this includes separating Snodland from Larkfield and New Hythe to the south, and from Halling to the north;
- prevent new development areas merging with existing settlements and to ensure that development on the East Bank of the Medway keeps within areas already allocated in local plans.

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

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

Policy SS910: Strategic Gaps

Strategic gaps are designated to maintain the separation of:

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

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

Chapter 3: Kent and Medway :Area Based Policies

3.1 There are certain key elements of the planning and transport strategy that need to be put in place across the whole county if living standards are to be improved and the environment enhanced. These include carefully considered investment in roads including cross county routes, major improvements to the coastal rail network, provision of CTRL domestic train services and tackling the issues of housing and employment on a county wide basis. There are some issues, though, that need a different emphasis in different parts of the county and for this reason this Chapter sets out specific locational policies grouped together on the basis of 4 sub areas:

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

North Kent

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

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

3.4 The Thames Gateway initiative, begun by Kent County Council, the North Kent Districts and East London Boroughs in the 1980s, has turned the area into a focus priority for of national and regional regeneration policy. This represents a major opportunity to improve both the image and condition of the area. There is a considerable amount of new development in the area, with recent prestige projects including the Darenth Valley Hospital, Bluewater and Ingress Park in Dartford and Chatham Maritime in Medway. ~~Although some settlements, such as Iwade and Sittingbourne, have developed by expanding into greenfield areas the majority of development has taken place on previously used land.~~ The majority of development has taken place on previously used land although in some parts of North Kent where brownfield development opportunities are more limited. some settlements, such as Sittingbourne and Iwade, have expanded through the development of strategic greenfield sites.

3.5 Substantial improvements in infrastructure have included the M2 widening and improvements to the A249. More is to come, including a second Swale crossing, completion of the CTRL and Ebbsfleet station, an enhanced public transport network ('Fastrack') and widening of the A2. These in particular will provide a major boost to the

pace of development, but it is also important for Kent and Medway to gain the fullest possible use of the CTRL for domestic services. Transport will continue to pose major challenges, including our dependence on the motorway system. Better use of the rivers is possible but can conflict with urban regeneration initiatives.

3.6 There has been concern that investment in community or social infrastructure has lagged behind development. There are communities in North Kent that have not benefited from the investment that has taken place in the area. A key challenge in the future will be to ensure that all sections of the community benefit from economic development and social change. Major investment will be needed in community facilities and services. Affordable and key worker housing will be required to support local economic growth and to respond to a strong housing market which has good and improving access to London.

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

Dartford and Gravesham

3.8 Situated within Dartford and Gravesham Boroughs, Kent Thameside is one of the two principal hubs for development identified in RPG9a for the whole Thames Gateway. It will be focused upon major areas of previously used or damaged land. Achieving development of the right form and quality here will be one of the keys to ensuring the success of regeneration across the wider Thames Gateway. The scale and close proximity of these locations provide a unique opportunity to introduce a pattern of development which provides for higher density, improves the environment and makes good use of public transport. Optimising the potential of these areas will depend upon the provision of an enhanced public transport network ('*Fastrack*') and a major upgrade of community facilities and services.

3.9 The level of traffic on the existing motorway and trunk road network means that air quality in parts of Kent Thameside is, at times, already poor. The amount of development proposed requires that if air quality is not to deteriorate further and, indeed, improve the range of measures planned under Policy NK1 must all be brought forward and phased appropriately. Certain sites are also close to or within areas of flood risk. Development proposals will need to demonstrate that they meet the provisions of policies in this Plan in respect of air quality and prevention of flood risk.

3.10 Strategic policy seeks to ensure that regeneration benefits existing communities, particularly marginalised ones, creating job opportunities and providing new community facilities and services. This will require backing from Government and its agencies, and a comprehensive investment programme which brings together both public and private

sectors. The intention is to preserve the open countryside and the Metropolitan Green Belt to the south of the A2 and to the east of Gravesend.

Policy NK1: Dartford and Gravesham

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

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

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

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

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

Strategic Developments will include those at:

- (a) Ebbsfleet Valley as the location for development of a combined domestic and international passenger station on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, a new business centre, major residential development and community facilities. Development should reflect a high standard of civic design and landscaping and be integrated with new and improved transport networks including Fastrack ~~and an extension to~~ Crossrail;*
- (b) Eastern Quarry for a series of linked and integrated communities with an emphasis on housing provision, along with social and community facilities and business development to be developed in accordance with a Master Plan and serviced by a new public transport network (Fastrack);*
- (c) North Dartford, to the west of the A282 for business, housing, leisure and recreation uses;*
- (d) Crossways Business Park, to the east of the A282, for continued mixed commercial development involving office, industrial and distribution uses;*

- (e) **Swanscombe Peninsula (East and West), within Dartford, for a new mixed use community, predominantly for housing, taking full account of the area's relationship with the River Thames, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, other physical constraints to development including ground conditions and flood risk and integrated with an enhanced public transport network;**
- (f) **Gravesend/Northfleet Riverside and North East Gravesend involving the reuse of redundant previously used land and premises.**

Medway

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

3.12 The urban area will be the focus for the majority of Medway's development needs and there should be no outward expansion that conflicts with strategic restraint policies. The role of substantial areas of potentially surplus defence land at Chattenden/Lodge Hill has been identified in supplementary Regional Planning Guidance and this Plan provides for a new, village scale mixed use community in this area in the period to 2016 and beyond.

3.13 Priorities include completing improvements to the A228 together with providing rail access to the regionally significant port of Thamesport. Such improvements are important to take forward strategic scale industrial and commercial land allocations involving previously developed land at Grain and Kingsnorth and the way they link with the Medway urban area and Chattenden/Lodge Hill.

3.14 Although Medway has the largest labour force in Kent, many people commute to London for work. There is a continuing need to support local economic development and the growth of higher value added economic activity. The development of the technology and knowledge sectors will be encouraged at Rochester Airfield and Chatham Maritime.

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

Policy NK2: Medway

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

Expansion beyond the Medway urban area to meet development requirements should be concentrated at a new, mixed-use community at Chattenden/Lodge Hill. Development for the Higher and Further Education sectors including a full-scale university campus, will be supported. Provision will be made for the technology and knowledge sectors at Rochester Airport and Chatham Maritime.

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

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

Swale

3.16 Swale will continue to play a significant role in the Thames Gateway but there will be a stronger focus on development and improvements in Sittingbourne and Sheerness. Most new housing in Swale should be provided in the Sittingbourne/ Sheerness corridor. at the principal urban areas of Sittingbourne and to a lesser degree Sheerness/Queenborough/Minster. .A Second Swale Crossing is critical to the regeneration of Sheppey. At Faversham, situated between the eastern end of the Thames Gateway and the coastal towns of the East Kent Triangle, the policy is to conserve its historic environment and contain peripheral growth ~~beyond that already planned.~~ Improving local job opportunities, greater self-sufficiency for the town and meeting housing needs in a manner commensurate with the urban housing capacity of the area are prime considerations although the scale of land committed for employment use , and reliant upon greenfield land, is substantial and warrants review.

Policy NK3: Swale

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

- (a) opportunities for mixed business, industrial and distribution and residential development already identified at Ridham/Kemsley;**
- (b) expansion of the port of Sheerness in accordance with Policy TP22;**
- (c) completion of the strategic expansion of Iwade for c.1200 dwellings (including the initial phase previously allocated through the Swale Local Plan). Provision for development should ensure no infringement upon areas of wildlife importance or on high quality agricultural land and maintain separation between Iwade and Sittingbourne;**

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

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

At Faversham conservation of the historic environment remains the prime consideration.

Peripheral growth of Faversham for residential development is not envisaged. Improvement of local employment opportunities will be pursued but should incorporate a review of the scale and location of previous commitments which remain unimplemented with a view to rationalisation, consideration of alternative site provision and husbanding of land in established employment uses.

Within this framework full and effective use should be made of development capacity within the town providing for a balance of business, commercial and residential development with particular attention paid to meeting locally based needs for housing.

East Kent Triangle

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

3.18 Parts of the area have persistent high levels of unemployment which reflect structural changes to the economy following job losses in the ports and former coalfield and the decline of traditional seaside tourism. There are significant disparities in average wage levels between this area and West Kent. Some coastal towns are characterised by low property values, lower cost (but often poor quality) accommodation and seasonal and/or low skill employment. These towns have seen an increase in the proportion of vulnerable people, many dependent on benefit, living locally and a spiral of deprivation.

3.19 A number of recent changes are helping to improve the area's overall image as well as its accessibility. Investment in East Kent has included: the expansion of the pharmaceutical industry in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough; growth in the Higher/Further Education sectors in Canterbury and Thanet; major road improvements

including the £100m scheme for the Thanet Way; major retail projects in Canterbury and at Westwood in Thanet, and seafront regeneration schemes.

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

3.21 Improving the East Kent economy means more work on raising skills, encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to invest further and capitalising on a reinvigorated tourism sector. The prospective expansion of Manston Airport provides further investment potential. East Kent's close and convenient access to continental markets is a further asset. Provision of CTRL domestic rail services to East Kent, with the consequent reduction in journey times, would assist in extending opportunities and encouraging regeneration.

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

Canterbury

3.23 The City of Canterbury is the predominant retail, cultural and educational centre within East Kent and a principal focus for the provision of professional services. Its education and cultural sectors represent a potential catalyst for growth. The further and higher education sectors in the City should be fostered by expansion of its universities and colleges. This should include providing accommodation suitable for an expanded student population. Diversification of the Canterbury economy should be pursued through support for business and research activity that has links with the Higher Education institutions in the city. To this end land should be released at Canterbury to support knowledge and technology uses linked to the education sector. Further investment is required in the cultural sector, in new hotels and new office accommodation that is capable of supporting diversification and regeneration of the urban economy.

3.24 The city currently depends on a large net inflow of commuters to support the level of jobs in the area. Increasing housing capacity within the city through fuller use of previously used land should help to reduce the dependence upon car based travel to work. A range of sustainable transport initiatives should tackle road traffic pressures associated in large part with the number of commuters, shoppers and tourists who visit the city. Herne Bay and Whitstable have experienced significant housing expansion in recent years but the emphasis at the coastal towns should now be on realising capacity for housing within the urban area and securing a better local balance between housing, population, jobs and facilities. With continuing priority attached to regenerating the coastal towns there needs to be a ready supply and choice of land both for local firms and for inward investment.

Policy EK1: Canterbury

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

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

Proposals for major cultural facilities and high quality tourism accommodation in, or with good access to, the city centre will be encouraged ~~and supported~~. New office accommodation contributing to diversification of the economy and urban regeneration will be promoted.

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

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

Dover

3.25 Strategic policy for Dover centres upon economic growth and the regeneration of the town and the former coalfield areas. The innovation hub based on pharmaceuticals research and development in the Sandwich Corridor will play an important role along with bringing forward strategic employment land at Dover. Development proposals should be brought forward to capitalise on the opportunities afforded by Dover's European gateway role, including those at the port. The regeneration of the former coalfield area remains a strategic priority but the isolated nature of the sites makes large-scale intensive development inappropriate. Some provision is made for release of land for housing post 2006 in areas accessible to the Sandwich Corridor. These aims for the District will need a range of transport improvements to support them.

3.26 Aylesham is an established location for strategic expansion involving up to 1000 dwellings together with job opportunities and community services and infrastructure. This development will contribute to wider housing provision for East Kent. Aylesham is reasonably close to Canterbury and has a rail connection to it. The development planned will offset some of the restraint applied to the neighbouring District. Development at Aylesham will also help the existing substantial community to be more sustainable.

Policy EK2: Dover

Development in Dover should strengthen and diversify its economy and promote environmental enhancement. This will include support for the innovation hub based on pharmaceuticals research and development in the Sandwich Corridor at

Richborough, implementation of strategic employment land at Dover (White Cliffs Business Park) and appropriate expansion and diversification of the port of Dover.

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

The mixed-use expansion of Aylesham, incorporating provision for up to 1,000 dwellings by 2016, is supported.

The housing provision for Dover District (Policy HP1) includes 300 dwellings for the post 2006 period to be accommodated at a location, or locations. ~~within, or offering good accessibility to, the Sandwich Corridor that can support, and offer good accessibility to, business growth to the north of Sandwich.~~

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

Thanet

3.27 Strategic policy continues to seek employment-led regeneration for Thanet. A better balance between housing and jobs is required to reduce commuting out of the area and address the needs of deprived communities. The significant growth in new homes proposed should be phased and depend upon evidence that the local economy is generating new jobs to accompany growth in the resident population. Established strategic policies mean that there is a generous supply of employment land already committed. Transport improvements, notably the dualling of the Thanet Way linking to the M2/A2 and the Ramsgate Harbour Access Road, have improved the accessibility of the area. Thanet now needs better rail infrastructure and services including the provision of high-speed domestic services on the CTRL from/to Ramsgate via Ashford.

3.28 Tourism and culture can play an important role in regenerating the existing towns of Ramsgate and Margate in particular. The proposed Turner Centre in Margate is a flagship project in this regard. There is potential for Manston Airport to attract significant inward investment through major expansion for both freight and passenger services. A new mixed-use town centre will be provided at Westwood, which is already a major retail destination. A new Strategic Development Location for housing beyond 2006 is also proposed for the Westwood area. This is close to the new town centre and to substantial land previously allocated for business development and is within the principal transport corridor linking Margate and Ramsgate. Phasing will be dependent on the outcome of detailed assessments of urban housing capacity in the Thanet towns. Examination of Westwood should also consider the housing provisions required by this Plan in Thanet beyond 2016.

Policy EK3: Thanet

Development in Thanet must address the long standing economic and social problems of the area by strengthening and diversifying the local economy and employment base.

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

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

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

A Strategic Development Location of up to 1,000 dwellings for the post 2006 period, adjoining the urban area at Westwood, should be defined and phased through the Local Plan/Local Development Document.

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

Channel Corridor

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

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

3.31 The relationship between the principal urban areas of Ashford and Maidstone and the rest of the sub-area will become increasingly important. Ashford has long been identified for significant growth, through successive Kent Structure Plans, and the town is

now one of the regional growth areas identified by Government in its Sustainable Communities Plan. Implementing the recommendations of the *Ashford's Future* Study will have significant sub-regional implications and the strategy must not be allowed to prejudice growth and regeneration in neighbouring districts including those within the East Kent Triangle.

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

3.33 There is a continuing need to capitalise on the economic opportunities afforded by growth at Ashford and the area's gateway role associated with the M20, the Channel Tunnel and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link international and domestic services. All parts of the community including those currently suffering deprivation should benefit. If the area is to fulfil its national role as a gateway whilst securing essential community development and economic change, there will be a need to increase capacity for the M20 west of Maidstone and improve access to the motorway, through a series of junction improvements and the removal of constraints such as those caused by Operation Stack in the Ashford area. Sustainable transport links will also be needed particularly to deal with the level of growth envisaged for Ashford.

Ashford

3.34 Ashford is recognised as a regional focus for growth both to help stimulate inward investment to East Kent and to assist in addressing the region's wider employment and housing needs. Despite a generous supply of employment land the rate of recent housing development has outstripped local economic performance. In coming years there will be additional labour market pressures caused by improved rail commuting capacity and faster rail journey times to London following completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link in 2007. Targets for employment growth under '*Ashford's Future*' are ambitious and if housing and employment are to be more balanced a step change in recent investment levels will be required supported by a boost in vocational skills provided by the town's Further Education sector.

3.35 If the exceptional scale and pace of growth at Ashford envisaged by the '*Ashford's Future*' study is to be achieved a number of constraints need to be tackled and essential improvements secured ahead of housing or other growth. The local authorities need central Government to enable them to finance the community infrastructure required to support the accelerated growth which is envisaged. This includes major renewal and upgrading of the town centre and its environs plus improvements to transport infrastructure and community facilities in the town. Disadvantaged areas of Ashford must share in economic and community improvements.

Policy CC1: Ashford

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

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

Provision will be made for up to 40ha of additional land for business development to meet requirements ~~for the medium and longer term~~ beyond 2011.

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

- *Enhanced junction capacity on the M20 at or near Junction 10 (and, in the longer term, at Junction 9);*
- *Quality bus corridors, a new centrally located bus interchange and Park and Ride facilities;*
- *Measures to manage flood risk in the Stour Valley including surface water drainage improvements;*
- *Provision for sustainable management of water resources, including facilities for increasing water supply and the treatment of wastewater in conjunction with the maintenance of water quality standards.*
- *An enhanced network of water and public greenspaces.*

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

Following masterplanning of Ashford's growth, Local Development Documents should identify the outer limit of Ashford's planned expansion and measures to :

- (a) protect the open countryside in the M20/A20 corridor towards Folkestone; and*
- (b) maintain the separate identity of rural settlements around an enlarged Ashford urban area*

In the rest of Ashford Borough the principal planning policy will be to protect and enhance the character of the rural area and the setting of its towns and villages.

Maidstone

3.36 The role of Maidstone as the County Town will be underpinned through major new retail, cultural and community uses. The town remains the centre for administrative, judicial, and financial services in the county and the range and quality of retailing in the town centre will be enhanced through the Fremlin Walk development. Central Maidstone has an important role to play in supporting diversification of the local economy and enhancing the quality of the area as an employment centre. Continued restraint to preclude net additional release of greenfield land for economic development in the

Maidstone area remains appropriate in view of a tightening labour market and the greater restraint now applied to housing provision. However some substitution between existing and new allocations would be appropriate, in line with Policy FP1 (e) to secure a supply of attractive land for economic development that has both good accessibility to the labour market of Maidstone and the national and strategic road network.

3.37 The Strategic Gap, originally designated in the 1996 Structure Plan, between Maidstone, the Medway Gap and Medway will be retained in order to maintain the separation of these urban areas. Areas of landscape importance limit the growth of Maidstone to the north and north west, particularly to the north of the M20, whilst extensive areas of high quality agricultural land lie to the east and south of the Maidstone urban area. The priority will be to make best use of urban capacity and to utilise opportunities for regeneration within central Maidstone for redevelopment, re-use and more intensive use of land near to town centre services and public transport. Transport improvements will support these priorities and allow better traffic management, provide opportunities for environmental enhancement and improve accessibility for communities to the south of Maidstone.

Policy CC2: Maidstone

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

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

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

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

Shepway

3.38 The policy for Shepway seeks to regenerate Folkestone in order to improve its shopping, service and residential functions, strengthen its role as a tourist resort, attract further investment into the town and address the needs of socially disadvantaged communities. Redevelopment of the harbour and seafront for a mix of uses, but incorporating a major residential element, will make a substantial contribution. Alternative uses for the port area should be considered. Some further provision of employment land to maintain a choice of sites for inward investment and new enterprise

is proposed where well-related to the Folkestone/Hythe urban area or New Romney as the key rural service centre for the Romney Marsh area.

3.39 Expansion of the Folkestone/Hythe urban area is limited by the proximity of the North Downs AONB. As a precaution against long term flooding risk significant additional residential development on Romney Marsh should be avoided. The strategic expansion of Hawkinge for residential and employment use, will be completed within the settlement boundary previously defined through the Shepway Local Plan and will depend on completion of the A260 Hawkinge Bypass. Measures to stimulate the rural economy and strengthen the role of the service centres at New Romney and Lydd should be pursued. The potential to maintain and improve facilities at Lydd Airport and Folkestone Racecourse should be investigated.

Policy CC3: Shepway

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

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

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

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

West Kent

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

3.41 Constraints on greenfield development coupled with strong housing markets and land values have resulted in substantial reinvestment in the fabric of the principal urban areas to meet housing demands. In some instances this has meant the loss of existing employment land. Key workers have faced difficulties in entering the housing market because of the high costs involved. In many instances the pattern of housing and job markets does not follow local administrative boundaries. Some rural communities are

remote and lack services or facilities and excessive levels of commuting can be detrimental to community life. The legacy of the cement industry and redundant institutional land available in the eastern part of the area provide significant opportunities for regeneration and recycling of previously used land.

3.42 Strategic policy for West Kent seeks to optimise economic performance in a sustainable manner without any strategic release of Green Belt land. This will rely strongly on making the best use of land for housing in the principal towns and rural service centres, while protecting existing employment land, particularly where it is in central, accessible locations within those settlements.

3.43 Growth will focus upon a few key strategic sites. These include several innovation hubs where links between research and business are promoted and which provide an opportunity for Kent to increase its share of regional economic inward investment. Some existing developed sites within the Green Belt, such as company headquarters, may offer redevelopment or other opportunities for optimisation of use. In such cases the existing built footprint will be important in establishing the future scale of development.

Policy WK1: West Kent

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

- (a) ***there will be no release of land from the Metropolitan Green Belt to meet strategic requirements and no major release of additional greenfield land beyond land committed at 2001 for residential or business development;***
- (b) ***in seeking to make the best use of land within the principal urban areas for housing the local planning authorities should make provision to safeguard existing and/or new employment land for more intensive (office) employment uses at locations in, or close to, the town centres of the principal urban areas.***

Sevenoaks

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

Policy WK2: Sevenoaks

Within Sevenoaks District the scale of new housing development reflects its location wholly within the inner Metropolitan Green Belt, the relatively small scale

of the principal urban areas of Sevenoaks and Swanley and the character of their built environments.

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

Tonbridge and Malling

3.45 The Strategic Development Locations identified for Tonbridge and Malling under earlier Structure Plans have been reviewed. Changes include:

- Commitment to a mixed-use new community at Kings Hill remains but its land use mix should be reviewed to provide for a greater residential element (some 750 additional homes) and business floorspace reduced to 186,000 sq. metres. This will ease labour market pressures, help to reduce demands elsewhere for additional housing land and further improve the balance between residential and business use within the development.
- The provision for development on the East Bank of the Medway during the timescale of this Plan is limited to a new community provided on previously developed land at Peters Pit. Undeveloped land beyond this is to be included in the Strategic Gap between the Medway Gap urban area and Maidstone which is retained to prevent coalescence of these urban areas.

3.46 This Plan also identifies innovation hubs at Kings Hill and HRI East Malling. At East Malling proposals relating to the land based industrial sector will need to pay due regard to prevailing policies of restraint applicable to greenfield land.

Policy WK3: Tonbridge and Malling

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

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

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

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

Tunbridge Wells

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

Policy WK4: Tunbridge Wells

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

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

Chapter 4: Protecting our natural environment

4.1 We hold our environment in trust for current and future generations. Kent's natural environment is a prized asset which in some parts of the county is recognised as superb. ~~The earth's natural resources, such as air, water, and sources of energy, are essential in meeting our day to day needs.~~ Protecting and enhancing the environment, ~~and using resources wisely (especially where they are not renewable)~~ is fundamental to ensuring the well being and prosperity of this and future generations. The challenge for the Structure Plan is to protect the environment while at the same time allowing for essential development ~~and tackling the implications for Kent of global climate change.~~

Key Issues for Kent:

- Protecting the countryside, coast, fauna and flora
- Conserving and enhancing the differing landscapes of Kent and their distinctive character
- ~~• Understanding and tackling the effects of global climate change~~
- ~~• Moving to renewable sources of energy~~
- ~~• Reducing pollution and improving air quality~~
- ~~• Ensuring water resources are managed for the future~~
- ~~• Combating the effects of flooding~~

Countryside and Coast

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

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

The **landscapes of Kent** are important for themselves and because of the impact they have on the quality of life of those who live, work and spend time in the county. The benefits include:

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

4.4 The Kent Coast and estuaries are an important local and national resource, particularly in terms of nature conservation value, scenic quality and their importance for recreation. However, they are under pressure from a variety of commercial and recreational uses. Opportunities for development within undeveloped stretches of coast are increasingly limited. Every effort should be made to protect undeveloped stretches of our coastline. However there may be developments that require a coastal location or direct access to the water e.g. port facilities and related development or sea defence works. In cases like these the local planning authorities should assess what impact the proposed development would have on the landscape, seascape and conservation of the stretch of estuary or coastline involved. They should also consider defining the extent of undeveloped coast and estuaries in Local Development Documents in order to allow the objectives of Policy E2 to be applied clearly. This should include assessment of the extent to which Policy E2 will apply inland of the undeveloped coast and estuaries. Within built up coastal and estuarial areas assessment of the impacts of development on townscape and seascape/riverscape will also be important including the contribution made to the retention or opening up of views of the water.

4.5 The main river estuaries are important wildlife corridors. The Tidal Thames is a wildlife corridor of considerable importance bordered by the Thames Gateway growth area. Measures to sustain and improve the quality and quantity of its wildlife habitats (through, for example, the Tidal Thames Habitat Action Plan) should be pursued.

4.6 Protection and enhancement of the countryside and coast should reflect the way they are valued, take account of the factors which have helped shape them, and respect the functions they serve.

Policy E1: Kent's Countryside and Coast

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

Kent's countryside will be protected for its own sake. Development in the countryside should seek to maintain or enhance it. Development which will adversely affect the countryside will not be permitted unless there is an overriding need for it which outweighs the requirement to protect the countryside

Policy E2: Kent's Coast and Estuaries

Kent's undeveloped coast and estuaries, except where allocated for port development and associated infrastructure, will be conserved and enhanced. Development in such areas and in adjoining countryside will not be permitted if it materially detracts from the scenic, heritage, wildlife or scientific value of these areas.

Landscape Character

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

The seven main natural character areas of Kent identified by the Countryside Agency and English Nature are:

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

(Insert map of character areas)

4.8 Changes in the countryside which are necessary and inevitable should be managed in a way which, as far as possible, strengthens its pattern and diversity rather than eroding character and distinctiveness. Government guidance places increasing emphasis on the conserving the countryside by assessing the character of its landscape. This approach will help to ensure that Kent's character and distinctiveness are safeguarded, and where possible, enhanced. Landscape character embraces not only visual appearance of the countryside and sense of place but also its natural and cultural heritage.

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

4.10 Local Planning Authorities will need to carry out more detailed character assessments for their areas within the period of this Plan. Supplementary Planning Guidance on county wide landscape character assessments will accompany the Structure Plan and help authorities prepare Local Development Documents. Kent County Council's Landscape Strategy Map, Medway Council's Landscape and Urban Design Framework, and the Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, all provide guidance and information to assist in implementing the policy. The historic dimension of the landscape is also addressed by Policy QL9. The Landscape Strategy Map offers guidance on a Kent wide approach to protecting and enhancing landscapes and sets out priorities for landscape action. It also suggests how the type, scale and form of development which is justified might respect the character of the countryside.

Policy E3: Landscape Character

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

Kent's landscape and wildlife habitats will be conserved and enhanced. Development will not be permitted if it would lead to the loss of features or habitats which are of landscape, historic, wildlife or geological importance, or are of an unspoilt quality free from urban intrusion unless there is a need for development which outweighs these countryside considerations

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

Designated Landscapes

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Heritage Coast

4.11 Kent has two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Kent Downs and the High Weald, and two stretches of Heritage Coast, which stretch from Kingsdown to Dover and from Dover to Folkestone. These are nationally important landscapes which have a similar status to national parks. The emphasis within them is to conserve their natural beauty whilst having regard to the area's economic and social well being. Development proposals outside the designated area of an AONB should be considered for any effect they might have on the natural beauty of the AONB.

4.12 Past policy has served these areas well but there is evidence that their natural beauty and distinctiveness are threatened by a range of activities, many of which are not under planning control. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the preparation of AONB Management Plans. Measures and actions set out in these plans, alongside policies in the Structure Plan and local plans/development documents, will be designed to ensure that Kent's AONBs are protected and enhanced.

Policy E4: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Heritage Coast

Protection will be given to the nationally important landscapes of:

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

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

Major commercial, mineral or transport infrastructure developments will ~~be permitted only where~~ not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:

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

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

Special Landscape Areas

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

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

Policy E5: Special Landscape Areas (SLAs)

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

North Downs

Greensand Ridge

High Weald

Eastern Low Weald

Old Romney Shoreline

North Kent Marshes

Sandwich Bay/Pegwell Bay

Dungeness

Blean Woods

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

4.15 Although the principal aim is to protect and enhance the landscape character and natural beauty of both AONBs and SLAs, the needs of agriculture, forestry, the rural economy and local communities should be taken into account. These areas of natural landscape can play an important part in providing informal recreation but only where it does not impact upon their natural beauty. New development which is needed to improve the social and economic life of local communities within AONBs and SLAs should be located within or immediately adjacent to existing settlements. Diversification

of the rural economy is supported (Policy FP7) within these areas but should be consistent with AONB and SLA objectives.

Nature Conservation

4.16 Kent contains a wide range of wildlife habitats and their associated species. These include downland, woodland, meadows, rivers, coastal habitats and wetlands. These nature conservation resources continue to come under pressure. One example of this is that, wild bird populations, a general indicator for biodiversity, are continuing to decline in Kent. This reflects a national trend caused by development pressures and other activities such as more intensive agriculture. These important resources need to be protected and encouraged, both for their own sake, and for future generations.

4.17 Nature conservation can improve our quality of life. Green spaces supporting wildlife interest, for example, can be very important to local communities. Contact with, and access to, wildlife as an everyday occurrence can contribute greatly to our health and wellbeing.

4.18 Development and other activities can have direct and indirect impacts on areas of nature conservation interest. Development sites can have an impact on a natural resource a considerable distance away, particularly if the effect is related to air quality or water resources. The impact of one development may be small but the cumulative effect of several can be significant. Impacts can be avoided and gains achieved by careful design and by guiding development away from sensitive sites. Opportunities to deal with the impacts of development on sensitive sites through mitigation measures should be taken.

4.19 The Plan provides protection for wildlife. It seeks to identify opportunities for enhancement taking account of the international, national or local importance of wildlife populations. Supplementary Planning Guidance on Nature Conservation will be provided which will elaborate the aims, objectives and targets of the UK and Kent Biodiversity Action Plans and how these can be delivered and made to work alongside development.

Internationally and Nationally Important sites

4.20 Internationally and nationally designated sites contain the best examples of our natural heritage. Sites of international importance are designated under the terms of:

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

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

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

Policy E6: International and National Wildlife Designations

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

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

Other Sites of Strategic Importance

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

4.24 Local Nature Reserves are designated by statute and are designed to increase the public enjoyment and understanding of nature, as well as nature conservation. County Wildlife Sites (designated by the Kent Wildlife Trust) and Regionally Important Geological/ Geomorphological Sites are of both strategic and local importance for wildlife and the earth's heritage. Many contain nationally important habitats and contribute to wildlife diversity.

Policy E7: County and Local Wildlife Designations

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

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

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

Biodiversity

4.25 The Kent Biodiversity Action Plan underlines the commitment to safeguarding biological diversity in Kent. It considers whole ecosystems, recognising that safeguarding and enhancing wildlife cannot be done by just conserving sites. It seeks to safeguard and improve priority habitats and species found in the wider countryside and to identify areas of biodiversity potential where net improvements can be achieved.

4.26 Habitats often occur as fragments within the landscape, providing wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one habitat to another. Preventing further

fragmentation by safeguarding existing habitats and improving linkages between them will help to maintain the current range and diversity of our flora and fauna.

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

Policy E8: Biodiversity

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

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

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

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

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

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

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

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

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

4.31 Kent and Medway Councils will continue to carry out tree planting and manage trees and woodlands on their own land and to promote these activities to other woodland owners. A specific objective will be to increase ~~with a particular view to increasing~~ the cover of broad-leaved woodland. Other priorities will include improving the management of small woodlands including the county's significant resource of coppice, marketing woodland products, and fostering community interest in woodlands.

Policy E9: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows

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

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

Community Forests and Woodlands

4.32 Creation of 'Community Forests' around major urban areas can give communities access to green space and provide an important way to manage and enhance the urban fringe. Such forests, especially when made up of native species, can enhance the landscape, create opportunities for recreation, bolster economic confidence and encourage investment. Existing wildlife habitats and landscape character must be protected. The Government's Sustainable Communities Plan encourages consideration of Community Forests in the regional growth areas. Their potential in Thames Gateway (Kent) and Ashford should be examined and, where this is confirmed, proposals included in Local Development Documents. At other appropriate locations smaller community woodland planting should be examined.

Policy E10: Community Forests and Woodlands

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

Urban Fringe

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

Policy E11: Urban Fringe

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

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

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

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

River Corridors

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

Policy E12: River Corridors

The environment within river corridors, including the landscape, water environment and wildlife habitats, will be conserved and enhanced. Where consistent with this provision will be made for :

- increased opportunities for access and water recreation;
- increased public access for walking and cycling and links to existing rights of way and cycleway networks.

Sustainable water resource and flood risk management should deliver environmental benefits.

Enhancement of Primary Routes

4.35 Kent's primary road and rail routes are used by large numbers of people from within and outside the county and include routes which carry significant tourist traffic. The character and quality of the landscape along these routes is important because it influences the perceptions of visitors and potential investors and because it can help to mitigate the impact of the routes themselves and the traffic which uses them.

4.36 Considerable advances have been made in the quality of landscaping treatment achieved on such routes through local authorities working in partnership with other bodies such as the Highways Agency and Network Rail. The construction of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link through Kent is testament to the benefits that can be achieved from a concerted programme of environmental treatment and enhancement. Policy E13 promotes enhancement of environmental quality along the county's motorway and primary road and passenger rail networks as identified on the Key Diagram.

Policy E13: Environmental Enhancement of Primary Routes

Enhancement of landscape quality and character along primary road and rail routes, including important tourist routes, will be promoted.

Rural Lanes

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

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

Policy E14: Rural Lanes

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

Chapter 5: Promoting Quality of Life in Town and Country

5.1 This Plan seeks to make towns and villages in Kent vibrant places in which to live, work, and take leisure. This Chapter looks to support an 'urban renaissance' in Kent and the revitalisation of rural communities. It focuses upon those policies which affect the quality of places including, design, density, the protection Kent's wealth of built heritage, community services and infrastructure. Policies for the protection and enhancement of the countryside and coast, their landscapes and wildlife are equally important dimensions of quality of life. These are addressed in Chapter 4

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

Key Issues for Kent:

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

The quality of development and design in town and country

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

5.4 The intrinsic character and setting of Kent villages and small rural towns is valuable. It helps to mould the image of the county and contributes to the quality of life for everyone who lives in and visits Kent. Structure Plan policies have protected the countryside and rural settlements from inappropriate development and must continue to do so. Any development in the rural areas must respond carefully to its location and environment.

5.5 There is now a clear expectation that the planning system will promote sustainable and well designed development and this is reflected in a range of national planning policy guidance notes and other Government publications¹. It is important that development responds well to the distinct character of each settlement. This character is formed by the buildings, open spaces landscape, street pattern, landmarks, materials used and other features. Each town or village therefore has a different set of physical design problems and opportunities. Achieving good design means looking at the

¹ For example : Better Places to Live by Design : Companion Guide to PPG3
By Design : Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

function, convenience and context of a development as well as the appearance and appropriateness of its architecture. It must address the public domain including the space between buildings and needs the community as well as those directly involved with the project to contribute to reaching decisions.

5.6 Good design can often be achieved at no overall extra cost. Using good urban design and management to focus more attention on street maintenance, public open space and pedestrian routes can result in economic benefits to an area as well as making places more attractive. The *Kent Design Guide* has been prepared as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Kent's local authorities. It advocates high quality design for new development making sure it is in harmony with its surroundings but without stifling innovation.

The benefits of good design:

Good urban design and high quality architecture will help to deliver strategic planning policies in Kent in a number of ways:

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

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

Policy QL1: Quality of Development and Design

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

(ii) Local authorities and others will:

- a) ensure that the distinctive character of towns and villages is conserved and improved;***
- b) apply the principles of the Kent Design Guide when determining planning applications and preparing site-specific development guidance;***
- c) require that a design statement accompanies proposals for development with accurate illustrations of the development in its surroundings;***
- d) develop design policies for their area based on an analysis of the quality, character and significance of the surrounding built and natural environment. This will include:***
 - (i) identification of areas where local design policies will apply to take take account of their special character;***
 - (ii) provision of design guidance within development briefs and master plans for major development sites and areas of change.***

(iv) The design of development should

- (a) consider the needs of all sections of the community***
- (b) provide for a healthy, safe and secure environment***
- (c) enhance the public realm***
- (d) protect the amenity of residents***
- (e) incorporate sustainable construction techniques including the provision for recycling facilities, water conservation and energy efficiency***

Policy QL2 : Priorities for the Public Realm

A concerted effort will be made to improve the appearance , design and ambience of the public realm including streets, squares, walkways, greenspace and vistas in both town and country. This will be implemented by :

- (i) programmes of investment in new and refurbished public spaces**
- (ii) the improvement of townscapes including environmental enhancement**
- (iii) improved maintenance of streets ,squares and other open spaces**
- (iv) better security**
- (v) encouragement , as appropriate , of retail , leisure, cultural and civic activity to bring vitality to the central areas of our towns and cities**

Policy QL3: ~~Priorities for the Public Realm~~—Movement and Accessibility in the Public Realm

Local authorities will establish priorities and programmes for:

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

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

Policy QL24 : Maintaining the identity of settlements

The separation of settlements will be maintained including:

- a) Safeguarding of the open and undeveloped character of the countryside around and between settlements, including the use of landscape buffers;**
- b) The allocation of land on the edge of settlements for uses which maintain or enhance their setting;**
- c) The protection of important features and views.**

Making effective use of development land

5.8 It is important to make best use of development land. The greater part of most Kent towns has not been developed to a high density and land is not always used

efficiently. There are opportunities to increase the density of residential and commercial development for example, through redeveloping single storey buildings or changing the way parking is provided. This can create more interesting and lively townscapes, while conserving the best character of Kent's towns. New development or intensification can use loft space, extra storeys, basements and terracing to make the most efficient use of the land available. Higher densities can be achieved without compromising wider design objectives or the quality of development.

5.9 There will in future be more one and two person households in younger and older age groups who will require smaller dwellings close to public transport and community services. Higher densities can be assisted by providing less car parking, especially where there is good access to good quality public transport.

Policy QL5: Density of development

In appropriate locations and in conjunction with the delivery of high quality development, new development will be subject to ~~minimum~~ average net densities* as follows:

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

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

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

Vibrant mix of uses

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

Policy QL6: Mix of uses on major sites

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

Heritage

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

Conservation Areas

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

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

5.14 It is important to take into account the impact of proposals outside conservation areas where these might affect important views into, and out of such areas. Highway improvements and maintenance will be carried out in a manner which is sensitive to their surroundings in order to minimise adverse environmental impacts on conservation areas.

Co-ordinated environmental improvement schemes will be carried out in appropriate locations.

Policy QL7: Conservation Areas

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

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

District Planning authorities should:

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

Archaeological Sites

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

5.16 The emphasis should be on preserving archaeological sites 'in situ' (i.e. in their original position). If this is not appropriate or possible, then an archaeological investigation for the purposes of 'preservation by record' will be required before the site is developed. This is likely to involve a full archaeological excavation and recording of the site, conservation of any finds, and publication of the results. Provision should be made for the long-term storage of the site archive and finds, for future generations. Displays, both temporary and permanent, can help people to appreciate the value of archaeology and can provide a sense of history for new and existing communities. The Kent Extensive Urban Archaeology Survey provides an overview of the archaeological resources of Kent's historic towns and sets out a framework for taking this into account

in assessing development proposals. This will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Policy QL8: Archaeological Sites

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

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

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

Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

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

5.18 Generally, the best way to secure the upkeep of historic buildings is to retain them in the use for which they were originally intended, or in their current use. A proposed change of use for a listed building may be acceptable if it offers the best way of retaining or refurbishing it.

5.19 Demolition of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will require a very strong case to be made. In such cases there is a legal requirement to allow English Heritage reasonable access to a building to make a record of it prior to demolition.

5.20 Alteration of a historic building can involve the destruction of important features and should be avoided. Before work is carried out a suitable record should be prepared. Where demolition or alteration would damage part of the structure of a building of special architectural or historic interest, applicants may be required to document fully the impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric of the building before the application can be determined.

5.21 Kent's built heritage can be identified by the use of local stones, bricks and tiles made from locally produced clay, as well as by the use of flint, thatch, oak and weatherboarding. The use of similar materials for alterations, repair and new build can help to maintain and enhance the character of the county's buildings of historic or architectural interest, conservation areas and other visually sensitive areas.

Policy QL9: Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

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

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

The Historic Landscape

5.22 The historic landscape of Kent includes World Heritage Sites, historic parks and gardens, historic battlefields as well as the wider landscape itself (as recognised by Policy E3). Historic landscape features are special because of their contribution to the character of the urban and rural historic environment. The settings of historic landscapes and views into, and out of, them are also important and should be protected.

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

Policy QL10: Historic Landscape Features

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

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

Enabling Development

5.24 In certain cases funds for the repair and restoration of a ‘heritage asset’, that cannot be generated from any other source, can be provided by permitting ‘enabling development’. This ensures the preservation of the asset through cross subsidy made possible by the associated development. A ‘heritage asset’ describes any component of the historic environment, including scheduled monuments and other archaeological remains, statutorily listed historic buildings and others of more local significance, conservation areas, registered historic parks and gardens and battlefields and other historic landscape features.

5.25 Proposals for enabling development can only be justified on the basis that the benefit to the community of preserving or enhancing the heritage asset outweighs any

harm. The enabling development must preserve the asset, not detract from its archaeological, architectural, historic, landscape or biodiversity interest or harm its setting. The development must be shown to be the minimum necessary to secure the long-term future of the asset and be shown to minimise any adverse effects. Further guidance is contained in English Heritage's Policy Statement on "*Enabling development and the conservation of heritage assets*" (2001).

Policy QL11: Heritage Assets - Enabling Development

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

Community services, sport and open space

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

5.27 A wide range of services is essential to community well being. It includes education, health, social care, sport, youth and community services, recreation and the arts. The existing pattern of development has allowed some areas to become deficient in services or only able to access them by the car. The Structure Plan can help promote a co-ordinated approach to providing community services by requiring:

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

5.28 The diversity of local communities must be taken into account and opportunities taken to promote social inclusion and maximise life chances and independence. People with disabilities, older people and the young are less mobile than the majority of the population but need access to a wide range of facilities. The number and proportion of older people in the population as a whole is set to increase but new communities meanwhile have a high proportion of young people. Gender and ethnic groups also have particular needs. This diversity should be reflected in the type and design of development proposed. In particular, planning policies should ensure that no one section of the community is isolated from housing, services, employment, shopping or other support. An important reason for concentrating development in the principal urban areas is that they will be able to sustain a full range of services including good quality public transport.

Providing for community services

5.29 Existing community buildings and open space will be protected from development where there is a continuing need for them. In other cases new facilities may be needed where growth is taking place in order to remedy existing deficiencies or to allow service providers to invest in new facilities.

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

Policy QL12: Existing community services and deficiency

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

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

5.31 In cases where existing community buildings do not have the capacity to serve new residential developments, standards for the provision of land for community services e.g. as set out in the KCC Guide for Developers will be used. Precise requirements for a particular development are likely to be determined in development briefs and through negotiation with developers, but Local Development Documents should safeguard land for community purposes early in the planning process. Community services should be located wherever practicable in multi use facilities at town, district or local centres and should not depend upon transport by the private car.

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

5.33 It is essential that unless there are exceptional circumstances the costs of providing new community facilities needed to support new housing or other development is met by the development in question (see also Policy IMP1, Chapter 10).

Policy QL13: Provision for new community services and infrastructure

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

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

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

Culture and the Arts

5.34 Facilities for culture and the arts range from formal performance and exhibition space to the dual use of existing buildings and street festivals. They can help to bring vitality to our towns and villages, foster community spirit and preserve the heritage of Kent and its communities. In recent years several towns and cities in the UK and abroad have undergone a renaissance founded upon individual landmark buildings or a cluster of related developments which foster the local arts and cultural 'scene'. Innovative new buildings, of an appropriate scale and design, can help to stimulate public interest further. The proposed Turner Centre in Margate seeks to foster such a transformation in the image of Thanet.

Policy QL14: Cultural development and the arts

Proposals for cultural or arts facilities will be encouraged , particularly where located within, or close to town centres or public transport nodes. Development proposals in general should seek to promote public art, both directly and through the provision of development contributions.

Provision for open space, sport and recreation

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

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

5.37 The provision of new sports facilities must have regard to minimum standards but must also be based on an assessment of local demand and the quality of existing facilities. In rural areas the possibility of creating focal points for sport and recreation by clustering facilities together should be examined. This can also add to the sustainability of key settlements. Kent's 'Strategic Framework for Sport'² identifies deficiencies in the county in the number of single sport and multi sports facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools and recognises the role that dual use and joint provision can play in meeting those needs.

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

Policy QL15: Provision for major sporting venues

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

Policy QL16: Formal recreation/sport facilities

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

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

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

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

5.39 Kent is an important area for water sports and recreation, due to its long coastline and to the major area of sheltered sailing close to London provided by the estuaries of the Thames, Medway and Swale. Facilities for mooring landing and launching craft may

² Kent: The Champion County: The Strategic Framework for Sport in Kent 2003-2008: Kent County Council.

need to be improved if this is to be capitalised upon this but congestion and conflict between users should be taken into account. There is continuing potential for inland water recreation through sensitive restoration of mineral workings. Particular considerations apply to water sports because of the sensitive nature of the areas in which they are found. While this Plan protects the undeveloped coast, opportunities to add to facilities which support water sports within existing urban areas or where existing port or commercial uses are declining should be examined.

Policy QL17: Water recreation

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

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

Open spaces networks in urban areas:

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

Policy QL18: Green-space networks and rights of way

Local authorities will prepare open space strategies and reflect their land use requirements in Local Development Documents:

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

5.41 The major/principal urban areas of Kent Thameside and Medway and Swale in Thames Gateway and Thanet, Canterbury and Ashford in East Kent are bordered by extensive highly valued environmental assets. The establishment of 'regional conservation parks' could create a setting for the existing urban areas, provide for

environmental improvement , create new leisure and recreational opportunities with improved public access to them alongside the conservation and enhancement of these high quality countryside assets. Sustainable management of improved recreational opportunities within these areas would be an essential requirement of such proposals. The extent and definition of the parks and the way they would link with adjoining urban areas (including the green space networks within them) need closer examination on a sub regional basis.

Policy QL19: Regional Conservation Parks

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

Chapter 6: Fostering Prosperity

6.1 Securing sufficient well-rewarded employment for Kent's residents is fundamental to their quality of life and well being. Kent is, however, less prosperous than many of its neighbours in the South East.

Key Prosperity Issues for Kent:

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

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

Structural weaknesses in the Kent economy:

Although unemployment is below 3% (2003) there are still a number of weaknesses in the Kent economy:

- many jobs are in industries with lower average earnings than the new businesses that are concentrated in London and the west of the region. Only four Kent districts are among the top 25% in the UK for earnings, despite Kent's location in a high-cost region.
- there are still many people who are at a disadvantage because of ill health and low skills.
- certain areas, such as Thanet, have suffered from under investment in the economy in the past.
- there are significant variations between the east and west of the county in average income levels
- there are about 80,000 more working people living in Kent than there are jobs in the county which demonstrates a high level of commuting to London and neighbouring counties, especially from North and West Kent.

6.2 The people of Kent will not enjoy greater prosperity unless strenuous efforts continue to be made to renew its economy and to make the most of its economic assets, including its leading businesses. However economic growth must be planned in such a way that the county's environment is protected and all areas benefit from better job opportunities.

The Plan’s Approach to Business Development

The Impact of Previous Plans

6.3 The 1996 Structure Plan paid special attention to the regeneration of major sites in the industrial towns of North Kent and to diversifying the East Kent economy in response to colliery closures, a decline in port employment and weak tourism. As a result, the Plan gave Kent a leading role in the South East in terms of land supply for new business. Throughout the county a total of 3.33 million sq.m of business floorspace were to be provided between 1991 and 2001 and a further 2.2 million sq.m by 2011. There are now in excess of 30 sites of more than 10 hectares available for business investment in Kent, which together could provide 3.75 million sq.m of employment space. Access improvements and incentives to encourage inward investment have supported the generous land provision.

6.4 Although ample land has been provided, development has fallen short of the 1996 Structure Plan guidelines. This has been exacerbated by the loss of industrial and business space to other uses (some 1.5 million sq. m between 1991 and 2001) as the 1996 Structure Plan guidelines are based on net additions to new business space from 1991. The chart and Table FP1 show that in net terms only 31% of the Structure Plan guideline has been met across Kent.

Table FP1: Planned Business Floorspace* 1991–2001/2011 (million square metres)

1996 Structure Plan Guidelines	1991–2001	3.33
	2001–2011	2.22
	1991- 2011	5.55
Gross take up of industrial and business floorspace	1991 -2001	2.53
Net take up of industrial and business floorspace	1991 -2001	1.02
Net take up of industrial and business floorspace 1991-2001 as a proportion of the 1996 Structure Plan guideline for 1991-2001		31%
Employment space committed (gross) at 2001		6.37

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

Insert chart of percentage guideline quantity developed across Kent

Strategies for Economic Development

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

Additionally *Kent Prospects* is the economic development strategy for the Kent County Council area. It seeks to support the most successful parts of Kent and to help less successful areas close the gap. It does not seek to maximise economic growth but to respect the quality of life in Kent and promote a diverse “*mosaic*” economy by:

- *building on the existing key economic activities in Kent:*
 - tourism
 - land-based industry and food processing
 - distribution and logistics including ports
 - health care
 - printing and packaging
- *and encouraging growth sectors in the "knowledge economy":*
 - pharmaceuticals and chemicals
 - media and communications
 - financial and business services
 - higher education and research and development
 - environmental industries

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

The economic development partnership for the county, *the Kent and Medway Economic Board*, has set out its priorities for development as follows:

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

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

6.5 Based on past experience market demand will not match the supply of land in the county's priority areas for growth and regeneration, and jobs from new development will be offset by the loss of existing sites and their employment. Only the larger development sites are likely to improve local employment prospects materially. Taken together, the major sites in Kent offer the potential to transform the economy of the county, but the precise impact is difficult to judge.

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

	Available by 2011	Available 2011-2021
All sites	4.75	<u>1.14</u>
<i>Of which Major sites</i>	<i>(2.61)</i>	<i>(1.14)</i>
Other informal commitments	0.48	
Total	6.37	

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

Source: KCC/Medway Employment Land Surveys 2001

6.6 Sites in Kent larger than 10 ha. have the potential to support 101,000 jobs - assuming full take up. In practice there will always be some empty space, and some of the new buildings will be occupied by firms relocating from elsewhere in Kent. Other sites, taken out of employment use will offset the impact of new development. Taken together these factors mean that the net number of additional jobs might be between 40% and 60% of the site capacity, rising to perhaps 60-80% for very large developments such as Ebbsfleet. At the same time other proposals such as the expansion of Manston Airport will boost employment.

6.7 An extra 50,000–80,000 jobs could be created by the successful development of the major sites in Kent. Consultants forecast that with no contribution from major new sites the growth of jobs in Kent would be modest - perhaps only an additional 16,000 jobs over 20 years.³

6.8 The scale and distribution of new homes proposed in Policy HP1 of this Plan takes account of the future balance between the number of available jobs and the size of the workforce. There will be slower growth in the working age population, and with the 116,100 additional dwellings proposed by 2021 the workforce will increase by about 36,000. The CTRL will make commuting from many parts of Kent more attractive, particularly if the extent of the network of domestic services favoured by the local authorities is introduced, although most of the passengers will be diverted from existing rail services.

6.9 The number of new jobs created on the sites already provided could therefore exceed the increase in workforce. This will provide an opportunity to reduce both commuting out of Kent and persistent unemployment. A 25% fall in the number of commuters and improved access to jobs as a result of this Plan's policies could inject up to 55,000 more people in to Kent's workforce⁴. On this basis the growth in jobs and the workforce will be broadly in balance in Kent as a whole – (a) and (b) in Table FP3.

³ See KMSP Working Paper 2: Labour Supply, Workforce and Development Guidelines 2001-2021

⁴ See KMSP Working Paper 2:

Table FP3: Job creation and workforce forecasts

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

6.10 However the growth in jobs and in the workforce varies considerably throughout Kent and requires some adjustment in journey to work patterns or to employment land supply to promote a more sustainable relationship in each area:

- In Kent Thameside, given sustained long term employment growth at a high level there is likely to be a reduction in out commuting and some reverse commuting into the area from outer London;
- In Sevenoaks, Tunbridge Wells, and Canterbury there is also the opportunity to reduce out commuting to support local employment;
- At Ashford and Medway the Structure Plan proposes additional employment land to help balance the labour market and reduce dependence on commuting;
- In Tonbridge and Malling the performance of the traditional industrial sectors of the local economy will influence the longer term relationship between local employment and the workforce;
- If there were high employment growth in the Manston-Richborough area, further housing provision could be needed in Dover/Thanet in the longer term but initially progress needs to be made to secure the employment developments already planned.

The balance of housing and employment land

6.11 Over a 20-year period the balance between workforce and jobs will be maintained by adjustments in the labour market and in the economy of the County. It is central to the Plan's strategy that this process should lead to greater employment choice, higher earnings and less need to travel long distances to work.

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

6.12 This Plan supports the introduction of domestic rail services on the CTRL. They will reduce journey times to London from East Kent and improve access to a better range and choice of jobs for people living in the more disadvantaged and more distant urban areas. However there is not likely to be a great increase in London commuting from those areas, due to the number of rail services to be provided and the cost of travel.

6.13 The approach to commuting in this Plan is therefore:

- to support improved rail services using the CTRL and other routes to provide a better choice of workplace and better quality travel;
- to use the same improvements to encourage people to switch from car to rail travel;
- to reduce the amount of long distance travel out of Kent by increasing the number, range and quality of local jobs.

Strategic Principles

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

The scale and character of economic growth should:

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

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

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

The concentration of economic development:

- Improvements in East and North Kent will be given priority to reduce the wide differences in prosperity between different parts of the county;
- major economic development will be concentrated at 6 strategic locations: Kent Thameside, Medway, Sittingbourne/Sheppey, Ashford, Thanet/Richborough and Maidstone/Medway Gap.

Local balance

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

The release of new employment land

6.14 Employment land provided through the planning system is intended primarily for business uses (mainly office, manufacturing and wholesale distribution)⁵ although in practice other uses may occupy that land. In Kent as a whole growth in retail, leisure and other services as well as new business space have contributed to recent job growth. Even so, it is important to set guidelines for the amount of new employment land to be released and this has involved consideration of a number of factors:

- *The strength of the local economy*

The Structure Plan seeks to ensure a generous supply of land in order to achieve a strong local economy throughout Kent. Some districts such as Thanet, Swale and Shepway have particular needs for new development because of unfavourable employment structure, slow growth, or low earnings.

- *Market Demand for new development*

In areas where demand is weaker the Structure Plan aims to stimulate demand by releasing land and by improving accessibility. Other than in West Kent and Canterbury, the take up of sites has lagged behind the availability of land. This has been particularly true of the coastal towns.

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

The Plan provides for a ready and varied supply of employment land, although some areas have a relatively small land supply (less than 200,000 sq.m). Sevenoaks,

⁵ Use Classes A2/B1/B2 and B8

Canterbury, Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells have been subject to varying degrees of restraint, but Shepway has also had limited amount and choice of development land.

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

Land supply must be sufficient to cope with future growth and the size of the labour market in each area. The largest increases in workforce, reflecting the housing quantities in Policy HP1, will be in Ashford and Kent Thameside (each in the order of 19,000). New employment land provisions in Ashford and Medway reflect the fact that the workforce in these areas is expected to grow significantly through population growth and changes in commuting which existing business land commitments alone will not match.

6.15 Much of Kent already has enough employment land committed for the new plan period, and the priority is to develop those planned major sites. Policy FP1 confirms the existing land supply and proposes to supplement this where necessary to ensure that shortage of land does not hinder full employment. In implementing this policy, the objectives of the Plan regarding the reuse of previously developed land, and the requirement for mixed-use developments (Policies SS3 and QL5) should be rigorously pursued. In Kent Thameside, in particular, a full range of service, community and residential land uses will be encouraged on the major mixed use sites so that the land required to support the employment and population growth of the area can be largely met within those sites.

6.16 In addition to the considerations governing the scale and management of land supply set out in Policies FP1–FP3, the local planning authorities may need to reassess the quality and availability of existing employment land. This should include identifying replacement sites, and re-assessing the mix of land uses envisaged for existing employment allocations where this is compatible with the other policies and proposals within this Plan. Schemes should be prepared to improve the environment of existing sites which have proved unattractive to investors and occupiers. Local authorities should identify suitable sites for the relocation of businesses which cause pollution or other environmental problems in residential and mixed-use areas.

Policy FP1: Employment Land Provision

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

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

- ***In Medway at least 20 ha. for a wide range of employment uses as part of mixed use development at Chattenden;***
- ***At Canterbury City up to 10 hectares to provide specifically for knowledge and technology uses linked to the education sector in Canterbury;***
- ***At Herne Bay-Whitstable up to 10 hectares to ensure a continuing supply of land for the relocation and expansion of local firms and to attract inward investment to the coastal towns;***

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

- *In Shepway provision of up to 20 hectares to improve choice and support inward investment;*
- *At Ashford further employment land up to 40 ha. will be provided to give support, for the longer term, to its role as a regional growth point based on balanced employment and housing growth;*

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

Local Authority Area	Net Commitment at 2001 (000's sq. m)	New Provision (000's sq. m)	Total 2001-21 (000's sq. m)
Ashford	<u>600</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>740</u>
Canterbury	179	70	249
Dartford	<u>938</u>		<u>938</u>
Dover	<u>480**</u>		<u>480**</u>
Gravesham	410		410
Maidstone	<u>107</u>		<u>107</u>
Sevenoaks	<u>85</u>		<u>85</u>
Shepway	<u>170</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>240</u>
Swale	934		900&
Thanet	<u>295</u>		<u>295</u>
Tonbridge & Malling	<u>345</u>		<u>270#</u>
Tunbridge Wells	<u>84</u>		<u>84</u>
KCC Area	<u>4,627</u>	<u>280</u>	<u>4,798</u>
Medway	505	70	575
Kent	<u>5,132</u>	<u>350</u>	<u>5,373</u>
North Kent	<u>2,787</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>2,823&</u>
East Kent Triangle	<u>954**</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>1,024**</u>
West Kent	<u>514</u>		<u>439#</u>
Channel Corridor	<u>877</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>1,087</u>

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

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

- *does not prejudice the scale and implementation of strategic locations for business development supported and safeguarded by this Plan (Policy FP3);*
- *does not conflict with other Structure Plan policies.*

Measures, including investment by the public and private sectors to provide serviced sites and/or land reclamation should be taken to bring forward sites that the market alone would not develop. Schemes will be encouraged to improve unattractive sites where this is a main reason for their lack of investment.

(f) Local Development Documents should identify land for the appropriate location of businesses likely to cause environmental disturbance to residential or mixed use areas.

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

Notes to Policy FP1:

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

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

& Figures for Swale allow for some rationalisation of business floorspace at Faversham pursuant to Policy NK3

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

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

Policy FP2: Location of New or Replacement Employment Land

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

6.17 The success of this Plan, with the impacts on employment structure and growth that it seeks, depends on key strategic employment sites. These are identified and safeguarded under Policy FP3. Measures will be taken, where necessary particularly in those parts of the county where the investment market is weak, to bring these sites forward including seeking national or European funding to resolve problems with access or infrastructure, or to provide mitigation for environmental impacts.

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

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

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

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

* *Subject to the provisions of Policy WK3*

Other considerations for the release of employment land

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

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

Technology and knowledge “clusters” in Kent

6.20 The technology and knowledge based businesses in Kent do not form a closely-knit cluster in the original sense. Kent has a number of major employers in electronics, pharmaceuticals and research spread throughout the County which have few linkages with one another. The higher education institutions are relatively small and the examples of linkage between research and industry are few.

What are clusters?

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

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

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

6.21 Nevertheless, the major employers have the potential individually to expand or to act as the core around which new businesses in linked activities could develop. Collectively there is particular scope to attract new investment around the strong presence in Kent of pharmaceuticals and agricultural research. The existing major technology and research institutions are considered to be very important to the future of the Kent economy. Their intensification, and, where appropriate, expansion in-situ is supported by this Plan. In some instances this will necessitate the use of greenfield land to achieve key economic and investment objectives. Proposals should seek to minimise the use of such land and be sympathetic to their surroundings with adequate measures to reduce and mitigate environmental impact through design and landscaping. Policy FP4 sets out the circumstances in which the release of employment land for these reasons will be supported. With the exception of land already identified at Canterbury, Richborough and Kings Hill, development of new land as a result of this Policy will be additional to the Policy FP1 guidelines.

Policy FP4: Land for technology and knowledge clusters

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

- (a) a new site at Canterbury linked to the University (pursuant to Policy FP1);**
- (b) expansion of technology and knowledge activities at:**
 - **Fort Halstead (Sevenoaks District);**
 - **Horticultural Research Institute (HRI : East Malling);**

- ***Kings Hill;***
 - ***Pfizer and land in the Sandwich Corridor at Richborough;***
 - ***Sittingbourne Research Centre;***
 - ***Rochester Airfield ;***
 - ***Chatham Maritime.***
- (c) ***the expansion, in situ, of other key employers in the technology and knowledge sectors.***

Premises for small firms

6.22 Encouraging small firms by providing them with suitable premises is an important part of economic strategy because of their growth potential, particularly in new economic activities and because they contribute to 'home grown' employment growth. Support for them should include providing premises in inner urban areas which are accessible to the local population on foot and by public transport. Except where businesses are located inappropriately the loss of existing employment land in general should be resisted particularly where it fulfils an important role for local firms and sectors of the economy which are strong.

Policy FP5: Premises for small firms

Premises for small firms will be provided:

- (a) ***within larger industrial estates;***
- (b) ***within new mixed-use developments;***
- (c) ***as part of clusters of similar economic activity (pursuant to Policy FP4);***
- (d) ***through the development of small infill sites; and***
- (e) ***through the conversion or alteration of suitable existing buildings.***
- (f) ***through the protection of existing employment land***

Development at these locations should be capable of being satisfactorily served by the local transport network.

Skills Development

6.23 Kent will only be able to capitalise on the opportunities for economic prosperity if it can call on an appropriate range of skills. Similarly Kent residents can take advantage of greater prosperity only if they have the skills to access better paid jobs. Education and training are key activities that need to be pursued in tandem with the development strategy of this Plan. Both the public sector and employers have important roles to play – the former through the provision of education and further education facilities and the latter through the development of training plans, improved linkages with education establishments and provision of in-house training.

The Rural Economy

New employment uses in rural areas

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

6.25 The Rural White Paper (2000) underlines the need for planning policy to do more to assist the diversification of farms and to support the wider rural economy. However this should not undermine the continued protection of the countryside. Structure Plan policy in Kent must judge what scale and character of new businesses should be permitted to encourage diversification of farms and the rural economy whilst preserving the character and environment of rural areas. It recognises the long standing importance of the land based economy in Kent and the need to support its adaptation to changing consumer demands and innovations in production, processing and marketing. Policy FP 6 accepts the development of suitable small-scale business uses at rural service centres and larger villages and sets criteria for business development elsewhere. The prospective contribution of enhancements to the Kent County Agricultural Showground at Detling, near Maidstone to the support and promotion of the land based sector in Kent and the wider region is acknowledged.

Policy FP6: Development of employment uses in rural areas

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

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

- i. *it involves the re-use, adaptation or redevelopment of an existing building, as covered by Policy SS6(ii) ; or*
- ii. *it is required for the expansion of an established business and/or for the processing, storage, distribution or promotion and research concerning produce from Kent agriculture, horticulture or forestry;*

and

- *good access can be provided to the primary road network and bus or rail services; and*
- *there is no overriding environmental objection.*

In respect of these provisions the role of the Kent Agricultural Showground at Detling is recognised as important and as requiring enhancement so as to promote more widely the land based economy of Kent and the region.

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

Diversification of farm businesses

6.26 The problems facing agriculture have been well articulated in recent years. Further pressure for change will arise from EU proposals to switch funding for agriculture from support for production to grants for rural development and for protecting and enhancing the environment. It will be particularly difficult for small farms to survive on agricultural income alone. A study of the land based economy in Kent⁶ has made recommendations regarding policy towards farm diversification and the rural economy and these have been taken into account in this Plan.

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

6.28 Many farms have surplus buildings and their re-use, if they are good quality, will usually be preferable to new buildings in the countryside. Existing buildings may be appropriate for activities not related to agriculture, such as small-scale offices, workshops or tourist accommodation. Policy FP7 sets out the circumstances in which conversion, alteration or re-use of existing farm buildings, and /or the construction of small new buildings, will be acceptable.

Policy FP7: Farm Diversification

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

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

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

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

⁶ The Land Based Economy of Kent: Final Report December 2002. Land Use Consultants/Kernon Countryside Consultants for Kent County Council and SEEDA.

Agricultural land

Kent's agricultural industry

- Almost 60% of Kent is farmed with roughly one third of this managed as arable farmland and a further fifth as grassland;
- Kent has a high percentage of high grade soils suitable for agricultural production – 43% of its agricultural land is within DEFRA Agricultural Land Grades 1 and 2 compared to a national average of 20%;
- Kent's agriculture has long specialised in fruit and hop growing – 41% of the area in England devoted to top fruit is in Kent although the total land involved has declined by more than two thirds in the last 50 years. Fruit farming now accounts for some 5% of Kent's farmland;
- In 2000 there were almost 2000 full time farms in Kent – more farm businesses than any other county in the South East
- The percentage of the workforce in agriculture, forestry and fishing in Kent (3.8%) is more than double the national average (1.7%) although the Kent agricultural workforce has declined by more than a half since 1951.

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

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

Policy FP8: Protection of agricultural land

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

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

Tourism

Economic impact of tourism in Kent

Tourism and leisure are important to Kent's economy.

In 1998 there were 5.5 million staying visitors and 32.8 million day-visitors, spending almost £1,200 million.

About 20,000 full-time jobs are supported directly by spending on tourism and leisure, rising to perhaps 30,000 jobs if the benefits to other businesses are taken into account.

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

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

6.33 The tourism policies in this Plan encourage developments which will increase the attraction of Kent as a tourist destination. Sustainable tourism seeks to ensure that the activity and development that is needed to support tourism proposals does not undermine environmental objectives. Kent's environment is a key tourism asset in itself which sustainable tourism should serve to sustain and enhance. The tourism policies of this Plan direct large projects to previously developed sites within urban areas in order to save greenfield land and maximise access by means other than the private car.

Policy FP9: Sustainable Tourism Development

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

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

- (c) *there are no adverse environmental impacts or such impacts are capable of being adequately mitigated; and*
- (d) *they reduce dependence on the private car and access is possible by a choice of means of transport, particularly by public transport, cycling and walking; and*
- (e) *equal access is provided for all social, economic and cultural groups and to people with disabilities.*

Spatial priorities - selective development and regeneration

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

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

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

Policy FP10: Tourism development and regeneration

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

Priority will be given to such development:

- ***within the Kent part of the Thames Gateway;***
- ***at the coastal resorts of the East Kent Triangle and Shepway;***
- ***at Ashford.***

Proposals for new buildings or for the refurbishment of buildings of historic interest, particularly in "clusters", for arts or cultural use will be supported where they cause no environmental harm.

Environmentally related tourism initiatives will be encouraged.

Tourist Accommodation

6.37 New tourist accommodation has been supported by previous planning policies. Since the end of the 1980's 31 new hotels have been built in Kent. Of these 25 are located close to the main business and tourist routes through the county, and only five are at the traditional coastal resorts. Despite the new provision the number of bed-spaces in Kent has declined over the past decade, especially at the coastal resorts.

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

Policy FP11 Tourist accommodation

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

Other tourism developments in rural areas

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

Major Tourism/Visitor Developments

Major attractions

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

6.40 New projects which bring exceptional benefits to Kent and could take advantage of the county's international transport links and good access to London will be

encouraged. They should be designed to the highest architectural standards. Policies QL13 and QL14 encourage the development of high quality venues for sport and entertainment.

6.41 Priority locations for such development are - the urban areas of Thames Gateway, Ashford or the coastal towns of East Kent. Developments of this stature with an essential requirement for a large amount of land may mean considering a greenfield location. They would, though, need to meet strict criteria regarding accessibility, design and impact on their environs and demonstrate that environmental concerns were clearly outweighed by the economic and social benefits to the county.

Policy FP12: Major Tourism/Visitor Attractions

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

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

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

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

Ensuring Prosperity in Towns and other Centres

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

Some of the significant recent changes in retailing include:

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

- smaller scale stores developed by some of the main food retailers and introduced into rural centres;
- three factory outlet centres developed outside town centres (at Ashford, Dover and Chatham Maritime);
- an expansion in the amount out of centre development for bulky goods* retailing;
- a drop in the number of proposals for large out of centre food stores due to stronger planning constraints although extensions to existing stores continue to be sought;
- proposals to diversify the range of goods sold from food superstores and retail warehouses which increasingly challenge the core retail functions traditionally associated with the High Street**;
- the development of new leisure uses predominantly outside town centres;
- retail and leisure development at Westwood Cross permitted as a new town centre for Thanet.

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

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

6.43 Retail spending has continued to grow substantially. Along with demands for better quality shopping and changing consumer preferences increasing spending is a key influence behind the continuing pressure for new floorspace and the redevelopment or refurbishment of existing shops. Increased car usage and the general mobility of shoppers has increased competition between centres. Other forms of trading such as internet sales are making an impact on areas of both retail and leisure spending – internet retailers ('e-tailers') are not restricted by hours, size or the types of goods sold. In consequence if town centres are to remain competitive there is a constant need to upgrade the quality of their shops and their general environment.

6.44 These trends and influences require strong support for existing centres. The Government, in its guidance on development plans, requires that a hierarchy of retail centres be identified. Within this framework there is a need to:

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

The retail hierarchy in Kent

6.45 Town centres in Kent fulfil different roles according to the size and composition of their retail 'offer' and the other services which can be found there. The hierarchy identified by this Plan is set out below. It is closely related to the overall settlement hierarchy set out in Table SS1 (Chapter 2), but in this instance distinguishes the relative functions of centres within larger urban areas (e.g. the Thanet Towns).

6.46 Bluewater is an established out-of-centre shopping development with a **regional** catchment extending across much of Kent and into London and Essex. Turnover and other measurements indicate that there are four **sub-regional centres** in Kent, which provide a wide range of comparison shopping and other services and have extensive catchment areas. They command higher rents and have greater potential for investment.

6.47 A distinction can be drawn between the **principal town centres** in each District, which provide shopping, local government and other services, and **district centres** which serve smaller urban areas, or parts of urban areas or are at the centre of rural catchments. The principal town centres offer greater physical capacity and investment potential. In terms of total retail turnover there is little difference between some of the middle ranking principal town centres and the larger district centres but the former offer a wider range of services.

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

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

Local Centres: To be defined in Local Development Documents

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

6.49. Accelerated growth at Ashford over an extended period will provide scope for the town centre to be enhanced and capitalise on its role as a public transport node. The Structure Plan provides for significant population growth in the town over the next 20 years and supports its evolution to fulfil a role as a sub regional centre within the strategic network of centres.

6.50 The planning and development strategy in North Kent will result in Bluewater becoming a major centre for retail, leisure and entertainment embedded within the new urban area of Kent Thameside. Over the next 20 years it will therefore mature as a central place. It will be well connected through road links and new public transport systems to the whole of Kent Thameside and, being in close proximity to the A2 and the new station at Ebbsfleet will increasingly serve the wider region. The concept of Bluewater has evolved. It is not solely served by car and there is a good and developing bus system and in the near future it will be well served by Ebbsfleet and Greenhithe stations and 'Fastrack'

6.51 Investing in the principal East Kent coastal town centres to retain existing retail spending and its future growth will also support wider regeneration initiatives and a more sustainable pattern of development by reducing the need for longer journeys to sub regional centres, especially Canterbury, which are usually made by car. Further development which would intensify the attraction of retail spending to Canterbury from the coastal towns and Ashford and thereby prejudice regeneration of the coastal towns or the strengthening of Ashford's role will not be supported.

6.52 Thanet does not have a dominant town centre capable of stemming the substantial loss of comparison spending from this large urban area to other centres. Development opportunities in the existing town centres are very limited and their investment potential is limited by their relatively small coastal catchments and the competition between the different centres. Westwood, in central Thanet, is already a major focus of travel demand for bulky and convenience goods retailing, includes a strategically important location for new employment and is astride the principal transport corridor linking Margate and Ramsgate. The recent commitment for a new town centre at Westwood will provide comparison shopping, leisure and other services which will complement existing uses and allow for multi purpose trips to the area.

6.53 Medway, like Thanet, is a multi centred urban area. Over time five discrete towns (Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Rainham and Gillingham) have grown together to form Medway. The largest of the towns is Chatham which serves as a sub regional centre but has been performing below its significant potential. Medway needs a strong 'city' focus and Chatham already fulfils much of this role. The aim is for Chatham Centre and Waterfront to become a thriving city centre. The other four town centres

have an important role as district centres. They will continue to be supported although the focus for retail and other suitable developments will be Chatham.

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

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

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

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

Local authorities will:

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

Criteria for new retail and leisure development

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

High Street, or “core comparison” shopping

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

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

6.59 Retail expenditure projections suggest that there will be demand for c.199, 000 gross square metres of 'core comparison' retail space in Kent by 2011-before allowance is made for outstanding planning permissions and schemes under construction. About half of the potential arises in the four sub-regional centres:

- Canterbury 27,000 sq. m
- Maidstone 21,000 sq. m
- Medway 30,000 sq. m
- Tunbridge Wells 17,000 sq. m

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

- Ashford 21,000 sq. m
- Thanet 17,000 sq. m
- Folkestone 12,000 sq. m

6.61 If growth in spending continues most districts have significant potential for new development in the longer term (to 2021) but the locations above emerge as having the strongest demand and are the strategic priorities for new town centre shopping.

Policy FP15: Development for core comparison goods shopping

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

Bulky Comparison Goods

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

6.63 Retail spending projections suggest that there will be demand for a further 148,000 gross metres of bulky comparison retail space in Kent by 2011, with about half of that in the four sub-regional centres. Currently committed developments will provide for almost half of the total demand. The remainder should be met wherever possible within town centres and could help to make smaller schemes viable. Developers and retailers must be flexible about the design and operation of stores to allow this to happen. Dartford, Dover and Gravesend are locations where the combined potential for core and bulky comparison shopping might support town centre based provision.

6.64 Where there are no suitable town centre sites new bulky goods shopping should be located at existing groups of similar units to provide scope for multi-purpose shopping trips. Better access by public transport to those sites and improvements to the wider shopping environment should be encouraged.

Policy FP16: Development of bulky comparison goods retailing

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

Food and convenience goods

6.65 Spending projections suggest there is potential for 21,000 gross sq. m of additional convenience retail space in Kent by 2011. This is more than matched by current commitments amounting to 60,000 sq. m. However, further proposals for new or extended food and convenience shopping can be expected in order to improve the quality and choice of outlets and through competition for market share. Such proposals should be supported when they:

- are located at town or urban/rural district centres within the hierarchy;
- make good a local deficiency in food shopping; or
- serve a new residential community.

Extensions to existing out of centre food and convenience goods stores will be subject to the provisions of Policy FP14.

Policy FP17: Development of large food stores

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

Local Development Documents will identify where new or improved convenience shopping, which cannot be accommodated within town or district centres, is needed:

- *to make good deficiencies in existing provision; or*
- *to meet new requirements associated with major new residential communities including the Strategic Development Locations identified by this Plan.*

Urban and Rural District Centres and Local Centres

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

Policy FP18: District and Local Centres

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

Chapter 7: Housing Provision and Distribution

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

7.2 This Chapter covers the key policy issues relating to housing provision, and has strong links with Chapters 2 (Spatial Strategy), 3 (Area Policies) and 5 (Quality of Life).

Key Housing Development Issues in Kent

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

National and Regional Policy on Housing:

- *There are aspirations to increase the rate of housing completions and ensure that Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) provisions are met; RPG9 suggests that the rate of regional housing provision will need to increase beyond 2006.*
- *The average annual rate of housing provision set out in RPG9 is 5700 dwellings per annum in Kent and Medway for the period 2001-2011. This is equivalent to a total of 85,500 dwellings.*
- *In 'Sustainable Communities: building for the future' the Government has identified four major growth areas in London and the South East. Two of these, Ashford and a substantial part of Thames Gateway, lie within Kent. In these areas Government policy is to secure a substantial increase in the supply of new housing.*

Public Consultation and Housing Provision

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

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

7.3 The scale and distribution of new housing provision needs to take into account:

- population growth;
- other social and demographic changes;
- the scale of existing labour markets in Kent and the balance of housing with job supply;
- where jobs are likely to be created and strategic priorities for economic development and regeneration;
- the quality of the environment and other locational issues.

Social and Demographic Influences on the Need for Housing

Population growth, the net movement of people in and out of different parts of the county, changing age structures and household composition are key influences in the future demand for housing and trends in these factors have been used to project future household growth*

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

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

Trend Based Population Change 2001-2021: Kent and Medway

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

Trend Based Household Growth 2001 –2021: Kent and Medway

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

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

These projections do not constitute policy guidance for individual Districts – while projections of local household growth contribute to the development of housing policy

they should not be slavishly converted into policy for the release of land for individual areas. A range of other factors needs to be taken into account.

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

7.4 Housing distribution also has to consider the varied and distinctive character and quality of Kent's environment, the need to make the most of development opportunities involving previously used or damaged land and the prospects for urban housing capacity. Past development has relied upon a significant contribution from greenfield development and the current substantial supply of housing land already identified also reflects considerable reliance upon this source. Some 35% of the capacity identified in 2001 related to greenfield sites.

7.5 Kent's environment has only limited capacity to accommodate further development on Greenfield sites without adverse impact. The easier options for expanding Kent's towns have generally been acted upon. Most towns are now very close to, or hard up against, land that is protected from development, for example because of its intrinsic quality.

Insert map of national and strategic planning constraints in Kent

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

Proposed Housing Provision and its Distribution

7.6 The strategy for housing provision and distribution provides for:

- An average annual rate of housing development of 5,700 dwellings between 2001 and 2006 in accordance with RPG9;
- A rate of development between 2006 and 2016 in accordance with RPG9. This also reflects the provision for accelerated growth at Ashford beyond 2006 in line with its planned status as a regional growth area for the South East;
- A lower average rate of housing development overall in Kent and Medway for 2016–2021 (5,300 dwellings per annum). This reflects demographic indicators which imply reducing indigenous household growth pressures but also a continuation of Ashford's regional role and a sustained but moderating emphasis on Thames Gateway;
- Total housing provisions are therefore:
 - 89,600 dwellings for the period 2001-2016
 - 116,100 dwellings for the period 2001-2021

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

- the emphasis on regenerating and reinvesting in Kent's towns, and the concentration of development at the principal urban areas. The five major urban

areas in particular (see Chapters 2 and 3), are locations which offer higher quality accessibility by public transport and serve as the main focal points for services and jobs;

- the need to make the fullest possible use of previously developed ('brownfield') land taking account of the scale, pattern and timing of development opportunities associated with it - particularly in Thames Gateway;
- past experience of development within existing urban areas and opportunities for providing additional housing within them;
- the full extent of existing housing land commitments including the contribution made to them by previously developed land.
- a review of previously identified locations for strategic scale development which have yet to be implemented including the scope for using them more intensively.
- the amount of employment land provision and the impact of associated new job generation.
- an extension of Ashford's strategic role over the medium and longer terms to reflect its contribution to regionally significant growth. This will depend on the resolution of critical infrastructure thresholds that will govern the rate at which development can be accelerated and on a more balanced pattern of housing and job creation.
- no adjustment to the extent of the Green Belt in North and West Kent and retention of the Strategic Gap in Mid Kent.
- identification of a need for new or extended strategic development locations in some areas.

7.8 The Plan seeks a better balance between housing and jobs, especially where housing quantities are higher than would be needed to support local demands and would support greater movement of population into an area. In large parts of Kent and Medway improved local employment performance is essential if housing provision is to support a sustainable pattern of development. At Ashford it is a specific regional objective that growth should provide for a parallel increase in jobs and homes. In parts of North and West Kent there is a strong reliance on commuting to London. The Channel Tunnel Rail Link and other service improvements will add to these commuting pressures by improving access to, and from, parts of Kent.

7.9 Accommodating these levels of housing throughout Kent is critically dependent upon essential social, educational, community and transport infrastructure being provided at the right time and properly funded (see Policies QL12 and IMP1).

7.10 Policy HP1 sets the quantities of housing for Medway and each district council area for the 2001-2021 period.

Policy HP1: Housing Provision

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

	Dwellings (net)					
	2001-2006	2006-2011	2011-2016	2001-2016	2016-2021	2001-2021
ASHFORD	3,500	5,000	5,500	14,000+	6,000	20,000+
CANTERBURY	2,100	2,100	2,000	6,200	1,500	7,700
DARTFORD	3,900	4,000	4,500	12,400	3,100	15,500
DOVER	1,600	1,600	1,300	4,500	1,000	5,500
GRAVESHAM	1,400	1,500	1,500	4,400	1,100	5,500
MAIDSTONE	2,300	2,200	2,000	6,500	1,800	8,300
SEVENOAKS	800	800	800	2,400	700	3,100
SHEPWAY	1,800	1,500	1,400	4,700	1,200	5,900
SWALE	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500	2,000	9,500
THANET	1,700	1,700	1,700	5,100	1,500	6,600
TONBRIDGE & MALLING	2,200	2,100	2,100	6,400	1,900	8,300
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	1,500	1,400	1,100	4,000	1,100	5,100
[KCC AREA]	25,300	26,400	26,400	78,100	22,900	101,000
MEDWAY	3,500	3,900	4,100	11,500	3,600	15,100
KENT	28,800	30,300	30,500	89,600	26,500	116,100

+ Including provision for 13,100 dwellings 2001-2016 and 18,500 dwellings 2001-2021 at the Ashford growth point

Notes to Policy HP1

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

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

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

North Kent

7.12 Dartford and Gravesham (Kent Thameside)

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

7.13 Medway

- Housing provision in Medway is broadly in line with the housing requirements indicated by recent demographic trends. These reflect the fact that Medway has

modest population gains primarily as a result of positive natural change (more births than deaths) and balanced in and out migration.

- The priority for housing development in Medway will continue to be the regeneration of key urban brownfield sites, particularly along the riverside. However these and other sites within the urban area will not be sufficient on their own to meet Medway's housing requirements. Other opportunities for development are limited by a combination of constraints. Chattenden and its immediate environment has been identified in RPG9a as having potential for development. The opportunity for a new or expanded settlement will centre upon the Defence Estate which comprises the only substantial area of previously developed land outside the urban area of Medway which could support development of such a scale. It is expected to be released from military use shortly.
- The development of Chattenden will be phased to begin after the major urban regeneration sites are substantially completed and is anticipated to extend beyond 2016. Chattenden and the larger sites within the urban area will need to be provided with job opportunities, social and community facilities and appropriate infrastructure within a comprehensive development. Providing new jobs will also help to meet Medway's strategic objective of reducing its dependency on commuting out of the area.

7.14 Swale

- Although much of Swale (Sittingbourne area and Sheppey) is within Thames Gateway housing supply has, to date, relied heavily on greenfield development around Sittingbourne and parts of Sheppey (Minster).
- For this reason the level and phasing of housing provision in Swale is adjusted in this Plan to:
 - reflect more accurately the distribution of previously developed land across Thames Gateway and Kent as a whole;
 - place a stronger focus on regeneration and urban renaissance within the principal urban areas ;
 - concentrate on integrated housing, economic development and transport and accessibility improvements within the Sittingbourne /Sheerness axis. at the principal urban areas of Sittingbourne and Sherrness/Queenborough/Minster;
- Notwithstanding this approach there will continue to be significant reliance on greenfield land given the scale of existing strategic sites;
- This Plan's housing provision for Swale remains well above locally generated demand. It maintains recent average rates of development into the medium and longer terms but reduces the dependence on greenfield land. It confirms commitment to completion of strategic development locations at North East Sittingbourne and Iwade.

East Kent Triangle

7.15 Canterbury

- Trend based housing requirements are influenced by the high levels of movement of people into the area in the past. Although strategic policy reflects restraint provision is well above requirements associated solely with local population and household change. New housing should be located to support the growth in the Canterbury economy envisaged by this Plan.
- There is not expected to be any requirement for new strategic housing locations before 2011 although this depends on progress with implementing development at brownfield sites and regeneration opportunities as well as making more efficient use of previously allocated land.

7.16 Dover

- Housing provisions match the dwelling requirements indicated by recent demographic trends which reflect modest gains from net inward migration to the District.
- There is a continuing need for strategic expansion at Aylesham (up to 1000 dwellings) which has been recently confirmed through adoption of the Dover District Local Plan. Provision at Aylesham is intended to go some way towards offsetting, the restraint applied to the neighbouring Canterbury District. The strategy does not envisage substitution between provision at Aylesham and land release elsewhere in Dover District. Development at Aylesham is now expected to be completed over the 2006-2016 period.
- Additional housing provision to meet strategic requirements should be guided by detailed assessments of urban capacity, particularly within the principal urban areas of Dover and Deal. It should also respect the tight strategic environmental constraints around Dover including the North Downs AONB and the need to support continuing economic and business growth in the Sandwich Corridor to the north of Sandwich. Policy EK2 earmarks provision of some 300 dwellings beyond 2006 for these purposes.

7.17 Thanet

- Past trends indicate that about three-quarters of the housing requirement in Thanet is derived from inward migration. However a substantial increase in the housing stock in the 1990's was accompanied by poor local economic and employment performance, despite reductions in unemployment.
- Housing provision is set substantially above the household growth generated by local demographic and social changes. There are challenging requirements for urban housing capacity which are appropriate to the scale of this major urban area. There is currently a very limited contribution to housing land supply from greenfield development.

- An extension to the urban area located close to existing public transport corridors serving the town and district centres or accessible to the concentration of employment and retailing in the Westwood area will have an impact on high quality agricultural land. Policy EK3 identifies a new Strategic Development Location adjoining the Thanet urban area at Westwood. Its phasing will depend on the outcome of local assessments of urban housing capacity in Thanet. Consideration should also be given to the contribution Westwood could make to housing provision beyond 2016.
- If the local economy develops substantially and new jobs are created within the 'Central Island' area (particularly that associated with the developing role of Manston airport) then strategic policy regarding the scale of housing provision in Thanet beyond 2011 period should be reviewed by 2006.

Channel Corridor

7.18 Ashford

- The provision for new housing in Ashford is set well above the amount indicated by existing trends and provides for an accelerating rate of net inward migration and local population growth. A close relationship between economic performance and housing provision is essential if Ashford is to achieve balanced growth in line with regional and strategic objectives.
- The housing provisions in policy HP1 are for the Borough as a whole. However the approach to the regional growth area at Ashford and the requirements of Policy SS1 mean that the great majority of housing is provided at the Ashford urban area. The Ashford's Future Study envisages that provision be made for 13,100 dwellings at the growth area between 2001 and 2016 and 18,500 between 2001 and 2021⁷.
- Continuation of rates of housing development provided for in the 1996 Structure Plan and their future acceleration in line with the conclusions of the 'Ashford's Future' Study will need major investment in infrastructure, as set out in Policy CC1. Strategic housing provision reflects a staged approach to growth beyond 2006 that supports an average rate of development of c. 1200 dwellings per annum by 2021. Growth will continue to be strongly concentrated at the Ashford urban area.
- The prospects for, and scale of, continued growth beyond 2016 will be subject to review by 2011. This should take account of the scale, form and balance of development that has taken place by then including economic performance and employment growth. Progress with the provision of the major elements of community infrastructure outlined in Policy CC1 that are essential to balanced and sustainable growth at Ashford will be another key consideration
- Greenfield land currently accounts for more than 80% of identified land supply for housing. The capacity of the urban area should be investigated further in order to increase the contribution made by previously developed land and there is

⁷ Ashford's Future: The Overarching Report. Ashford Borough Council and Partners. December 2002

substantial scope to increase the efficiency with which existing development sites are used. However, further strategic scale greenfield land releases will be required beyond 2006 in locations which are close to the Ashford urban area and with good accessibility to it by a choice of transport. Detailed definition of new strategic development locations will need to take account of the provisions of this Plan to 2016 and the potential beyond if Ashford's accelerated rate of growth is to continue into the longer term.

7.19 Maidstone

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

7.20 Shepway

- Housing requirements based on recent demographic trends are strongly influenced by migration into the District, which accounts for some 60% of the overall trend-based assessment of housing demand.
- This Plan does not reflect the full trend requirement but still makes provision well above the level, which would accommodate household growth, generated solely by local demographic and social changes. The Plan provides for continued growth from migration, including workforce growth in which will be needed to support economic regeneration and diversification.
- The policy allows for significant use of urban development sites and relies on both urban regeneration at Folkestone/Hythe (particularly the harbour and waterfront opportunity areas) and completion of the strategic expansion of Hawkinge.

7.21 *West Kent*

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

7.22 Sevenoaks

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

7.23 Tonbridge and Malling

- The Borough has been growing in recent years as a result of net inward migration although household growth generated by local demographic and social changes accounts for some two thirds of the overall trend housing requirement.
- The Borough has existing Strategic Development Locations which consist of previously developed or damaged land identified in previous Structure Plans as set out in Policy WK3. Most of these remain unimplemented. Making more efficient use of land at these major development locations is significant strategically in terms of housing capacity and its phasing.

7.24 Tunbridge Wells

- Trend based housing requirements show only a very modest increase from net inward migration. More than four fifths of the requirement comes from indigenous demographic and household change.
- The policy provision for housing matches the trend housing requirement and places a very strong emphasis on urban capacity to meet future dwelling requirements.

The Managed Release of Housing Sites

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

- take account of the nature of existing commitments;
- provide for the flow of urban housing capacity within built up areas during the lifetime of the Plan; and
- allow existing and new strategic development locations to be implemented.

7.26 The planning authorities will need to ensure that sufficient land comes forward to enable the average rates of development under Policy HP1 for each of its phases to be

achieved whilst optimising the use of previously used land within the major/principal urban areas and at other sustainable locations before using greenfield land. Phasing will help to prevent the early release of greenfield sites prejudicing urban regeneration. It will also help to achieve the recycling target for the use of previously developed land (Policy HP3).

7.27 Strong market demand for homes in some areas may result in pressure for allocated sites to be developed rapidly during the early stages of the plan period and for a higher than expected number of 'windfall' sites to come forward. Careful phasing of the release of land, including windfalls, will ensure that a steady supply of sites is forthcoming throughout the whole of the plan period and that targets are not exceeded. Phasing can also help ensure that, if necessary, community and physical infrastructure is improved or provided in parallel with the development of housing.

Policy HP2: Phased Provision of Housing Land

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

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

Table HP1: Annual Average Rates of Housing Provision By Phases: 2001-2021

	Dwellings (net) ++					
	2001-2006	2006-2011	2011-2016	2001-2016	2016-2021	2001-2021
ASHFORD	700	1,000	1,100	930	1,200	1,000
CANTERBURY	420	420	400	415	300	385
DARTFORD	780	800	900	825	620	775
DOVER	320	320	260	300	200	275
GRAVESHAM	280	300	300	295	220	275
MAIDSTONE	460	440	400	435	360	415
SEVENOAKS	160	160	160	160	140	155
SHEPWAY	360	300	280	315	240	295
SWALE	500	500	500	500	400	475
THANET	340	340	340	340	300	330

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

TONBRIDGE & MALLING	440	420	420	425	380	415
TUNBRIDGE WELLS	300	280	220	270	220	255
[KCC AREA]	5,060	5,280	5,280	5,210	4,580	5,050
MEDWAY	700	780	820	765	720	755
KENT	5,760	6,060*	6,100*	5,980*	5,300*	5,805*

++ Rounded to the nearest five

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

Increasing Reliance on Previously Developed Land

7.29 There needs to be enough land available to provide 89,600 homes in the period to 2016. At 2001 there was enough land identified (sites with planning permission and those allocated in local plans), on both previously developed and greenfield land for some 54,000 dwellings. However a significant proportion of this (c.11,000 dwellings), primarily within Thames Gateway (Dartford), represents sites which are not likely to be available until after 2011.⁸ Additional land will come from sites identified through District based urban housing capacity studies and other previously developed land which comes forward as a result of windfall planning permissions. Sites of this kind, involving previously developed land have recently been adding an average of about 1500 dwellings per annum to the housing supply. Further housing gains can also be expected as a result of increased densities from already committed sites, particularly on larger greenfield allocations.

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

7.31 In the light of these assessments, the planning authorities will need to consider the amount of greenfield development needed to meet strategic housing requirements. This will include reviewing existing greenfield allocations against the criteria of Policies HP4 and 5 and , if retained, reassessing their phasing and capacity to avoid the premature release of new greenfield land. It is unlikely that a major retrenchment in the need for greenfield land previously committed for development will be appropriate over the Structure Plan period as a whole.

7.32 Existing strategic development locations involving both previously developed and greenfield land are largely retained and some new greenfield provision will be required on a selective basis in the medium term. New or extended strategic development

⁸ A small element of this longer term (post 2011) supply in Dartford (residual part of Eastern Quarry) is likely to represent availability post 2021

locations will be needed to accommodate requirements in Medway, Swale, Ashford, Shepway and Thanet. Depending on progress in the use of previously developed land, smaller scale additions to greenfield supply may be necessary in Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone, and Tunbridge Wells in the longer term. In assessing these requirements there will be a need to take account of the indicative housing provisions for the 2016-2021 period. These should be regarded as minimum requirements for this period.

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

- the previously developed and greenfield elements of the existing committed housing land supply;
- the likely scope for increasing the housing capacity of strategic development locations and other major housing allocations (unless they have already been assessed against current objectives for better use of land);
- expectations for the future capacity of previously developed land;
- provision made in this Plan for new or extended strategic development locations involving both previously developed and greenfield land.

7.34 Given the extent of, and continuing reliance upon, existing committed greenfield land these targets rely upon a much higher proportion of previously developed land being identified in new housing allocations and planning permissions beyond 2001.

Policy HP3: Contribution of Previously Developed Land to Housing Provision 2001-2016

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

* **Policy target includes former mineral workings and other damaged land that falls outside the definition of previously developed land within the terms of PPG3 (Annex C)**

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

Priorities for the Location of New Housing Development

7.36 Housing development on urban sites has in the past come from a variety of sources including:

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

7.37 Such sources should continue to be explored. Vacant dwellings could provide a valuable source of accommodation by being brought back into use by, for example, applying an empty homes strategy or similar. The housing provisions of this Plan, however entail new, additional provision. Reoccupation of vacant dwellings does not contribute to meeting Policy HP1 requirements unless there is a net gain in dwellings, for example, through conversion of a property.

7.38 While it is desirable to make the best possible use of urban development opportunities for housing this should not be done at the expense of other important aspects of urban life. These include improving the urban environment, protecting valuable amenities, including open space, within settlements and the safeguarding of centrally located and accessible business and employment land.

7.39 This Plan requires a sequential test to be applied to the major/principal urban areas and rural service centres when land for housing is under consideration in the preparation of Local Development Documents. Priority must be given to the use of previously developed land. Reliance on such land within smaller rural settlements, beyond small scale infilling, will need to demonstrate tangible benefits to village sustainability along with the potential for a sustainable form of development with housing, employment and other facilities in close proximity. In these circumstances such opportunities will take precedence over the release of greenfield sites which would involve extensions to the principal urban areas or rural service centres.

7.40 This Plan identifies strategic development locations which play an important part in implementing its development strategy. In the case of greenfield development their release and phasing will be depend on the prior application of the search sequence in Policy HP4 to ensure that priority is given to the use of previously developed land. Similar considerations will apply to smaller scale greenfield land releases identified through Local Development Documents. These will need to consider the nature and impact of strategic environmental and planning constraints at the principal urban areas and the rural service centres.

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

7.42 Development linked to nodes within good, or potentially good, public transport corridors will need to take account of both the level and frequency of public transport services and the connections they provide to centres of employment and major services. Proposals should be within reasonable walking distance of a railway station or an existing or prospective bus stop.

7.43 All sites considered for housing should be assessed to ensure that new development would be well located, accessible to essential services and supported by adequate physical and community infrastructure while having as little impact as possible on the environment.

Policy HP4: Sequential Approach to Location of New Housing Provision

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

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

followed by:

- 2) **Where applicable, settlement extensions or new communities identified as strategic sites by this Plan;**

followed by:

- 3) **An extension or extensions to:**
 - d) **a major/principal urban area; followed by:**
 - e) **a rural service centre; followed by:**
 - f) **a smaller rural settlement, as defined in Local Development Documents, ~~that can provide~~ with the potential for a sustainable form of development including ready access to good quality public transport.**

Where practical consideration of a settlement extension under 3 above should give priority to the use of previously developed land.

Policy HP5: Assessment of New Housing Land

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

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

Housing Development in the Countryside

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

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

Policy HP6: Housing Development in the Countryside

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

- a) *a site allocated for housing development in a Local Development Document; or otherwise consistent with Policy SS5; or*
- b) *minor development within the confines of a rural service centre or smaller rural settlement; or*
- c) *a single dwelling demanding a rural location for farm or forestry workers; or*
- d) *the rebuilding, conversion or modest extension of a dwelling currently in residential use; or*
- e) *the conversion or redevelopment of a redundant commercial, institutional or industrial building to meet an identified need for housing which does not conflict with a need to retain local employment opportunities.*

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

Housing Type and Need

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

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

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

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

7.50 Local housing needs assessments should be used to determine the type and size of additional housing to be provided. The assessment should take account of the composition of existing and future households, the requirements for both subsidised and market housing, and the character and condition of the existing stock. Given that the number of people aged 85+ is expected to grow by almost one third over the next 20 years and that there is a current shortage of extra care housing, the need for sheltered housing, including extra care sheltered housing, should be assessed. This assessment should take into account the strategies of Kent and Medway Councils towards sheltered housing. District based assessments should be undertaken in a consistent manner across wider housing market areas where there are significant cross-boundary movements between districts for employment and/or housing purposes. Local Development Document policies and other site-specific guidance should set out clear guidance for house builders regarding the type of housing expected for the principal development sites.

Policy HP7: Range and Mix of Housing Provision

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

Affordable Housing

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

7.52 Not providing enough affordable housing also has adverse consequences for the local economy, new commercial development and public services (including those provided privately such as in the social care sector). Recruiting and retaining 'key workers' is made more difficult since they are unable to find anywhere suitable to live. Insufficient affordable housing can also adversely affect the quality of life by requiring people to travel long distances to work from lower priced areas. RPG9a stresses the importance of increasing the supply of affordable housing as an essential ingredient of regeneration.

7.53 The term 'affordable housing' encompasses a wide range of patterns of tenure and ownership. For the purposes of this Plan it includes:

- shared equity housing where both the occupier and a social landlord have an interest in the property
- other types of 'intermediate housing' involving renting at below open market values
- low cost housing where the initial purchase price is below market values
- key worker housing involving, for example subsidy by employers
- social rented housing

7.54 In Kent there is a great need to foster both higher levels of investment in the existing housing stock and to encourage a sense of participation in the well being of local communities. To this end a ladder of opportunity to share and participate in housing and the future of residential areas needs to be provided. Thus, where potential occupiers cannot afford full market housing (owned or rented) there is much to commend equity sharing and other forms of intermediate housing. Kent and Medway Councils, the Housing Corporation, District housing authorities and the private sector will seek in particular to widen the opportunity for equity sharing in the County as a means of promoting a sense of community and social independence.

7.55 RPG9 sets a 'provisional indicator' of 18,000 to 19,000 affordable homes a year for the region. This indicator is not divided amongst structure planning areas. It is equivalent to almost half (48%) of the total annual housing requirements and well in excess of current levels of provision. Government advice is that it is inappropriate for the Structure Plan to include detailed guidance and targets for the level of affordable housing provision in particular localities as this depends upon detailed local assessments of need.

7.56 A strategic assessment of future affordable housing supply in Kent and Medway has been carried out to consider how applicable the RPG9 indicator is to Kent.⁹ This assessment focussed on need expected to arise during the Plan period rather than on any outstanding 'backlog' of need. It concluded that household growth implied an indicative 1600–1800 net additional affordable dwellings per annum made up of homes for rent, shared ownership developments and other forms of low cost housing. This suggests that on the basis of household growth alone some 30% of all new homes should be in the affordable sector. This assessment does not provide district level indicators for which individual need assessments will be required but it is nonetheless indicative of the overall scale of the requirement.

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

7.58 The negotiation of cross subsidy arrangements between market price development and affordable housing will depend on the circumstances of individual sites. This will include their relationship to the existing pattern of services and facilities, accessibility to public transport and local evidence of need. It will be important to ensure that both low cost market homes and subsidised housing for rent remain affordable in perpetuity, possibly through partnerships with registered social landlords and the use of legal agreements. The contribution made by sites to affordable housing provision should also take full account of contributions required to other infrastructure and services directly related to the development in accordance with Policies QL12 and IMP1.

Policy HP8: Affordable Housing Provision

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

Local Development Documents should:

- a) establish the proportion of strategic housing provisions identified in Policy HP1 that should be met by affordable housing on the basis of District housing needs assessments;***
- b) identify the respective contributions planned for shared equity, key worker and other forms of intermediate housing;***

⁹ Needs for Affordable and Market Housing in Kent: Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research: Department of Land Economy, University of Cambridge 2001

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

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

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

Policy HP9: Affordable Housing on Rural Exception Sites

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

Local Development Documents should indicate those rural settlements at which the provision of affordable housing would be acceptable on sites that have not been allocated for housing but where such development would be justified to meet a proven local need.

Provision for Gypsy Accommodation

7.61 Regardless of their ethnic origin gypsies are distinguished by their nomadic way of life which is directly associated with their way of earning a living.¹⁰ Although they make up a tiny proportion of the population local planning authorities must consider gypsies' needs for accommodation and provide for adequate sites in their development plans. In addition to the settled population, parts of Kent are host to gypsy groups seeking temporary seasonal work or passing through the area. A variety of sites may be needed including sites for settled, long-term use, temporary stopping places and transit sites. To tackle the problem of unauthorised traveller encampments Government is revising policy and funding to facilitate the provision of temporary, transit and emergency stopping places for travellers. Consideration needs to be given to providing such facilities over a wide area to provide a network of opportunities. In conjunction with Kent and Medway Councils District authorities should identify the local need for gypsy sites

¹⁰ See Department of the Environment Circular 18/94 :Gypsy Sites Policy and Unauthorised Camping

(both permanent and transit) in their Local Development Documents and indicate how this need is to be met.

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

Policy HP10: Provision of Permanent and Transit Gypsy Accommodation

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

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

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

Chapter 8: Quality, Choice and Accessibility in the Transport Network

8.1 Transport has an important influence on the quality of life and the economic prosperity of Kent and Medway. Transport is essential to allow people access to work, education, shopping, social and leisure opportunities and to enable goods to be moved efficiently. However, transport, particularly road traffic, can have adverse effects, including health impacts, physical injury, noise and air pollution. Additionally the character of many of Kent's towns and rural lanes is being harmed by congestion and heavy traffic.

8.2 Kent and Medway Councils, as the local Transport Authorities for the county, are responsible for maintaining some 9,140 km of carriageways (8,340 kms within the KCC area ; 800 kms within Medway and 2,800 associated structures (2,700 KCC area ; 106 within Medway). Maintaining this asset, currently valued at broadly £1 billion is an important element of the transport strategy within this Plan. Making best use of the network is also a vital component in tackling the challenges arising from the near doubling of traffic that has occurred in Kent since 1980.

8.3 Peoples' travel behaviour has changed over time and will continue to do so. People are travelling greater distances to meet their daily needs, mainly because of the convenience of car travel. Continuing to rely to such a large extent on car travel is unsustainable. It will lead to worsening congestion, damage to the environment and will ignore the problems faced by those without access to a car. If people are to be persuaded to change their travel behaviour and rely less on their cars, then they need to be offered more convenient and efficient public transport or other alternatives tailored to their needs.

8.4 There are a number of distinctive factors which influence travel patterns in Kent. These include the high volume of international traffic passing through the county, the large numbers of commuters who travel to London by road and rail and the fact that Kent is made up of many medium sized towns and rural villages with no dominant urban area. These characteristics make for a significant amount of movement between and within the principal urban areas and the countryside. While parts of Kent and Medway are generally well served by the rail, motorway and trunk road networks, other parts are more remote.

Key Transport issues for Kent include:

- Kent's proximity to London and its role as the UK's main gateway to Europe
- Kent's dispersed pattern of settlements
- managing the economic and social problems associated with congestion and the need to improve journey reliability
- taking account of the environmental, social and health impacts of heavy traffic
- managing and maintaining the existing transport network
- improving public information to ensure more informed travel choices
- ensuring that more remote areas have access to public transport;
- limited facilities for cyclists and walkers
- reducing dependence on the car especially for journeys to, and within, urban areas

- supporting the Plan's development and regeneration strategy and responding to the opportunities and impacts associated with new development

Map of existing transport infrastructure in Kent

Regional Transport Strategy

8.5 SEERA's Regional Transport Strategy (2003)

- promotes investment in forms of transport other than the car.
- identifies a number of regional hubs where there is the potential to achieve better access by non-car transport modes by building on existing transport networks. Hubs will include high quality interchanges, improved public transport and better facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- in Kent and Medway Ebbsfleet, Rochester, Maidstone and Ashford have been identified as hubs.
- Canterbury and Tonbridge are also identified as important transport interchanges

Kent and Medway's Strategy for Transport seeks to:

- facilitate national, regional and local inter-urban movements whilst minimising harm to the environment
- promote a pattern and form of development that reduces the need to travel
- promote accessibility for all sectors of the community
- address local and global environmental concerns
- support strong local economic performance
- address the broad transport needs of individual areas and the interrelationship between them
- ensure that new housing, employment and other development is served by a choice of means of transport including public transport, walking and cycling routes
- maintain and make efficient use of the existing transport network
- provide travel choice and alternatives to the private car, including public transport, walking and cycling
- inform the public as to the choices of transport services available in and about Kent
- promote travel plans for large developments
- introduce and support measures to influence and manage demand for travel
- reduce the impact of travel on communities and the wider environment
- reduce the rate at which congestion is worsening and improve journey reliability
- improve air quality, safety and personal security and reduce social exclusion related to transport issues
- secure improvements to the transport network
- concentrate longer distance traffic movements on the most suitable routes indicated in the road hierarchies attached to this Plan.¹

Major Strategic Transport Improvements

8.6 A shift towards more sustainable transport patterns will occur only if overall accessibility by sustainable transport modes is improved, particularly within urban areas. This means making significant improvements to public transport, walking and cycling facilities. This will require investment over and above that associated with the incremental changes brought forward as part of new development and will require effective partnership working between the public and private sectors. Meeting future transport requirements will need a targeted programme of major improvements to Kent's transport infrastructure and to the county's public transport services. There will still need to be some road building to ensure the county can accommodate through traffic and movements between urban areas. The priority for transport improvements will be based on the overall strategy of this Plan and will reflect the assessment criteria in Policy TP1. These criteria will be used to inform future reviews of the Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway and responses to schemes promoted by the Department of Transport or the Strategic Rail Authority.

8.7 The scale, distribution and location of the development identified in this Plan will generate demand for transport. These demands will be met in part through the programmed strategic transport schemes (Policies TP3 and TP4) but also through the schemes (Policy TP7) to be promoted through future Local Transport Plans. For example the success and character of the extensive redevelopment of previously used sites proposed in Kent Thameside will depend upon a sustainable transport system being in place to serve the area – this is the phased provision of 'Fastrack'. At Ashford sustainable growth will not be possible without a mix of transport solutions to tackle existing problems, such as Junction 10 of the M20, and to influence the character of future travel demand such as through the orbital and radial bus priority schemes identified in Policy TP7.

Policy TP1: Assessment Criteria for Transport Proposals

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

- ***The relationship to the overall strategy of this Plan;***
- ***The contribution towards achieving a more sustainable pattern of development and regeneration;***
- ***The likely impact on the environment including areas of special environmental quality;***
- ***The likely effects on air quality;***
- ***Reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions***
- ***Reducing dependence on the private car***
- ***The economic and operational benefits likely to be achieved relative to the cost of the proposal;***
- ***The contribution to the movement of passengers and freight by rail;***
- ***The need to concentrate traffic on the most suitable routes;***
- ***The impact on road casualty reductions;***
- ***The need to maintain or improve town centre accessibility by sustainable means;***

- *The need to accommodate improvements for bus services, pedestrians and cyclists; and*
- *The ability to enhance the environment for local communities.*

Transport and the Location of Development

8.8 The location of development is a major factor in influencing the demand for transport and how that demand will be met. This Plan highlights the need for land use and transport planning to be well integrated. There is an emphasis on locating development where it will reduce dependency on the car and increase the use of public transport.

8.9 In preparing Local Plans/Local Development Documents and determining planning applications, local authorities will need to consider the location of the proposed development, how it would fit in with the existing transport network, how easy it would be for people to reach services and what arrangements are being made for transport. Larger scale developments may provide scope for major changes in the transport network and could support major new public transport infrastructure. Smaller developments can still make a contribution to sustainable transport, for example, by providing walking and footpath links. Developments that are only accessible by car should be avoided.

Policy TP2: Transport and the Location of Development

Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling, or will be made so as a result of the development. ~~Travel plans should be established to actively promote their use.~~ Travel plans should be established for larger developments that generate significant demand for travel to promote the use of these means of transport

Developments likely to generate a large number of trips should be located where there is either a good choice of transport already available or where a good choice can be provided in a manner acceptable to the Local Transport Authority.

Major Local Transport Plan Schemes

8.10 The schemes listed in Policy TP3/Table TP3 cover the rail, motorway and trunk road networks and local highway network schemes in the 2001-2006 Kent and Medway Local Transport Plans or in government programmes. These schemes will improve the operation of Kent's strategic transport network and will support economic development. The Local Authorities will use their influence to secure the early completion of these schemes.

Policy TP3: Safeguarding of Programmed Strategic Transport Schemes

The programmed major transport schemes listed in Table TP3 will be promoted and land required for their construction safeguarded.

Table TP3: Programmed Strategic Transport Schemes	
Rail ⁽¹⁾	Channel Tunnel Rail Link (under construction) Crossrail Thameslink 2000 Strood Tunnel North Kent Re-signalling Scheme
Motorway & Trunk Roads ⁽²⁾	A2/A282 Dartford Interchange Improvement A2 Bean – Cobham A21 Lamberhurst Bypass A249 Iwade to Queenborough including Second Swale Crossing
Local Transport Plan Schemes ⁽³⁾	A256 East Kent Access – Phase 1 (Sandwich – Ebbsfleet Lane) Fastrack – Phase 1 (Dartford town centre – Darenth Park-Bluewater-Greenhithe – A226 – Gravesend town centre) A228 Main Road – Ropers Lane A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass Improvement
Notes :	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schemes listed in Transport 2010 2. Schemes are included in the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvement. 3. Schemes are included in the respective Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway (2000/01 – 2005/6) and have been provisionally accepted by Government.

Rail Investment

8.11 The biggest change to the rail network in Kent and Medway will be the completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) identified in Table TP2. While this will increase the network's capacity the full benefits of the CTRL will only be seen when decisions are made on what use can be made of the CTRL by domestic passenger services and freight trains. Better rail services also depend on the availability of modern rolling stock and power supply, signalling and track improvements on the existing network.

8.12 Major development of the rail network, more than currently programmed, is needed to encourage rail travel and reduce pressure on the road network. It will also avoid the costs, -financial and environmental, - of more extensive expansion of the road network. A number of schemes are identified in table TP3. Some are outside the administrative boundaries of Kent and Medway but are crucial to making the best use of the rail network in Kent. One of the major problems facing traffic from Kent and the rest of Europe trying to reach the rest of the UK is the way London tends to "block" rail traffic. This particularly affects long distance rail freight. Rail services are primarily focussed upon commuting into London, often at the expense of orbital services that would avoid the need to travel into the capital and back out again.

Policy TP4: Support for Strategic Rail Schemes

Kent County Council and Medway Council will press Government and the Strategic Rail Authority to implement the rail schemes listed in Table TP4 within the Plan period.

Table TP4 : Strategic Rail Schemes

Schemes identified in Multi-Modal Studies

**Increased rail capacity/capability around/through London
South Coast Corridor rail capacity improvements (including Ashford- Hastings)
~~Lower Thames Rail Crossing~~**

Scheme Included in the Mayor of London's Transport Strategy

Woolwich Rail Crossing (Docklands Light Railway Connection)

Other Schemes

Domestic passenger services via the CTRL from/to Ashford and East and North Kent towns

Thameslink 2000: Extension to Gravesend and Maidstone

Crossrail: Extension to Ebbsfleet and Medway

Ashford – Thanet journey time improvements on existing line

North Kent Line (Dartford – Gillingham) rail capacity improvements

Medway Valley Line – improved junctions at Strood and Paddock Wood

Rail Access to Manston Airport ⁽¹⁾

Dover Western Docks rail freight link ⁽¹⁾

Sheerness Docks rail freight capability improvements ⁽¹⁾

Thamesport – London rail freight capability improvements ⁽¹⁾

Notes : 1. Scheme funded in whole or part by development.

Investment in Major Transport Corridors

8.13 There is a need to tackle existing and potential points of congestion on the major transport corridors formed by the motorway and trunk road network, which are not currently included within the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements. ~~not the subject of current proposals within the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements nor other potential transport solutions.~~ Multi modal studies will play a key part in how best to deal with particular parts of the network and there will be a need to consider improvement to public transport, traffic management and local accessibility. Factors to consider in determining the extent of the required improvement include the actual increase in congestion over time and the future funding made available to rail schemes which will reduce the pressure on roads. Table TP5 identifies locations at which positive action for improvements is now required.

Policy TP5: Major Transport Corridors:

Kent County Council and Medway Council will press Government and the Highways Agency to identify and implement multi-modal solutions to the existing and predicted congestion problems on the sections of the Motorway & Trunk Road network listed in Table TP5.

Table TP5: Existing or Predicted Problems on the Motorway & Trunk Road Network Requiring Multi-Modal Solutions	
Schemes included in the draft Regional Transport Strategy	M20 Junction 10 Improvement A21 Tonbridge Bypass – Pembury Bypass Improvement A2 Lydden – Dover Lower Thames River Crossings (road & rail)
Schemes identified in Orbit Multi-Modal Study	M25 Junctions 1b – 3 M25 Junction 5 – 7
Roads Subject to Existing Congestion ⁽¹⁾	M20 Junction 4 and sections between Junctions 3 – 5 <u>A282 Dartford Crossing</u> A2 Bean Junction M20 Wrotham Hill A20 Townwall Street, Dover
Roads Subject to Heavy Stress Levels in 2010 ⁽¹⁾	M20 Junctions 7 – 8 M25 Junctions 3-5 A21 Kippings Cross – Lamberhurst A21 Lamberhurst – Flimwell
Additional roads potentially under pressure in growth areas of Thames Gateway and Ashford	A2 (M25 – M2) M20 Junction 9 and section between Junctions 9 and 10
<u>Other Network Problems</u>	M25/M26 Additional Slip Roads M2/A2/A299 Brenley Corner Junction A2 Canterbury Bypass Junction
Notes :	1. Stress levels identified or forecast by Highways Agency.

Further Thames Crossings

8.14 The concept of a new road and /or rail crossing of the River Thames east of Dartford has been under consideration since a Highways Agency study in 1994. Such a proposition is a national and inter-regional issue. The recent Orbit and London-Ipswich multi-modal studies recommend further investigative work is undertaken as does the draft Regional Transport Strategy which identifies strategic corridors within the South East to assist in regional and inter-regional movement, reduce the concentration of movement on the London area and to assist regeneration in sub regional priority areas. One of these corridors links mainland Europe (via Dover and the Channel Tunnel) to the east of London and into Essex.

8.15 Provision of a further crossing would have major economic, environmental and transport implications and Kent and if a proposal were to be identified Kent and Medway Councils would need to fully appraise it in accordance with Policy TP1 of this Plan. Prior to this Kent and Medway Councils wish to ensure that the need for , and location of , any further crossing of the Thames is investigated as a matter of urgency taking full account of the key considerations identified in Policy TP6.

Policy TP6: Further Thames Crossing

The strategic planning and transport authorities will seek to ensure that Government investigates fully, and quickly, the need for, and location of, a further multi modal crossing of the River Thames taking into account:

- ***the transport, economic and regeneration benefits to Kent;***
- ***the balance of beneficial and adverse impacts on Kent communities and the well being of settlements including potential air quality and noise impacts;***
- ***the protection of the nationally and internationally important natural environment to the east of Gravesend;***
- ***the ability to integrate a crossing with the existing road and rail network in Kent and the impacts associated with any consequential links with these networks***

In reaching a judgement as to whether there is a net benefit to Kent of a further crossing the strategic planning authorities will take into account the criteria of Policy TP1.

Local Authority Major Transport Schemes

8.16 A number of major transport schemes not currently in Local Transport Plans, will need to be carried out in order to improve traffic movement between towns, benefit the local environment or allow planned development sites to be brought forward. It is unlikely that enough money will be available for all these schemes. Whether individual schemes go forward will depend on detailed feasibility studies, justification and environmental impacts and potential financial contributions from developments. Schemes listed in Table TP7 will need to be prioritised in accordance with the criteria set out in Policy TP1.

Policy TP7: Future Strategic Transport Schemes

The Local Planning Authorities will safeguard land for the major transport schemes listed in Table TP7, which may be promoted through the respective Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway. These schemes will be subject to multi-modal scheme appraisal and will also be subject to Policy TP1.

<p>Table TP7: Other Strategic Transport Schemes to be Promoted Through Local Transport Plans</p> <p><u>Schemes included in current Local Transport Plans (2000/01 – 2005/6)</u></p> <p>A228 Colts Hill Strategic Link A228 Ropers Lane – Grain East Kent Access Phase 2 B2163 (A274) Leeds & Langley Bypass</p>

Schemes in Sustainable Communities Plan :Growth Areas (Thames Gateway; Ashford (to be funded partially or fully by development)

Kent Thameside: Fastrack Future Phases (including North Dartford, Stone, Eastern Quarry, Swanscombe Peninsula, Thames Way)

Medway Waterfront Rapid Transit System (Rochester-Strood-City Estate-Chatham Maritime-Dockyard- Chatham-Rochester)

Ashford: Orbital and radial bus priority schemes

Ashford:A28 Chart Road Dualling and A28 – A2070 Link

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road

Rushenden: Link to the A249 : Queenborough

Other schemes to be funded partially or fully by development

A260 Hawkinge Bypass (partially complete)

A227 (A25) Borough Green and Platt Bypass

A228 East Bank of the Medway/Snodland Bypass Dualling

A228/A26 Kings Hill – Seven Mile Lane

Other Schemes

A229 Maidstone : Upper Stone Street Improvements and All Saints Link Road

A26: Tonbridge : London Road – Hadlow Road Link

Improved Links between Hempstead and Walderslade

Widening Choice

8.17 Providing solely for the private car is no longer a sustainable long-term strategy, particularly in urban areas. The use of buses, rail, cycling and walking, needs to be encouraged both to protect the environment and to offer greater accessibility for those who do not have access to a car or who choose not to use one. Encouraging the use of alternative modes of travel through management of the transport network, the provision of infrastructure, travel plans and partnership working with transport providers is important.

Public Transport

8.18 People without access to a car depend on public transport to reach services that are not available locally. In urban areas where journeys may be relatively short, good quality public transport provide a more efficient and sustainable alternative to the private car for many trips. In rural areas, however, public transport may be less viable due to a more dispersed population.

8.19 Buses can make travel by public transport accessible to a wider range of people and provides the principal means of public transport across Kent and Medway. Many bus services are operated commercially without the need for public subsidy but others need to be supported particularly in rural areas, at evenings, on Sundays or when new routes are launched. Ensuring bus routes can serve larger developments will be crucial if their usage is to be supported. Smaller scale developments will also need good accessibility to the public transport network.

8.20 There are more than 100 rail stations in Kent and Medway. Many of them are well used, but some particularly in rural areas are not. Some rail routes are relatively slow while others are congested. Better use could be made of the rail network by improving services, rolling stock, stations, access car parks and other facilities. Improved signalling and maintenance would also provide a more reliable and safer service. Physical and cost limitations mean that it is not possible to provide rail access to all parts of the County, but Kent and Medway Councils will continue to work together with the rail industry to make improvements wherever possible.

8.21 Public transport networks will need to be improved in response to new patterns of development and to changes in travel behaviour. New bus interchanges or services should be considered where a development is likely to generate sufficient demand. New railway stations and services should be considered where they would provide greater opportunities for the use of public transport or improve links with other forms of transport. Providing improved services may go hand in hand with the closure of existing stations where there is no longer a justified need, or where keeping them open would have slow down journey times.

Policy TP8: Supporting Public Transport

~~The provision and use of Public transport will be supported~~ promoted by providing through partnership:

- **Better interchange facilities between public transport and other transport modes, including better car parking;**
- **Better integration between bus and rail services, including through ticketing;**
- **The provision of improved and integrated public transport information;**
- **Improved facilities for passengers, especially access for the mobility impaired;**
- **Continued financial support for non-commercial but socially necessary bus services;**
- **Procuring Government grant for urban and rural services**
- **Greater use of bus priority measures;**
- **Encouraging the improvement of the rail network and services using Government funding streams and developer contributions;**
- **The development of quality partnerships, such as those already in Maidstone & Thanet, in other areas such as Canterbury.**

Table TP8

The following specific schemes to improve public transport services are planned:

- **Improvements to Dartford Station and refurbishment of Greenhithe Station including public transport interchange**
- **Redevelopment of Maidstone East station and interchange improvements⁽¹⁾**
- **Reconstruction of Strood station and interchange improvements⁽¹⁾**
- **Enhanced bus/rail interchange at Ramsgate, Gillingham, Tonbridge Gravesend and Minster stations**
- **A20 corridor: Medway Gap: bus priority measures**
- **Improved rail interchange facilities on the Tonbridge – Ashford line and on the**

Ashford – Hastings line

- **Replacement bus interchange in central Ashford**
- **Access, parking and interchange improvements : West Malling station⁽¹⁾**
- **Manston Parkway Station**
- **Rail service and infrastructure improvements on the Medway Valley Line**
- **Enhanced daytime rail service between Minster, Sandwich, Deal and Dover**
- **Enhanced rail services on the Sheerness branch line**
- **Enhanced pedestrian facilities for Maidstone and Chatham station**
- **Enhanced access arrangements to Rochester station ⁽¹⁾**
 - **Disabled access improvements at Tunbridge Wells Station**
 - **Continuing bids to the Government for funding bus services**
 - **Web CCTV to enhance security at rural stations**

(1) Scheme to be funded wholly or partially by development

Park & Ride

8.22 Park & Ride facilities help to reduce congestion in town centres and in other locations. Facilities can be appropriately located on the edge of towns, either adjacent to a rail station or on the primary and secondary road network. It is important that Park & Ride facilities are sited so that they intercept existing or potential car journeys rather than generating additional car trips. Park & Ride should be provided as part of an overall transport strategy for an area, particularly important when serving town centres, where the relationship between parking fees and fares will strongly influence the use of Park & Ride. Bus priority measures need to be provided to ensure that the benefits of bus travel for passengers are maximised. Park & Ride facilities can fulfil a number of different functions as, for example:

- a collection/delivery point for goods bought in town centres
- an interchange for school transport
- an interchange for rural bus services
- a service for town centre workers

8.23 Rail based Park & Ride facilities, in the form of 'parkway' stations, may also be considered in connection with longer rail journeys. Enough parking will need to be provided around the stations to avoid any inappropriate parking in nearby roads. Although these schemes may cause an increase in local car journeys there are potential benefits in terms of:

- reducing long distance car journeys;
- reducing congestion on routes to major town centre stations;
- improving the interchange between bus and rail services.

Policy TP9: Supporting Park and Ride

Bus and rail based Park & Ride facilities to serve both town centres and major traffic generators will be provided. Contributions towards the provision of such facilities will be sought from developers.

Walking & Cycling

8.24 On average 25% of journeys in Great Britain are less than a mile long. Walking and cycling are healthy activities that are becoming increasingly popular not just as leisure activities but also for day to day journeys. They can help reduce dependency on the car, particularly for short journeys but also for longer ones when integrated with public transport.

8.25 Life can be made safer and more convenient for pedestrians and cyclists by keeping them away from other road users, by introducing traffic calming and by improved crossing facilities. Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be maintained and improved through the Local Transport Plans and the development of local transport strategies. The use of such facilities will be promoted through travel plans.

8.26 Proposals for new development can help to encourage people to walk and cycle by being designed around good facilities for both means of transport. The aim should be to provide permeable, convenient and safe environments that will encourage walking and cycling facilities to be used. New developments should also complement or enhance existing pedestrian and cycle route networks in the area.

Policy TP10: Facilities for Pedestrians and Cyclists

~~The provision and use of Facilities for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided and their use promoted. Local authorities should ensure that these are included in the design of all transport projects and other developments. Land should be safeguarded to provide safe and direct pedestrian and cycle routes where necessary.~~

8.27 Where development which is expected to generate significant car and goods vehicle movements is justified it should have good links to the major transport networks to avoid long distance movements on inappropriate routes. It is also important, for safety reasons, that new development avoids a proliferation of new access points onto primary and secondary routes.

Policy TP11: Development and Access to the Primary/Secondary Road Network

Development will not be permitted which involves either the construction of a new access onto the primary or secondary road network or the increased use of an existing access, where a significantly increased risk of crashes or traffic delays would result.

8.28 In deciding the most appropriate location for a development it is important to have a clear understanding of the likely demand for travel that it will generate, existing traffic flows, and the choice of transport proposed to meet the additional demand. Local Authorities will expect a Transport Assessment to be carried out for any proposed development large enough to have implications for local transport strategies. A Travel Plan will also be required. The level of detail will depend on the scale of the development but in general the transport assessment will need to show:

- the demand for transport movements associated with the development;

- any investment required for sustainable forms of transport to meet the predicted travel demand;
- the amount of parking to be provided;
- any highway improvements needed before the development can proceed.

Distribution

Rail freight

8.29 As much goods traffic as possible should be transferred to rail because it is more environmentally sustainable and energy efficient than road transport. This is especially relevant to the use of the Channel Tunnel for rail freight. It is unlikely that Kent's road network could be improved sufficiently to handle the growth in transport movements expected during the Plan period, which makes rail vitally important in the movement of goods.

8.30 Transfer of freight from road to rail will be encouraged, through schemes that provide additional rail freight capacity, improve road/rail interchanges and directly serve major development sites, unless there are overriding planning or environmental constraints. Better rail freight access to ports in Kent and Medway would benefit road freight. This is dealt with more fully under Policies TP20-22. The priorities for major investment in rail infrastructure in Kent and Medway are identified under Policies TP3/TP4.

8.31 The rail freight network in Kent and Medway has a number of routes which currently attract little or no freight movements. Increased use of these routes will be encouraged. Completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, will remove Eurostar trains and some domestic services from the existing rail network, making more slots available for freight.

Policy TP12: Rail Freight and Handling Facilities

Development which will encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail, including the development of freight handling facilities, will be permitted unless there is overriding conflict with other planning and environmental considerations. If necessary, conditions will be imposed on planning permissions in order to maximise the amount of non-road borne freight movements.

8.32 Land adjacent to railway stations, former goods yards, railheads and marshalling yards may come under pressure to be used in other ways once it is no longer required for railway use. Such sites, though, may have an important role in broader transport terms, for example:

- to enable better integration between rail and other modes of transport such as by providing bus stops/shelters, car parking, taxi ranks, or cycle parking;
- for development that could benefit from direct access to the rail network;
- to improve adjacent rail stations;
- to provide new passing loops;
- for new stations.

8.33 It is therefore important to retain this land for future transport use rather than losing it to other forms of development even if there are no immediate proposals for its use. Any proposals for temporary uses would need to demonstrate that the potential for future transport use is not jeopardised.

Policy TP13: Safeguarding of Railway Land for Transport Purposes

Land used formerly for the railways will be safeguarded from development which would preclude its future use ~~for transport purposes~~ to meet an identified transport need

Road Freight

8.34 While rail has the potential to take some international freight away from the County's roads, road haulage will continue to be predominant as it tends to be a more flexible and economic method of freight movement. An efficient road freight industry is essential for the UK's economy and competitiveness, to meet day to day needs and to service the workplace. The Freight Transport Association (FTA) has developed its 'Delivering the Goods' initiative to promote environmentally sensitive, economic and efficient deliveries of goods in towns and cities. Kent County Council and Medway Council support the work of the FTA and seek to reduce the impact of lorries in sensitive urban and rural areas. This includes attempting to prevent such things as "rat running".

Policy TP14: Development Traffic & Heavy Goods Vehicles

Development which generates significant increases in traffic, especially heavy goods vehicles will not be permitted if it is not well related to the primary and secondary road network, or if it would result in an increased risk of crashes or significant traffic delays.

Kent County Council and Medway Council will:

- ***identify and signpost lorry routes so as to direct heavy goods vehicles away from rural and residential areas;***
- ***work with others to achieve distribution of goods by sustainable means in the urban areas in Kent.***

8.35 Local transport strategies aim to provide a co-ordinated approach to transport planning. They should deliver a balanced and efficient transport system that offers a wider choice of transport and meets future needs while avoiding unacceptable damage to the environment. District authorities in partnership with the highway authority, transport providers and local businesses, should develop these strategies in consultation with the local community.

8.36 The aims of the local transport strategies will be to:

- *address the transport needs of both rural and urban areas;*
- *ensure that major developments are served by a choice of transport;*
- *minimise the need to travel and encourage alternatives to the private car;*

- *require transport assessments and travel plans to be submitted for major workplace, education, health care , leisure and other community developments;*
- *improve bus facilities and services by introducing, for example bus priority measures, interchanges and quality bus partnerships;*
- *encourage improvement in the capacity, use and quality of the rail network including the provision of new stations;*
- *provide Park and Ride facilities;*
- *provide for pedestrians ,cyclists, those with impaired mobility, powered two wheelers and taxis;*
- *manage parking controls effectively;*
- *manage traffic speed by measures which include traffic calming, 'home' and 20mph zones and the Quiet Lanes concept;*
- *improve the local highway network;*
- *make efficient use of the local highway network through traffic management, signing, width and weight restrictions and the use of high occupancy lanes;*
- *establish freight quality partnerships to improve the efficiency and sustainability of goods deliveries;*
- *introduce measures to tackle congestion;*
- *reverse deterioration of air quality caused by road traffic , especially in declared Air Quality Action Plan areas;*
- *consult on elements within the strategy and market and promote the schemes introduced.*

Policy TP15: Local Transport Strategies

Local transport strategies for urban and rural areas will be promoted in accordance with the transport policies of this Plan and the Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway. The prioritisation of investment in urban areas will have regard to the regional hubs and interchanges identified in the Regional Transport Strategy.

Minor Roads

8.37 The existing and planned networks of Motorways & Trunk Roads, Primary Routes and Secondary Routes are shown in maps TP1 and 2¹¹. The majority of through traffic will be guided onto these routes. Traffic movement should be kept to a minimum outside the main transport corridors and traffic management measures will be used to guide traffic onto the most appropriate routes. Improving and maintaining the main transport corridors to a high standard should reduce the need for traffic to use minor roads except for access and leisure purposes.

Policy TP16: Traffic and Minor Roads

Through traffic, particularly goods vehicles, will be discouraged from travelling on minor roads by the use of traffic management measures, regulatory measures, the control of development and freight quality partnerships.

¹¹ To be inserted

8.38 It is important to ensure that the use of minor roads through, and between, settlements is safe and compatible with the local environment. Improving minor roads by widening and straightening them would encourage non-essential traffic to use them and result in faster vehicle speeds and worsening road safety particularly for cyclists and pedestrians. Such improvements can also harm the landscape and conservation interests. Traffic management measures on the other hand can improve the quality of the environment, if they are designed sympathetically.

Policy TP17: Management of Minor Roads

Minor roads will not be widened or realigned unless overriding safety considerations require it and no alternative method to resolve the safety problems is deemed practicable.

Roadside Services

8.39 Suitable facilities should be provided to allow lorry and car drivers and their passengers to rest and take refreshments. Such facilities enable drivers to break their journey and reduce the risk of accidents. They are best located along the motorways, trunk roads and primary route network, which cater for longer distance traffic. They help to deter through traffic from diverting onto local routes in search of facilities. Because of their potential impact on the environment, facilities should be limited to a scale, which is necessary to meet the needs of drivers and passengers - more extensive commercial ventures in the open countryside should be avoided. Justification for such schemes will depend on a number of factors including whether or not there are existing facilities along the route and whether or not there is scope to upgrade existing facilities rather than develop greenfield sites.

Policy TP18: Roadside Services

Facilities and services for road users will be permitted on the motorway, trunk road and primary route network only where a demonstrable need can be established and there is no overriding conflict with other planning and environmental considerations.

Parking

8.40 The strategy within this Plan is to reduce the need for people to travel by car which should, in turn, reduce the need for on-site parking. The availability, or otherwise, of parking at either end of a journey has a significant influence on the choice of transport used. Managing the supply of parking can encourage people to choose alternative means of transport, but those alternatives must be available. Reducing the amount of parking available without providing people with an alternative can result in inappropriate parking in nearby roads and may adversely affect local businesses.

8.41 Both Kent County Council and Medway Council have adopted maximum standards for parking which cover different categories of land use. These constitute Supplementary Planning Guidance to Policy TP19. The guidance will be regularly reviewed to take account of any changes in circumstances. Local standards for individual town centres which consider both transport implications and town centre viability may be agreed with the district authority. In some cases it may be appropriate

for car parking to be provided away from the site as part of publicly provided parking space or in conjunction with a Park & Ride scheme (see Policy TP9).

Policy TP19: Vehicle Parking Standards

Development proposals must comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council.

Kent's Ports

8.42 The Channel ports and Channel Tunnel perform a vital gateway function to allow the movement of goods and people in and out of the country. As well as these main facilities, the small wharves and ports around the Kent coast also provide employment and support a range of valuable functions from the import and export of raw materials through to commercial fishing and marine leisure. The continuing prosperity of Kent's ports is important nationally and regionally but also to individual towns and to the county as a whole.

Employment in Kent's ports

- ~~6700~~ About 9000 direct jobs in port and air transport ;
- 3000-4000 jobs in three main deep sea ports of Thamesport, Sheerness and Chatham
- ~~more than 11,000 people in the port related sector which includes processing, distribution and haulage~~ Those employed in supplier business or supported by the expenditure of the industry's workforce and travellers using the ports are more numerous:
 - Dover alone could support more than 12,000 such jobs
 - Indirect employment is more widely dispersed in the county but with concentrations at the ports

8.43 Some ports have the opportunity to expand but others are constrained by being close to a built-up area or, in some cases areas of environmental or landscape importance. Good quality access to the primary road and rail networks is critical to the future success of Kent's ports and to their development. However, port traffic places substantial pressure on the county's transport system. The rapid growth in international traffic, has increased the amount of congestion on Kent's trunk and primary roads and has had impacts on the environment throughout the county. If activity at the ports is to be promoted it must be done in a way that does not harm the economic, social and environmental fabric of the county.

8.44 The Structure Plan strategy toward the ports includes the following elements:

- Qualified support for the expansion of international traffic, where it is supported by improvements in the road and rail network (within and beyond Kent) which are able to reduce congestion and encourage more traffic movements by rail;

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

- Support for the development of short sea shipping services as an alternative to land transport and greater use of the Thames and the Medway for moving freight and materials;
- International traffic through Kent being accommodated within the major international arteries(A2/M2, A20/M20, the CTRL and existing rail routes);
- Support for the parallel cross- channel options provided by the Channel Tunnel and the ports in order to allow choice, competition, safety, flexibility, job opportunities and a spreading of the pressure on the transport network;
- Recognition of how important Kent and Medway's major deep sea ports are and support for the right standard of road and rail access to serve them;
- Support for proposals for port expansion to be assessed against criteria that includes economic, social and environmental impacts and the need to encourage freight traffic to move from road onto rail;
- Redevelopment for other uses at ports and smaller wharves where port operations are no longer viable or where transport access is inadequate, carried out in partnership with the port owners and local planning authorities;
- Support for proposals to produce energy from renewable sources such as wind power as long as these do not harm the environment or conflict with port functions (see Policy NR2);
- If the need for a second fixed Cross Channel link is demonstrated, any proposal should encourage a substantial switch of traffic from road to rail and not jeopardise the choice of cross Channel modes, meet environmental criteria and minimise the impact on the county's roads.

The Major Ports

8.45 The major ports are:

- **Dover** – The UK's principal ferry port with substantial freight, car, coach and cruise activities could expand within the confines of the existing port, with the greatest potential lying within the Western Docks. The rail link into the Western Docks needs to be reinstated and there is a need to improve access to the Eastern Docks by upgrading of the A2 Lydden-Dover to dual carriageway standard and improved traffic management on the A20 Townwall Street.
- **Channel Tunnel** – Now carries significant volumes of cars and freight on its shuttles. Eurostar and international rail freight services also use the Tunnel, although the amount of rail freight carried is disappointing. The Tunnel still has considerable potential to encourage a transfer of freight from road to rail and this would be helped by increased capacity around London and better service quality.
- **Thamesport** –The fourth largest container port in the country with the opportunity for further landward expansion and port development subject to the protection of

nature conservation interests. Further development at the port depends on improved road links via the A228 and increased rail link capacity.

- **Sheerness** – The largest UK port for break bulk fresh produce, Sheerness has substantial opportunities to intensify of port related activity within existing boundaries and, if required, to expand onto nearby industrial areas. There are important nature conservation areas adjacent to the port. The Second Swale Crossing will significantly improve road access to Sheppey but improved rail access is needed to increase the amount of freight carried in this way.
- **Ramsgate** – The existing port is substantially underused with only freight services to Ostend, but Ramsgate now enjoys much better road access and traffic flows to and from the port increased to around 125,000 lorries during 2002. There is scope for the port to reintroduce ferry services and to create facilities that take into account the expanding role of Manston Airport.
- **Thames Europort** – Roll-on/roll-off services currently sail from the port at Dartford to Zeebrugge, Vlissingen and Dunkerque. The port has potential for development although this is limited to the confines of the existing site. The port may ultimately relocate and allow the existing site to become part of the Crossways Business Park.
- **Chatham** – The port has scope for new development within its existing site.
- **Folkestone** – The existing port is small and there are currently no cross-Channel passenger or freight services operating from it. There are, though, proposals to regenerate the port area, to include mixed-use development that will diversify the range of land uses.

8.46 Under the terms of its franchise Eurotunnel submitted a feasibility study for a second fixed link at the end of 1999. It is unlikely that proposals will be brought forward before 2010 as there is still spare capacity in the existing link but the long time scale needed to design and construct a new fixed link, may mean proposals being brought forward within the timescale of this Structure Plan.

Policy TP20: Gateway Function of the Ports

The role of the following ports as deep water and/or gateways to Europe will be protected and enhanced:

- ***Dover***
- ***Channel Tunnel***
- ***Medway Ports, including Sheerness and Thamesport***
- ***Ramsgate.***

At the 'core' ports of Dover, Sheerness, Thamesport and Ramsgate, the priority will be to safeguard the port function.

Proposals for development which will enable the growth of trade at Kent and Medway ports and wharves will be supported provided that:

- *any measures required by the development to improve local access by road and rail are brought forward as part of the proposals;*
- *the proposals maximise the potential for passenger and freight traffic to be accommodated by rail;*
- *the proposals achieve a high standard of design; and*
- *there are no overriding adverse economic, social and environmental impacts.*

Deep water frontage in the Thames Estuary will be safeguarded for port or port related uses where good surface access by road, and preferably by rail, exists or can be readily provided. Elsewhere proposals which will assist the diversification of trade, port operations or land uses will normally be supported.

Policy TP21: Channel Tunnel Capacity and Second Fixed Link

Improvements to the capacity of the Channel Tunnel and to the loading gauge and capacity of the Channel Tunnel rail routes will be supported.

In the event of a second fixed cross-Channel link being proposed, the local planning authorities will consider the economic, transport, social and environmental impacts of such a proposal. A proposal that substantially increases congestion on the County's road network will not be supported.

Policy TP22: Kent and Medway Ports

- a) Provision will be made for development which will enable growth of freight and passenger traffic through the port of Dover. Any such development, outside of the existing harbour walls, will be subject to the reinstatement of the rail link to the Western Docks to enable a significant proportion of freight to reach the port by rail;*
- b) At Thamesport further expansion of the port will be encouraged within existing port confines and through inland expansion at Grain subject to improvements to the capacity of the rail access to the port and improvements to the A228;*
- c) At the Port of Sheerness expansion should involve intensification of port use within existing port confines or expansion onto nearby land designated for commercial use. Development that further expands the port will be subject to the availability of, and opportunity for, improved transshipment and rail access and the completion of the A249 Second Swale Crossing scheme;*

- d) At the Port of Ramsgate proposals should assist the growth of port trade and not compromise its role as a major gateway port. However within the area of the Royal Harbour, diversification will be supported subject to the overriding need to protect the historic character of the area;**
- e) At Thames Europort redevelopment of the port for other land uses will be supported;**
- f) At the Port of Folkestone, mixed use development which will assist in the regeneration of central Folkestone will be supported. This could include leisure and business uses as well as some retention of port and fishing activities; and**
- g) On the Thames and Medway in North Kent, key deep water wharves will be retained and a programme of investment in modern facilities, rail access and good highway linkages will be pursued. A programme of rationalisation and restructuring of the wharves will be carried forward as part of the Thames Gateway initiative.**

Major distribution and transshipment centres

8.47 Kent is a favoured location for distribution companies handling international goods and serving the major London market. Handling of such freight efficiently is important to the economy as whole. The *Ports White Paper* and *Regional Planning Guidance for the South East* together provide criteria for the development of major freight distribution and transshipment uses. This includes making best use of existing infrastructure, encouraging the movement of freight by rail and developing inter-modal interchange facilities.

8.48 The 1996 Kent Structure Plan supported the development of major distribution and transshipment facilities at five locations. Each of these sites meets the criteria set out in national and regional policy, but only Dover has proceeded. Support is maintained for these locations as follows:

Annotated Map

- *Sheerness (Isle of Sheppey) and north of Sittingbourne, on land with rail connections, where distribution uses linked to the wharves and ports could be developed;*
- *Grain (Thamesport), where there is ample land with rail connection for distribution uses linked to the container port;*
- *Dover, on inland sites where development is proceeding to serve the port;*
- *Manston, where land adjacent to the airport could be used for storage and transshipment serving air and sea transport.*

8.49 There is concern that an inland road-rail interchange serving cross-Channel traffic such as the site previously proposed at Ashford (Sevington) could encourage freight to travel by road by reducing the viability of rail freight. This reflects the fact that rail freight is currently at a severe disadvantage because train loads have to be assembled in North London (Willesden). The location of such interchanges outside

urban areas may also conflict with strategic policies to protect the countryside and this will need to be weighed against the need for the development. There will need to be firm evidence that the rail facilities at such sites will be used.

Policy TP23: Major distribution and transshipment centres

a) Proposals which encourage the transfer of freight from road to rail, or between road and air or sea, which are designed and landscaped to a high standard, will be supported at the following locations:

- ***on the Isle of Sheppey (Sheerness) and north of Sittingbourne (Ridham and Kemsley area) subject to the completion of the A249 second Swale crossing scheme;***
- ***serving Thamesport on the Isle of Grain, subject to improvements to the A228 and to rail access;***
- ***at Dover on allocated employment land to provide inland freight facilities for the port;***
- ***at Dover through extension of the Dover Western Docks to provide a road-rail freight interchange, subject to economic and environmental considerations;***
- ***at Manston Airport.***

b) The provision of an inland road-rail facility to serve the Channel Tunnel, or a major new distribution and transshipment centre elsewhere in Kent, will be permitted only where:

- ***the site is easily accessible to the trunk road system and served by rail sidings and/or water;***
- ***strong evidence is provided that the proposal is necessary and viable, and will reduce the overall volume of freight traffic carried by roads in Kent;***
- ***there are no significant adverse effects on the local economy, countryside character or environment.***

The long-term use of the rail facility as an integral part of the operation of the site should be secured.

Kent 's Airports and Airfields

8.50 The past 50 years has seen a dramatic increase in the amount of air travel for business and leisure. Good air links are important to businesses, providing access to new markets and attracting investment. Many of the UK's major airports are reaching their capacity and a forthcoming Government White Paper on airports policy will set out how growth is to be accommodated over the next 30 years including the scale and pattern of additional airport capacity needed in the South East. This Plan assumes that the Government does not select a major airport at Cliffe in North Kent as its choice for future expansion of airport capacity.

8.51 While there are social and economic benefits associated with expanding air services and while regional airports can promote regeneration, environmental and community interests must be safeguarded.

London (Manston)

8.52 Manston Airport in Thanet has the potential to develop into a regional airport and become one of the largest single generators of economic activity within the county. It could handle between four and six million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2021 (comparable to the amount of passengers using Luton Airport in 2000) and up to 400,000 tonnes of freight per annum by 2015, subject to the development of terminal facilities, warehousing and apron space. In the longer term, there may be potential for passenger numbers to grow to 10 mppa. The future growth of Manston depends upon its ability to attract passengers from the major London airports and to capture new markets. Its expansion will have a significant impact on East Kent's economy, labour market, transport needs and urban development. It is important to ensure that the airport's growth does not have an unacceptable impact on the environment or on the quality of life of residents. Detailed proposals for expansion should therefore address:

- Surface access. Strategic road access to/from the west is good, but the local road network will need to be improved to address potential congestion. The growth of the airport should be underpinned by the development of a choice of travel modes for both passengers and employees. An essential part of the process will be the phased improvement of public transport links to the airport. The airport will need a direct rail link once it reaches a critical mass in order to minimise congestion on the wider road network.
- Noise impact - Noise is likely to be a very important issue for communities living near flight paths. The control of noise and the introduction of mitigation measures will be essential to ensure there is no significant impact on local amenity.
- Air quality - Expansion of Manston Airport will have an effect on local and regional air quality because of the increase in both air and road traffic. Air quality will need to be monitored and mitigation measures will need to be put to protect the local environment.

Lydd

8.53 The airport at Lydd plays an important part in serving local business needs and providing opportunities for recreational flying. The future development of Lydd Airport should focus on enhancing its existing facilities (including terminal and runway improvements). This will improve the airport's ability to cater for general aviation and passenger traffic and capture scheduled and charter business. Development proposals will be assessed for their impact on the surrounding environment and local communities, how appropriate proposed mitigation measures are and the choice of transport options providing access to the airport.

Headcorn

8.54 The potential for further development at Headcorn is constrained by its location within a sensitive environment. However Headcorn has an important role to play in

meeting business and general aviation needs particularly for recreational flying and related activities and there is potential to consolidate and improve existing facilities.

Rochester

8.55 The general aviation and business role of Rochester is to be safeguarded. There is an opportunity to improve existing facilities at the airport. Proposals for development will be assessed against their impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local communities.

Policy TP24: Manston Airport

The development of Manston Airport into a regional airport with a capacity of up to 6 million passengers per annum by 2021 will be supported. Proposals related to the development of the airport will be assessed for acceptability against the following criteria:

- a) development being directly related to the operation of the airport unless otherwise forming part of a proposal in a Local Development Document; and*
- b) no significant detrimental impact on internationally, nationally or locally designated environmental areas; and*
- c) no significant adverse impact on the amenity of local communities which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated; and*
- d) appropriate measures being secured to mitigate the impact of development including noise control, air pollution, water pollution, landscape and habitat management; and*
- e) the requirements for surface access being adequately accommodated within the capacity of the existing or committed local transport network; and*
- f) measures being identified and secured to improve access by public transport modes including the provision of a direct rail link when the capacity of the airport reaches 4 million passengers per annum.*

Policy TP25: Lydd Airport

The expansion of general aviation at Lydd Airport will be supported. Proposals related to the development of the airport will be assessed against the following criteria:

- a) the impact upon the surrounding environment, landscape and local settlements;*
- b) the economic and employment advantages;*
- c) access from the main centres of population and the availability of a choice of transport modes; and*
- d) the existence of suitably located alternative flying facilities.*

Policy TP26: Other Airports and Airfields (Headcorn and Rochester)

Proposals for ~~the use of existing airports/airfields and the development of new facilities for commercial and recreational flying at existing airfields will be permitted only where they do not have an unacceptable adverse economic, social and environmental impact on the local and wider community ~~will be assessed against their impact upon the surrounding environment , landscape and local communities.~~~~

Chapter 9: Climate Change and Managing Our Natural Resources

9.1 The earth's natural resources such as air, water and sources of energy are essential in meeting our day to day needs. Our stewardship of the county and contribution to wider national and international objectives relies upon using resources wisely (especially where they are not renewable).

Key Issues for Kent

- Understanding and tackling the effects of global climate change
- Moving to greater use of renewable sources of energy and greater energy efficiency
- Reducing pollution and improving air quality
- Prudent management of water resources for the future
- Managing flood risk

9.2 There is growing concern about the pace and implications of climate change around the world and the problems that could result from it. The most significant cause is considered to be carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere from industrial activities, power generation and traffic. Although levels of carbon dioxide are falling nationally, the proportion caused by road transport has risen and accounted for almost a quarter of the total in the year 2000¹².

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

Climate Change

Scenarios for the UK produced in 2002 suggest that the average annual temperature could increase by 2 and 3.5°C by 2080¹³. There will be more extreme weather conditions, more storms, and wetter winters with an estimated increase in annual rainfall of between 10 and 20% by 2050, together with a 20% increase in peak river flows. Summers will be hotter and drier. This will mean lower river flows and less water reaching underground aquifers. Relative sea level is expected to rise by 6mm per year. These changes could have the following practical impacts:

- *Property and heritage* - An increased risk of flooding and run-off which could damage property, including listed buildings and sensitive features.
- *Landscape and habitats* - Possible increased coastal erosion. Beaches may need to be more regularly maintained to protect settlements and habitats may

¹² Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) :2002

¹³ DEFRA: 2002

be lost or become fragmented. Species will change to adapt to changing habitats and weather conditions.

- *Agriculture and forestry* - changes in crops and livestock, greater demand for water, increased risk of pests and storm damage.
- *Recreation and tourism* - Kent may become a more popular holiday destination and there may be increased opportunities for outdoor leisure and water based activities.
- *People and health* - Increased risk of skin cancer and worsening air quality.
- *Water resources* – Reduced water quality, less of it and increased demand for it.
- *Energy requirements* - less energy will be needed for heating in winter but more energy may be needed for air conditioning in summer.

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

- Ensuring development decisions take account of climate change;
- Bringing about reduced greenhouse gas emissions;
- Promoting more sustainable solutions for protection against flooding and coastal erosion;
- Promoting efficient water use;
- Bringing about improving air quality;
- Reducing energy demand and promoting renewable energy.

Energy

Power production in Kent

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

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

Promoting alternatives to fossil fuels

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

- They are not renewable and reserves will eventually become exhausted. They need to be used wisely and plans made for their replacement;
- Burning fossil fuels to create energy makes a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions, particularly carbon dioxide (CO₂). These, in turn, contribute to climate change.

9.6 Promoting a switch to alternative, renewable sources for energy production can reduce fossil fuel use.

The 'Renewable Obligation' targets for England and Wales propose that 10 % of electricity should be generated from renewable sources by 2010(from 3% in 2002/3). The Government now proposes doubling this target to reach 20% by 2020. The "Energy White Paper"¹⁴ proposes a target of 10 Gwe of combined heat and power capacity being installed by 2010.

Proposed Alterations to Regional Planning Guidance Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy¹⁵ suggest a target for the South East of 8% of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2016.

Renewable Energy

9.7 Renewable energy involves harnessing energy from sources that occur naturally and continuously in the environment. Sources include energy from heat (including biomass, solar and geothermal), water (including tidal, hydro and wave action) and wind. The technology to harness these energy flows is continuing to develop and the potential to take advantage of them in Kent is set out **in the box below**. Energy sources that are not economically viable now may well become more cost efficient in the future, allowing them to be more widely used. Regulatory and fiscal measures aimed at encouraging the development of renewables are important and already in place. The Renewables Obligation requires all licensed suppliers to supply part of their electricity from renewable energy sources. Coupled with the Climate Change Levy which is charged on non-domestic energy derived from non-renewable sources and the availability of capital grant schemes these measures are helping in the development of new technologies and the creation of long term markets.

¹⁴ DTI Energy White Paper : Our energy future- creating a low carbon economy (February 2003

¹⁵ SEERA: Proposed Alterations to RPG9 : Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (May 2003)

Potential renewable energy production in Kent

The potential for renewable energy generation in Kent

Solar Energy

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

Geothermal Energy

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

Wind Energy

Wind levels in Kent and Medway, particularly around the coast are relatively high. The massed use of wind turbines, particularly offshore, provides the most viable option to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Every 1 MW of power generated by a wind turbine is sufficient to provide power for some 600 homes year. Due to the inconsistent nature of wind this is lower than, say, 1MW of power generated by a biomass plant, which could provide power for 1000 homes. Much of the Kent coastal plain along with the North Downs have wind energy potential.¹⁶ Walland Marsh, Dungeness and Romney Marsh in particular have annual mean wind speeds of 6.5 to 7.5 metres per second, which may be conducive to commercial wind energy production. However parts of these areas include nationally or strategically important landscapes (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Areas) and/or nationally or internationally important areas for wildlife. Prospective semi-offshore locations include harbour walls and jetties - there are a number around Kent that are potentially suitable including Dover, Folkestone and Ramsgate. Onshore potential may lie not only in larger schemes but in small scale opportunities involving single or small clusters of turbines. The potential for offshore wind generation around Kent's very extensive coastline is recognised as probably more substantial and with scope for lesser visual impact.

Hydro Energy (Wave and Tidal)

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

¹⁶ Renewable Energy in Kent : Resources and Prospects : Altechnica for Kent County Council. May 2002

Hydro Energy (Streams and Rivers)

Kent's geography means that it is not suitable for large-scale hydroelectric power generation. However, there may be potential for smaller scale systems including mobile water turbines situated in streams and rivers, possibly providing power for agriculture and fixed turbines at sluices and weirs. Larger scale systems could, provide a power source for development close to faster moving streams and rivers. Prospective locations have been identified in Kent on the River Medway and on the Stour¹¹⁷.

Bio fuels

Using coppice and similar woodlands for power generation can help to reduce carbon emissions in the short term. The carbon produced in combustion is absorbed by the woodland growth. Other bio fuel sources include energy crops, crop residues, wood residues, animal manure, and other organic agricultural and putrescible wastes. Biomass plants have been identified as one of the renewable energy sources with the greatest potential in the region.¹¹⁸ Their potential role in helping to support agricultural diversification and rural employment is a significant consideration.

9.8 The SEERA strategy includes an assessment (below) of potential deployment of all sources of renewable energy in Kent, with a total of 111 MW capacity by 2010 and 154 MW by 2016. There is a strong emphasis on wind energy although the targets below exclude energy from offshore wind. However the potential supply from windfarm installations in the Thames Estuary is likely to be significant.

<u>Kent & Medway–Potential Renewable energy Production by 2010</u>					
<u>Biomass Combustion /Thermal</u>	<u>Biomass Anaerobic Digestion</u>	<u>Onshore wind</u>	<u>Solar(PV)</u>	<u>Small scale hydro</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Installed Capacity (MW)</u>					
<u>Up to 30</u>	<u>2.5</u>	<u>75</u>	<u>3.2</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>111</u>
<u>Kent & Medway–Potential Renewable energy Production by 2016</u>					
<u>Installed Capacity (MW)</u>					
<u>Up to 40</u>	<u>7.5</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>5.6</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>154</u>

Source: SEERA: Proposed Alterations to Regional Planning Guidance for the South East : Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy : May 2003

¹⁷ Renewable Energy in Kent: Resources and Prospects : Altechnica for Kent County Council : May 2002

¹⁸ SEERA : Proposed alterations to RPG9 : Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy : May 2003

9.9 The prospective pattern of renewable energy facilities that might secure this potential is very varied but an indication of the scale and type of facility that might be involved is set out below :

<u>Biomass Combustion/ Thermal</u>	<u>Biomass Anaerobic Digestion</u>	<u>Onshore Wind</u>	<u>Solar(PV)</u>	<u>Small scale hydro</u>
1 x large (15+MW) biomass plant fuelled by straw and 3 small (5-10MW) plants fuelled by wood	6 x anaerobic digestion plants fuelled by sewage farm slurry or outrescible waste	1 x large (50+MW) windfarm and 3 x small clusters of 4-10 turbines (6MW) and 4 x large single turbines and 15 small single wind turbines	Photovoltaics incorporated in a significant proportion (50%) of new development. Approx. 700 domestic & commercial installations	Unknown But likely to make a contribution

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

Other energy sources

Energy from Waste

9.11 Energy can also be produced from biomass waste which includes agricultural, forestry or wood waste or residue as well as biodegradable municipal, commercial and industrial waste (derived from plant or animal matter) Energy generated from these sources is deemed to be renewable energy but energy from other waste sources is not. Landfill (methane) gas can be used to produce electricity rather than being released into the atmosphere. This is not a renewable fuel as waste is not naturally occurring and will decrease over time but it is an efficient use of waste as a resource.

Combined Heat and Power (CHP)

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

Encouraging Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Facilities

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

9.14 In the light of these issues the aim of the Structure Plan is to:

- Enable a continuous supply of energy;
- Bring about lower greenhouse gas emissions by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and promoting renewable energy through positive development plan policies;
- Ensure that the type, location and design of energy production facilities and its means of transportation minimises any detrimental impact on the environment and people's health;
- Encourage the harnessing of local energy sources to supply nearby communities and help them become more sustainable;
- Foster patterns of development and design which are sustainable and need less energy (Policy SP1 and Chapter 6);
- Promote clean production and decommissioning.

9.15 Under the Electricity Act 1989 the Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for granting planning permission for new power generation proposals with a generating capacity greater than 50 megawatts (MW). Local authorities are consulted on these applications. District planning authorities determine energy proposals of less than 50 megawatts. Local Development Documents will play an important role by identifying suitable sites and establishing the detailed assessment criteria by which proposals for sustainable energy production will be assessed

9.16 Encouraging greater energy efficiency through the design and layout of new development is an effective means of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and helps in achieving a wide range of other sustainable development objectives. Planning can make a significant contribution by influencing layout, access arrangements, building orientation and form, spacing and landscaping. Optimising the use of natural heat and light and reducing the need to travel can displace energy that would otherwise have been required from fossil fuel sources.. In line with Policy SP1 of this Plan, Local Development Documents have a key role in providing guidelines on the location, form, design and mix of development that will minimise energy demands.

Policy NR1: Energy Generation

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

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

Policy NR2: Renewable Energy Production

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

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

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

Policy NR3: Combined Heat and Power Generation

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

A Clean Environment

Sources of Pollution

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

- Water pollution affects the quality of Kent's water resources and can impact on wildlife;
- Ground and soil pollution can affect agriculture and blight development opportunities;
- Air pollution causes acid rain, which can affect buildings and trees. Poor air quality may contribute to asthma and bronchial conditions;

- Noise pollution, such as that from airports and motorways , can cause a serious nuisance to local residents;
- Light pollution from development projects can be visually intrusive.

9.18 Industrial developments, major road schemes, waste treatment and disposal facilities, sewerage treatment and energy generation, are all capable of causing pollution but may be needed to sustain economic development or to support day to day life. Whether or not the pollution caused will give rise to specific problems depends on a number of factors including:

- The scale of development
- The background levels of pollutants that already exists
- The cumulative impacts of developments
- The type and level of pollution involved
- The sensitivity of nearby land uses

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

- promoting "clean production methods";
- ensuring that all development is designed in a way that minimises the risk of pollution;
- promoting a pattern and mix of development that reduces the need to travel and promoting means of transport that cause less pollution;
- ensuring that existing and potential sources of pollution are taken into account when development decisions are made;
- ensuring that sensitive development is not allowed in areas exposed to significant levels of pollution and that existing sensitive uses or areas are protected;
- ensuring that developments that could cause pollution are located where they will have least adverse impact on local communities and the environment.

Air Quality

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

National Priorities for Air Quality:

- The National Air Quality Strategy (March 1997) aims to meet a series of Air Quality Objectives for eight priority pollutants¹ by 2003-2005. It establishes a range of measures to support these objectives, including stricter vehicular emission limits and discouraging the use of high sulphur fossil fuels.

- The Environment Act 1995 makes local authorities responsible for reviewing and assessing air quality and identifying where additional measures may be required. If there is the potential for one or more of the national air quality objectives to be exceeded the local authority must designate an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). An AQAP can include planning and traffic management measures, such as additional pedestrianised areas within a town centre, encouraging public transport and reducing public parking.

9.21 It may not be appropriate to prevent any development in an AQMA as this could sterilise economic growth and inhibit social improvements. The impact of proposed development is the key consideration and the action that could be taken to mitigate that impact. Development proposals should be supported by sufficient information to allow them to be assessed. This should include monitoring and modelling data along with measures that are proposed to mitigate any impact on air quality.

Policy NR4: Pollution Impacts

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

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

In assessing proposals local authorities will take into account:

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

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

Policy NR5: Development Sensitive to Pollution

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

Policy NR6: Air Quality Management Areas

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

Water Resource Management

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

9.23 Demand for water and for wastewater treatment is not just increasing because of new development but also because people are consuming more water. Society also expects a higher quality of water and wastewater treatment. As an example, all wastewater treatment works are now required to provide primary and secondary treatment. A substantial proportion also incorporate tertiary treatment. The EU Water Framework Directive promotes a more integrated approach to water management, increased water quality standards and better environmental protection.

9.24 The Structure Plan needs to ensure that the water supply and wastewater disposal needs of existing and future development can be met. It promotes the sustainable use of water resources and high standards of wastewater treatment. The county needs to balance additional demand against supply, make the best use of existing resources (for example, by locating development where water supply is or could be readily available) and plan for new resources in a way which reduces the overall impact on the environment.

9.25 Water supply and treatment have been taken into account in deciding on the scale and distribution of development in this Plan. The planning and construction of water supply and wastewater treatment facilities have long lead times. The development strategy set out in this Plan is designed to inform the agencies involved where new or improved facilities are likely to be required. Future investment should allow for the ability to respond flexibly to changing circumstances, make the most effective use of resources and minimise environmental impacts. Local Development Documents will need to consider the detailed requirements for increased water supply and wastewater treatment, including reservoirs, pipelines or treatment works, together with any likely impacts on the environment.

Water Demand and Supply Balance

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

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

Water supply in Kent

The key sources of water supply in Kent are:

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

The County is strongly dependent on groundwater for water supplies (it makes up about three-quarters of the total).

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

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

9.29 If metering and/or other water efficiency measures do not make enough impact, then there is likely to be a need to develop new resources. As demand increases over the medium to long-term the Agency's strategy suggests that new sources of supply will be needed. The extent and timing of these will depend upon the distribution of development, how well water demand is managed and other factors such as the control of leakage. It is anticipated that between 2010 and 2015 either Bewl or Darwell reservoirs (both in East Sussex) will need to be enlarged. Water company plans assume this will be Darwell but Bewl may offer a greater yield and more operational flexibility to satisfy demand in Kent. The other reservoir would need to be enlarged by 2015/16. Beyond this the need to develop new resources remains a possibility. This might include a new strategic-scale reservoir in Kent (for example at Broadoak near Canterbury), transfers of water from South London, effluent reuse or desalination. All options will have environmental impacts and significant costs.

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

Map of water supply characteristics in Kent:

- *Medway, Swale and Sheppey have adequate resources;*
- *Thanet will be dependent on additional transfers from elsewhere (e.g. from Medway);*
- *Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells will rely on enhancing local groundwater and water transfer from neighbouring areas;*

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

Water Supply and The Environment

9.31 Abstraction licences in many parts of Kent allow too much groundwater to be abstracted during dry months. This can impact adversely on wildlife. Peak demand causes particular problems, as this is when summer groundwater, rivers and streams are receding. Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies (CAMS), prepared by the Environment Agency aim to find the right balance between the needs of those who abstract the water, water users and the environment.

Water Quality

Groundwater quality

9.32 Ground water quality can be affected by pollution from nearby developments. Protecting and monitoring water quality within aquifers is important. The impact of construction impacts and the need to maintain aquifers over the long term need to be considered. The Environment Agency's aquifer protection maps give broad guidance on where developments that could cause pollution should not be sited. Aquifers outside the protected zones may also be sensitive. Applications for potentially polluting developments should be supported by appropriate technical information and should be subject to consultation.

Water Quality in Rivers and Estuaries

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

Coastal Water Quality

9.34 Bathing water quality is important for tourism in Kent. Although about half of the effluent discharged by Kent's sewage works is pumped into the sea, 97-100% of beaches comply with the EU mandatory standards and 30% meet EU guidelines.

Schemes to improve the treatment and disposal of wastewater can greatly improve coastal water quality. In many coastal towns there are combined sewerage systems which can overflow in times of heavy rainfall carrying a mixture of rainwater and untreated sewage into surface waters. With more stringent EU requirements for the quality of water discharges at coastal locations, water companies are investing heavily in upgrading treatment processes provided at coastal sites. Coastal sewerage systems have been substantially improved at Dover, Folkestone and Whitstable.

Wastewater Treatment

9.35 Wastewater treatment and disposal includes the provision and maintenance of public sewers and wastewater treatment plants. Some locations may benefit from sustainable waste disposal systems in order to relieve pressure on main drainage.

9.36 Large volumes of sewage sludge arise from wastewater treatment and this will significantly increase with the introduction of secondary/tertiary treatment plants. Previously this sludge has been disposed of onto land but tighter standards may mean it has to be dealt with in a different way. Treating effluent for indirect reuse may be costly but it could be a useful way increasing water supply (e.g. during periods of drought) and of reducing the quantity for disposal.

9.37 The Ashford Discharge at Bybrook is operating close to the limits of its consent. Even at current levels there is insufficient dilution available in the Stour to meet standards for river water quality. Continuing and accelerated growth at Ashford will require substantial investment in wastewater treatment capacity in the medium term if water quality is not to be compromised.

Policy NR7: Water Quality

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

Policy NR8: Water supply and wastewater treatment

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

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

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

Flood Risk

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

Causes of Flooding

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

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

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

9.39 Flood plains fulfil an important natural role by absorbing water during times of heavy rainfall. Flood risk can be made worse by:

- Building on flood plains which reduces the land available for storing flood water, obstructs its flow, increases the rate or volume of run off and creates additional risk elsewhere;
- Inadequate maintenance of flood defence systems;
- Inadequate maintenance of watercourses, surface water sewers, culverts and road gullies which can allow channels to become blocked;
- Modifying, culverting and diverting watercourses;
- Agricultural practices such as removing trees and ploughing at right angles to contours rather than parallel with them;
- Sewerage systems that become overloaded by surface water run-off and cause pollution.

9.40 Large parts of Kent are naturally at risk of river or coastal flooding (see map), which also shows that many developed areas are already protected by flood defences. Although defences reduce the risk of flooding they do not remove it completely. The protection they offer will diminish over time unless they are improved to take account of the impacts of climate change.

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

Responses to flooding

9.41 Catchment Flood and Shoreline Management Plans are prepared by the Environment Agency. These will be the key mechanisms for identifying how to deal with flood risk in a particular area. These plans assess nature conservation as well as property and cost when considering flood risk and defences. They may include proposals for new or improved defences or recommend approaches to deal with land use change. The Structure Plan seeks to develop an integrated approach to flood risk management and ensure that these policies are reflected in Local Development Documents and in planning decisions.

Flood risk mapping

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

Identifying Flood risks

Flood risk issues are likely to arise for developments:

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

PPG25 defines flood risk as follows

:

- *Zone 1: Little or no risk*
- *Zone 2: Low to Medium Risk - River 0.1-1.0%, Tidal and Coastal 0.1-0.5%*
- *Zone 3: High Risk - River 1.0% or greater, Tidal and Coastal 0.5% or greater*

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

Avoiding development in the flood plain

9.43 In cases where development proposals raise flooding or run-off issues, whether proposed in a local development document or a planning application, local authorities should consult the Environment Agency and other relevant bodies such as Internal Drainage Boards, Parish Councils, sewerage undertakers and navigation authorities. In accordance with PPG25 local planning authorities are required to apply a risk-based, sequential approach to flood risk when preparing development plans and taking development control decisions.

Managing flood risk

Flood Defences

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

Drainage Systems

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

Mitigation by design

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

Policy NR9: Development and Flood Risk

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

- i. *if it would be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding or where it would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere or require the construction of new defences;*
- ii. *Where it would prejudice the capacity and integrity of flood plains or planned flood protection or coastal defence measures;*
- iii. *Where it will hinder the implementation of future flood protection or coastal defence measures;*
- iv. *if it would adversely affect the ability of the land to drain.*

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

Local Development Documents will include policies to:

- (a) *ensure that a risk based sequential approach, reflecting degrees of flood risk, is adopted in guiding specified categories of development away from flood risk areas;*
- (b) *secure the provision and maintenance of appropriate drainage systems in new developments to alleviate flood risk;*
- (c) *ensure that proposals for development are accompanied by flood risk assessments appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risk.*

Policy NR10: Flood Protection

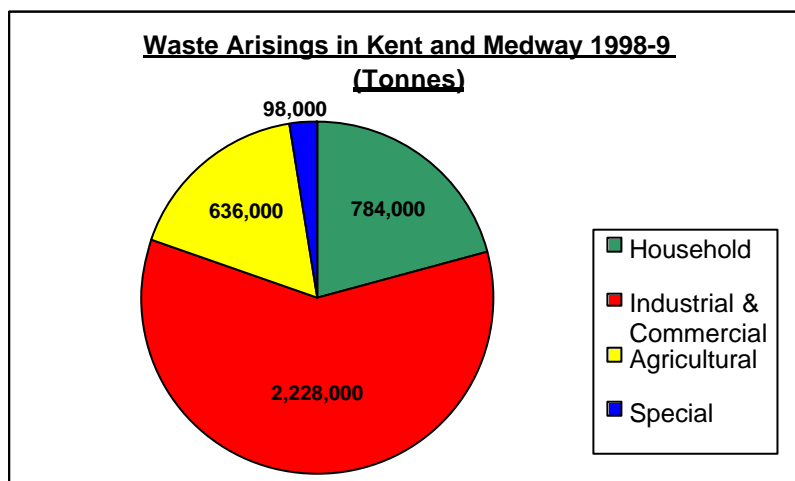
The development of new or replacement flood protection or coastal defence measures that are in accordance with a Catchment Management Plan, Shoreline Management Plans or Coastal Defence Strategies will be supported. Where these are required to service a development their provision and maintenance should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

Chapter 10: Managing Our Waste and Mineral Resources

10.1 The people and businesses of Kent and Medway ~~continue to produce significant~~ major volumes of waste (see Figure 1). Unless ~~it is~~ adequately managed and treated, ~~waste has the~~ it can have the potential to cause significant environmental and health problems. On the other hand it has potential value as a resource if it can be re-used or recycled. Long term provision needs to be made to manage waste in an efficient and environmentally sound manner. Measures must also be taken to counter the trend of year on year increases in the amount of waste generated.

10.2 National strategy and guidance ~~towards waste~~ seeks a more sustainable integrated approach to ~~handling and treating it~~ waste management. This is driven by European Union regulations – particularly the Landfill Directive¹⁹ which aim to prevent, or reduce as far as possible, the negative effects both on the environment and on human health of sending waste to landfill. Other key influences include National and Regional Planning Policy Guidance and Kent and Medway Councils' own Waste Strategies.

Figure 1²⁰:



[Source: Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000 – South East²¹.]

Key Waste Management Issues

- Household waste has grown since April 1998 at an annual average rate of 4.5%.
- In 2001/2, each household in Kent produced an average of 1.3 tonnes of waste.

¹⁹ 1999/31/EC

²⁰ Figure 1 does not include all waste arisings e.g. construction and demolition waste and other streams for which there is no reliable data.

²¹ Very little of the agricultural waste generated i.e. 636,000 tonnes is subject to control under the planning regime.

- Volumes of waste are likely to increase, at least in the short to medium term because of population growth, the increase in the number of one person households and growth in the economy.
- The number of homes in Kent is due to increase by 18% (116,100) over the next 20 years.
- The 25.2 million tonnes of waste arising in the South East in 2000/2001 is projected to rise to nearly 35 million tonnes by 2025 (an increase of almost 40%)
- There are reduced opportunities for landfill.
- Environmental impacts of waste disposal.
- Kent has traditionally taken waste from neighbouring areas and exported to others.
- Kent currently recycles or composts around 20% of household waste. The National Waste Strategy seeks to increase this rate to 33% by 2015.

Regional Waste Management Strategy (2003)

One of the most significant issues facing the South East is the growing amount of waste produced and how to manage it now and in the future. Historically waste has grown as the economy and consumption has grown. We have become a throwaway society, discarding materials with little thought for the environmental impact or the waste of valuable resources. This must change.

At present in the south East approximately 50% of all waste is recovered . The draft Regional Waste Management Strategy puts forward a range of options for increasing this rate to 77% - 86% by 2025.

The majority of existing waste management capacity in the South East is landfill which is expected to decline over time as sites are filled. Existing recycling, composting and energy from waste facilities provide only a small proportion of overall capacity at the present time. Increasing the diversion of waste from landfill to recovery will require rapid and large scale provision of additional recovery facilities.

Land use planning can contribute only some of the change in practice and behaviour required. It will need to be complimented by other initiatives for example to develop markets for recycled goods

The Structure Plan Strategy for Waste aims to:

- Promote an integrated approach to waste management
- Provide for the necessary facilities to manage Kent's waste in a sustainable way
- ~~Reduce the overall amount of waste produced with an initial emphasis on reducing the rate of growth.~~
- ~~Allow enough~~ some flexibility to cope with variations in ~~both the scale and~~ the pace of waste reduction.
- ~~Allow flexibility to cope with continued growth in the volume of waste.~~
- Promote the best practical environmental options when disposing of waste.
- Promote the reuse recycling and recovery of waste.

Consideration of Waste Proposals Integrated Waste Management

10.3 The application of BPEO is essential if Kent and Medway are to achieve a sustainable pattern of waste management.

' Best Practicable Environmental Option' (BPEO) seeks to ensure that waste is dealt with in a way that considers environmental impacts alongside social and economic considerations¹ and represent the most efficient and environmentally sound method. In particular, proposals will be expected to show that they accord with the following principles:

- ~~Demonstrate Need;~~
- The Waste Hierarchy;
- The Proximity Principle; and
- Self-Sufficiency.

The Waste Hierarchy

10.4 The ~~national~~ waste hierarchy set out in the National Waste Strategy seeks to promote an integrated approach to waste management. It reflects the fact that the best option for dealing with waste is to reduce the amount created, followed by re-use and then recovery which includes recycling, composting and energy from waste. Only when these options have been exhausted should waste be disposed of to landfill. The appropriate waste management option will vary according to the type of waste in question and local considerations. ~~It is possible to refine this hierarchy further to ensure that the best use is made of recycling and to ensure that statutory targets in this area are met.~~ The aim is to move up the hierarchy to ensure better environmental protection and meet statutory targets. A significant increase in the number of facilities for materials recycling , composting , thermal treatment and landfill will be required to comply with the waste hierarchy and national targets.

The Proximity Principle

10.5 This requires waste to be disposed of as close as possible to where it was created and reflects the fact that transporting waste itself has an environmental impact of its own. Types of waste that require specialist management facilities may justify transportation over longer distances if there are no local facilities capable of dealing with it. It would be preferable to transport long distance waste by rail rather than by road.

Self – Sufficiency

10.6 Minerals Planning Authorities should attempt to deal with their own waste so as to support regional self-sufficiency, that is, treating or disposing of waste within the 'region' in which it is produced. However the geographical proximity of areas needs to be taken into account alongside the local circumstances. For example parts of West and North Kent are close to regional boundaries and are also subject to nationally important planning constraints such as the Green Belt.

10.7 In 2001/02, approximately one third of Kent's household waste was exported to Essex (in the East of England Region). Whilst this Plan seeks to ensure that Kent and Medway manage the equivalent of their own waste (Policy WM3) some discretion may be required. There could be occasions where applying the self-sufficiency principle would clash with the proximity principle, for example if waste needed to be transported long distances across the county in order to keep it within the same region.

Need

10.8 The assessment of need for a waste management proposal should take account of the amount of waste that needs to be dealt with; the level and nature of management capacity that is committed, the projected growth in the amount of waste and statutory recycling and diversion targets.

Policy WM1: Integrated Waste Management

Provision will be made for the integrated management of waste reflecting Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO), the national waste hierarchy and national targets for waste management.

The Waste Local Development Frameworks for Kent and Medway will identify the range, scale and location of facilities to provide for rapid growth in capacity for recycling, composting and recovery from waste of all controlled streams.

Energy from waste proposals will be considered only as part of an integrated approach to increase waste recovery rates and should incorporate other waste management facilities including recycling, composting and materials recovery.

Policy WM2: Assessment criteria for waste proposals

Proposals for the treatment, storage, transfer, processing or disposal of waste will be required to show that they represent the most efficient and environmentally sustainable method of managing a specific type of waste. Proposals should demonstrate that they:

- a) ***Meet a demonstrable need that overrides material agricultural, landscape, conservation, traffic and other environmental or land use concerns; and***
- b) ***Are the Best Practicable Environmental Option (BPEO) and accord with the waste hierarchy***
- d) ***~~Comply with the proximity principle, taking into consideration the environmental impact of the mode of transport proposed; and~~***
- e) ***~~Contribute to the achievement of self-sufficiency.~~***

Waste Reduction

10.9 The most efficient way of tackling Kent and Medway's waste is to reduce the quantity produced in the first place. Local authorities should seek "project waste plans" to be produced in association with major development proposals which detail how waste is to be dealt with both during construction and subsequent occupation. These might, for

example, detail proposals for shared waste collection points, for allowing waste to be separated and transferred for recycling or re-use. Policies should also encourage manufacturing using recycled waste as an alternative to raw materials.

Policy WM 3: Securing waste reduction

Major Development proposals will be required to demonstrate they are able to make a contribution to reducing growth in the volume of waste generated in Kent and Medway.

Local Development Documents will include policies:

- 1) ***Requiring the submission of a waste minimisation plan ~~alongside major development proposals and~~, where appropriate, and provide for the use of conditions or agreements to secure waste minimisation;***
- 2) ***Providing for the ~~accommodation of development for~~ of assembly manufacturing or processing facilities to recycle and/or recover waste related to recycled waste.***

Provision for Waste Management Facilities in Kent and Medway

10.10 Kent and Medway need to provide enough appropriate facilities to deal with waste within their respective areas. While it would be impractical for Kent and Medway to achieve absolute self-sufficiency each authority should seek to achieve its equivalent after cross border movements have been taken into consideration.

10.11 In the past, waste management policy has planned ahead on a ten-year basis. However finding alternatives to landfilling requires significant levels of capital investment and involves long lead times in planning and development. The amount of waste management capacity will be calculated by looking at the existing and committed capacity for dealing with a specific waste type and comparing it with the amount of that type of waste expected to arise.

Policy WM 4: Planning for waste management capacity

The Kent and Medway Waste Local Development Frameworks will make provision for, and maintain, integrated waste management capacity sufficient for 15 years ahead.

Through their Waste Local Development Frameworks, Kent and Medway Councils will each make provision for the management of the equivalent of the waste arising in their areas.

10.12 The type of waste facilities provided will largely reflect the need to divert waste away from landfill in order to meet national targets within the National Waste Strategy 2000 and statutory Best Value Performance Indicators for household waste recycling and composting. These set targets for:

- Slowing down the growth in the amount of waste produced;
- Reducing the quantity of biodegradable municipal waste landfilled;

- Reducing the quantity of industrial and commercial waste landfilled;
- Recovering value from municipal waste and for recycling or composting household waste

10.13 Targets for recycling and diverting waste from landfill are set out in Chapter 10 on implementation and monitoring.

10.14 Kent and Medway send almost 80% of their household waste to landfill (2001/02). This level must be reduced to meet statutory requirements and contribute to national targets. Rapidly diminishing landfill space adds to the pressure to identify alternative ways of disposing of our rubbish. In 1999 Kent and Medway had less than 6½ years worth of landfill space left²². The steady move towards ~~sustainable~~ integrated waste management techniques will reduce the county's dependency on landfill. But while disposing of waste in this way is seen as a last resort, there will be a continuing need to deal with residual wastes by landfilling.

10.15 Landfilling is likely to continue on sites used for mineral extraction where this goes hand in hand with restoring the site. Kent and Medway's geology dictates that some mineral workings are only suitable for filling with inert material such as construction and demolition waste. To reinstate sites with non-inert material would carry a high risk of ground contamination. Inert waste material is however, becoming less common following the success of national initiatives to reduce waste such as the Landfill Tax. For this reason where disposal to landfill is justified under the provisions of Policy WM2, the material involved should be directed to appropriate mineral workings to allow them to be restored. In some areas the nature of the underlying geology may prohibit the disposal of even inert waste to mineral workings.

10.16 Although the disposal of non-inert waste to landfill may be justified if it is considered to be the BPEO, finding suitable landfill sites can prove difficult because of the need to prevent groundwater pollution. Landraising, a form of disposal that changes existing land profiles - may offer an alternative means of disposal for non-inert waste. Landraising can be visually intrusive and needs sensitive treatment but it can offer advantages over landfill as it enables pollution to be more easily managed. Sensitive landraising at existing landfill sites could offset the need for further greenfield sites. Landraising, like landfill, should only be used as a last resort when other methods of disposal, higher up the hierarchy, have been exhausted.

Policy WM 5: Waste Disposal to Land

Where disposal of waste to land is proved necessary:

- 1) ***For inert waste, priority will be given to using suitable mineral workings rather than other land disposal sites where this will facilitate the reinstatement of land to a beneficial after-use and/or secure improvement of the environment;***
- 2) ***For non inert waste, subject to Policy WM2, the Councils will consider landraising as an option for land disposal.***

²² Strategic Waste Management Assessment 2000: South East (Environment Agency).

Location of Future Waste Management Facilities

10.17 Kent and Medway presently export more than a third of their household waste for landfilling. New facilities are needed to allow waste to be dealt with more sustainably. Policy WM6 sets out a prospective pattern of key new facilities. It is based upon current waste levels and disposal flows and set against the backdrop of the existing and committed facilities²³.

10.18 Kent and Medway will seek to maximise opportunities for new recycling facilities, particularly where waste can be transported by means other than by road. Sites that offer good access by rail or water could contribute significantly to the development of sustainable waste management.

10.19 Biological treatment of waste by such methods as composting offers an effective way of achieving recycling targets. Treatment plants usually take in green waste from a variety of sources, compost it and then take it off site for sale as a soil conditioner. Two industrial scale plants already exist in Kent – at Dunbrik near Sevenoaks and at Shelford near Canterbury. There is also a handful of small, farm based composting facilities located sporadically throughout the county. These smaller facilities tend to use the compost ~~themselves on adjacent farmland~~. While such facilities reduce the need to transport waste, it is unlikely that they will make a significant contribution to recycling targets. Further, industrial scale composting capacity is likely to be required in North and East Kent to ensure that all parts of the county are adequately served.

10.20 Recycling alone will be unable to deal with Kent and Medway's waste management requirements in the short to medium term. This is because of the time needed to secure the significant investment required and changes in public attitudes and behaviour.

10.21 National policy regards facilities that ~~turn waste into energy~~ derive energy from waste as an essential part of waste management strategy. The new facility ~~under construction that is committed~~ at Allington, near Maidstone will be capable of accepting up to 500,000 tonnes of household and industrial and commercial waste each year. It will be able to deal with waste arising in Mid and West Kent but further capacity will be needed in East Kent.

Policy WM6: Provision of strategic waste management facilities

The Kent and Medway Waste Local Development Documents Frameworks will seek to provide a pattern of waste management facilities over the plan period, to include:

- i. A strategic recycling facility in North Kent to meet local and regional needs;***
- ii. ~~An~~ Industrial scale composting facilities in North Kent and East Kent;***
- iii. A waste reprocessing plant in East Kent providing energy production both for the plant and wider use and incorporating provision for materials recycling;***

²³ See KMSP Background Paper XX/03: Waste Arisings, Disposal and Management Facilities and Future Capacity.

- iv. *Further landfill capacity in North Kent to meet the need to dispose of residues to land;and*
- v. *Other facilities that may be required to meet integrated waste management targets.*

They will also determine the need for, and pattern of, small scale waste processing and composting facilities.

Wherever practicable facilities should be located to enable the use of rail and/or water based transport.

Construction Projects

10.22 Construction projects such as new transport schemes and major developments can require significant quantities of aggregate minerals or give rise to significant quantities of surplus spoil. ~~Both these things~~ As a result they can have a major impact on land use and transportation. Planning authorities considering large projects will seek to ensure that any resource or disposal requirements are dealt with either on site or adjacent to it. Where this is not possible they will seek agreement on appropriate routes ~~should be used by~~ for vehicles bringing material into, or out of, the site and on where materials should be sourced and taken to. Use of the rail network will be promoted wherever possible.

Policy WM6: Construction related spoil

In order to minimise the environmental impact of construction projects which require significant quantities of construction aggregates or give rise to significant amounts of surplus spoil, a scheme for the transport and routing of such materials, together with proposals for the disposal or reuse of surplus spoil, will be designed into the project itself.

Minerals

10.23 Minerals make an essential contribution to economic prosperity and provide raw materials for many everyday needs – homes, community buildings, schools, roads, glassware, household goods and much more. With continuing development and improved transport links, the need for accessible sources of minerals remains strong.

10.24 Minerals can only be worked where they occur naturally and their extraction can have significant impacts on the environment. Kent and Medway are rich in minerals containing a variety of sands and gravels as well as chalk, ragstone, clays and brickearth. Given the high environmental quality of much of Kent's undeveloped land there is a need to balance the demand for minerals with protection of the county's distinctive natural features. There is also a need to balance the benefits of mineral extraction with the well being and amenity of communities living nearby.

10.25 More detailed policies are outlined in the existing and emerging Kent and Medway Minerals Local Plans/ Local Development Documents.

Mineral Resources : Key Issues

- *Maintaining a sufficient supply of minerals for the development industry*
- *The environmental impact of mineral extraction and transportation*
- *Safeguarding mineral resources for the longer term*
- *Maintaining sufficient capacity for the importation of minerals*

The Strategy for Minerals is to:

- *Maximise the use of secondary and recycled minerals*
- *Maintain a continuity of supply either locally or by importing a range of mineral types*
- *Avoid unacceptable environmental impacts*
- *Make sure land is restored satisfactorily*
- *Safeguard local minerals reserves and protect import facilities*

Supply of Minerals

10.26 Kent and Medway rely upon a range of sources for their minerals, including:

- Locally extracted virgin (primary) materials;
- Imported virgin (primary) materials;
- Virgin (primary) marine dredged material (sand and gravel only);
- Recycled materials such as road scalplings and planings and construction and demolition waste; Secondary materials – material which can be used instead of a primary material and which usually arises as a by-product of other quarrying, mining or industrial processes. Examples include pulverised fuel ash, blast furnace slag and incinerator residues.

10.27 It is national policy to move towards a more sustainable use of resources by using fewer land-won “primary” minerals and more alternative materials taken from secondary or recycled sources. New national and regional guidelines for the supply of aggregates (MPG 6 Amendment 2003) indicate that these secondary sources will be expected to provide a significantly greater share of total supply compared with the previous 1994 guidelines. The guidelines call for a 50% increase in the use of secondary sources by 2011 compared with the 2001 level. This can be encouraged by influencing construction/building specifications and by making provision for facilities that treat and process potential sources of recycled and substitute material.

Policy M1: Sources of Minerals Supply

Subject to environment, transport and other planning considerations, proposals for the provision of minerals through recycling, the use of secondary materials, imports and the ~~development of~~ acceptable extraction of acceptable local sources of supply will be permitted.

Policy M2: Use of Secondary/Recycled Materials

Kent County Council and Medway Council will seek ~~to encourage a greater~~ maximise the use of recycled and secondary materials through:

- *The Councils' own material specifications in setting contracts;*
- *Encouraging other contractors to examine specifications to use and specify the use of recycled materials;*
- *Permitting recycling proposals at appropriate locations consistent with Waste Local Development Documents.*

Consideration of Minerals Proposals

10.28 Extracting and supplying of minerals has the potential to cause significant harm to the environment. Community and environmental interests will be protected by imposing appropriate conditions on planning permissions and monitoring operations at sites once permission has been granted. Suitable restoration and aftercare will also be required at mineral sites. Restoration provides a unique opportunity for mineral development to enhance the environment and contribute to nature conservation and biodiversity objectives.

Policy M3: Assessment Criteria for Minerals Proposals

Proposals for minerals extraction and/or associated plant and buildings and minerals recycling facilities will be permitted only where they do not have an unacceptable adverse impact on agricultural, landscape, conservation, or environmental interests of acknowledged importance or on residential and business communities.

Permission will only be granted if any physical constraints on the land have been properly taken into account and if there are adequate access proposals, measures to minimise harm to the landscape and environment, to protect local communities, to landscape the site, remove plant or buildings after workings have ceased and to restore the land to an appropriate after use, normally as working progresses.

Wherever appropriate a period of aftercare will also be required.

Rail and Wharf Facilities for Minerals Handling

10.29 Geological and environmental constraints mean that approximately two thirds of primary aggregates are supplied via rail and wharf facilities (2001 figures). Large reserves of marine aggregate have been identified in the Eastern English Channel. There are a number of deep water berths along the Thames and the Medway which are suitable for mineral importation and some are already used for this purpose. The ability to accommodate larger ships means that these deep water facilities play an important part in the supply of minerals to Kent and Medway and to the wider region, particularly where they have good, or potentially good rail links.

10.30 River frontage has become increasingly attractive for a range of development and suitable sites for wharves have already been lost. Since imported materials will continue to contribute to Kent and Medway's overall minerals requirement, it is important to make sure that Kent's wharf and rail facilities are protected and, where possible, enhanced. As well as maintaining sources of supply this will also maximise the amount

of bulk material transported in ways other than by road. It will be particularly important where good surface access to wharves exists or can be provided. The authorities will need to consult river and port authorities on navigational and conservancy matters.

Policy M4: Marine Wharves and Rail Depots

Existing marine wharves and rail depots that receive and process minerals will be protected generally from development that would inhibit their continued operation or potential expansion. This will be achieved through the identification of buffer zones around such sites in Minerals Local Development Documents.

Wharves on the Thames and Medway will be subject of study and potential rationalisation in accordance with Policy TP22(g).

Proposals for new marine wharves and rail depots, to receive and process imports of minerals, will be permitted on appropriate sites. In assessing whether a site is appropriate, Kent County Council and Medway Council will consider all material planning interests including those relating to agriculture, landscape, conservation, environment, traffic and access.

Mineral Supply

Construction Aggregates

10.31 Construction aggregate – sand, gravel and rock - is the main type of mineral found and extracted in Kent and Medway. It is used by the construction industry in concrete, road stone and asphalt and for such things as construction fill and railway ballast. Building sands, concreting sands and gravels and ragstone make up the main types of aggregates found in the county.

10.32 Guidance on the level of provision that should be made for construction aggregates is set out in Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6 “*Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England*”. This sets out a level of provision for each region which is then apportioned to each mineral planning authority. These authorities must then reflect these requirements in their development plans. In the 1994 guidelines the figure for Kent and Medway relating to sand and gravel is 3.2 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). However sand and gravel production in Kent and Medway has fallen substantially below the previous regional apportionment and since the mid 1990s has been approximately 2.2 mtpa.

10.33 In June 2003 Government published revised national and regional guidelines for 2001-2016 as an amendment to MPG6. These new guidelines are (nationally) 19% lower than the levels forecast for 1992 to 2006 in MPG6 (1994) and assume a substantially greater role for secondary and recycled aggregates. A new sub regional apportionment of these revised guidelines is expected by the end of 2003. The current figure of 3.2 mtpa for Kent and Medway is expected to be substantially reduced as a result of this - the provisional proposal is for 2.42 mtpa for land won sand and gravel together with a figure of 1.2 mtpa for land won crushed rock.

10.34 Authorities are also expected to maintain a stock of planning permissions for aggregates (a landbank) which will provide at least 7 years extraction of sand and gravel and at least 10 years for crushed rock, such as ragstone. The revised apportionment figure for Kent and Medway would extend the life of the current landbank for sand and gravel which in 2000 was estimated at 13 years based on the 1994 apportionment. It suggests a reducing impact on the environment from primary aggregate production. Proposals for aggregate extraction will be assessed in the light of these considerations and the criteria set out in Policy M3. In terms of Policy M5 there are no occurrences of ragstone within the Medway area.

Policy M5: Provision for Construction Aggregates

Kent County Council and Medway Council will review and maintain:

- 1) ***A supply of aggregates sufficient to contribute to national, regional and local needs, in accordance with their agreed share of regional aggregates supply.***
- 2) ***A landbank of permitted reserves of:***
 - ***sand and gravel sufficient for at least 7 years' production at agreed apportionment levels;***
 - ***ragstone sufficient for at least 10 years' supply.***

10.35 In terms of crushed rock, a major potential limestone resource has been identified in East Kent. If local environmental and highway issues can be dealt with satisfactorily then favourable consideration will be given to proposals for limestone mining in this area. This would secure a major source of quality hard rock to help meet the community's requirements for construction aggregates in a way that would be less environmentally damaging compared to other methods of winning aggregates from the land.

Policy M6: Limestone Extraction in East Kent

Kent County Council will give favourable consideration to limestone mining in East Kent. When assessing the landbank for Kent's land won construction aggregate requirements, no account will be taken of this option until planning permission has been granted.

Other Minerals

10.36 When considering the need to identify or permit additional reserves of non-aggregate minerals, the minerals planning authorities will take into account recent levels of national and regional production and the extent of current permitted reserves. The need to identify sufficient mineral reserves to justify substantial new investment in existing and new fixed plant will also be recognised.

- ***Silica Sand***

10.37 Silica (or industrial) sand, is an essential raw material used in many industrial processes including glass manufacture, the production of foundry castings, ceramics,

chemicals manufacture and for water filtration. There is specific national planning policy guidance relating to silica sand (MPG15) which stresses the need to recognise the scarcity of economically workable silica sand deposits and the high capital cost of investment in the industry. Policy M7 establishes landbank reserves in line with this guidance. There is no silica sand in the Medway area. Proposals will be subject to the criteria set out in Policy M3.

Policy M7: Silica Sand

Kent County Council will seek to maintain a landbank of permitted reserves of silica sand sufficient for at least 10 years supply for each production site, or at least 15 years at sites where new significant capital investment is required.

• ***Building Stone***

10.38 Some minerals found in Kent, particularly local ragstone, can be used as building stone. This type of material is important for repairing local historic buildings and monuments. Workings of this kind are generally small scale. An adequate supply of local building stone should be secured in order to make sure that the high quality of Kent and Medway's historic environment can be maintained.

Policy M8: Building Stone

Kent County Council and Medway Council will seek to ensure that there is an adequate supply of building stone available for the repair of local buildings of architectural and historic importance.

• ***Brickearth***

10.39 Government policy emphasises the need to make suitable provision for brickearth, which is used to make stockbricks (often known in Kent as London Stocks).

Policy M9: Brickearth

Proposals for the extraction of brickearth will be permitted which will enable each stockbrick works to be maintained with at least 15 years reserves of brickearth. Proposals for brickearth extraction on the best and most versatile agricultural land must provide for the site to be progressively restored.

• ***Chalk and Clay***

10.40 Chalk and clay provide raw materials for specialist uses and support industries that are important to the national and local economy. Chalk is used in the building industry and is worked for agricultural purposes such as liming, and in manufacturing, e.g. in the paper industry. It is also used in the cement industry and for other engineering purposes. Clay is extracted for use in the brick and cement industry, for sea defences and other engineering purposes such as lining landfill sites.

Policy M10: Chalk and Clay

Proposals for the extraction of chalk and clay will be permitted which enable:

- a) *Kent and Medway's cement industry to be maintained with up to 25 years reserves of chalk and clay;*
- b) *Kent and Medway's clay brick industry to be maintained with at least 15 years reserves of clay;*
- c) *Reserves of agricultural chalk to be maintained with a 10 year supply; and*
- d) *Kent and Medway's engineering, pharmaceutical and whiting manufacturing requirements for chalk and clay to be met.*

- **Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane**

10.41 Government regards the exploration and production of oil, gas and coalbed methane as important for the long-term national interest. Proposals to investigate commercial production of oil, gas or coalbed methane workings for commercial production will be considered on their merits against Policy M3 of this Plan.

Policy M11: Oil, Gas and Coalbed Methane

Proposals for the exploration and appraisal of oil, natural gas and coalbed methane will be permitted. Permission for any production of on-shore oil, gas and coalbed methane which would require a gathering station, export terminal or distribution network will only be given if there are adequate proposals for:

- a) *the screening, landscaping and design of production well sites, gathering stations and export terminals; and*
- b) *access and routing for vehicular traffic; and*
- c) *avoiding nuisance to any sensitive development in the vicinity; and*
- d) *transport of oil, gas and coalbed methane within the plan area (for which there will be a presumption in favour of rail transport and/or underground pipelines so far as this is practicable); and*
- e) *the testing or disposal of gas; and*
- f) *the clearance of plant, equipment and buildings and the restoration and aftercare of all areas affected by the production operations at the end of the permitted period.*

The siting of gathering stations and export terminals in locations protected by the Structure Plan's countryside and coast policies, or in locations close to substantial built development, will be refused, unless it can be shown that there is no suitable alternative location.

Safeguarding Mineral Resources

10.42 Mineral resources should be protected against sterilisation by other forms of development. MPG1 "General Considerations and the Development Plan System", gives guidance on declaring Mineral Consultation Areas (MCAs). In such areas Minerals Planning Authorities have to be notified of any proposed surface development which would sterilise an economically important deposit and are given the opportunity to object. Consideration will be given to the identification of MCAs in the Kent and Medway Minerals Local Development Documents.

Policy M12: Safeguarding of Mineral Resources

Development proposals which would sterilise the future availability of strategic mineral reserves identified in Minerals Local Development Documents will be refused. Where possible, known sources of secondary and recycled materials will be safeguarded from sterilisation.

Where development is proposed, encouragement will be given to the prior extraction of the mineral resource or use of secondary and recycled materials prior to, or in conjunction with, development.

Chapter 11: Implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the Kent & Medway Structure Plan

Implementation

11.1 The Structure Plan sets out long term strategic planning policy for Kent and Medway. If it is to be successful it needs to be implemented effectively through a wide range of mechanisms and organisations across the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

11.2 The Plan seeks to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of Kent, principally by guiding the scale, general location and phasing of development. To be most effective, it needs to be translated quickly and efficiently into Local Development Documents. Although local planning authorities will lead this process it will be important for them to consult a wide cross section of stakeholders, including local communities.

11.3 Local Plan/Local Development Documents and decisions upon individual planning applications should be consistent with policies in the Structure Plan. This ensures that the Structure Plan is made effective through the day to day policy and development control work of District Councils and the Medway Unitary Authority.

11.4 The private sector will play a major role in implementing the Plan, both by bringing development forward and in managing Kent's land resource. Much of what is currently cherished about the county's countryside has been preserved over the years by the stewardship of the farming community and land-based industries.

11.5 The number and range of different agencies that will be involved in implementing the Structure Plan is reflected in the table IMP2, Measuring Progress. The Local Authorities in Kent will work closely with these agencies to achieve the objectives of the plan and overcome potential obstacles.

11.6 The Structure Plan is strongly linked to other areas of policy. It is an important tool for delivering the Community Strategies produced by Local Strategic Partnerships across Kent. It informs and responds to other policy frameworks. Local Transport Plans for Kent and Medway will translate the policy framework within the Structure Plan into rolling five-year plans for tackling transport issues. Public sector policy making in which affects areas such as the environment, health, education and community services must be consistent with the Structure Plan because of the potential impact they have on the location and accessibility of services and the demands placed upon the transport network.

11.7 The Structure Plan is part of a wider family of policy and implementation documents which includes community strategies, investment programmes, and the government plans (including legislation) and those of private sector agencies.

Diagram – Linkages with other strategies

11.8 Supplementary planning guidance (SPG) brought forward in conjunction with this Plan will also play a part in implementing its objectives. SPGs will help to articulate the objectives of the plan in more detail. Specific supplementary guidance supports policies of this Plan relating to archaeological heritage (Policy QL7), landscape and countryside

character (Policy E2), biodiversity (Policy E7) and parking standards (Policy TP18). Other established guidance e.g. the Kent Design guide, supports the aims and objectives of the Plan's policy approach to design (Policies SP1 and QL1).

Resources

11.9 Since the Structure Plan is a policy rather than a programming document, it has no resources of its own. It is a strategic planning tool which belongs to the organisations and communities of Kent. The resources needed to see it implemented will come from a variety of sources and will be considerable. It will include funding from Government agencies and investment generated by public and private sector development. Some development will be speculative but other projects will also be associated with organisations wanting to locate in Kent.

11.10 Kent needs to play a full part in contributing to the economic prosperity of the nation and region but the needs of the area also need to be fully recognised in wider strategies and funding programmes. To manage change effectively and to address economic disparities across the county will need sufficient resources from central Government, its agencies and others. Timely investment in transport and community infrastructure is particularly important. Those parts of the county where property and investment markets are weak, such as the Priority Areas for Regeneration in North and East Kent or where accelerated growth is intended (Ashford) are particularly in need of additional funding if the key objectives of the Structure Plan and Government are to be delivered

11.11 There will need to be significant shifts in key areas of investment by both the public and private sectors in order to effect the changes and priorities set out in this strategy. These will be particularly important in respect of:

- Investing in high quality development and design
- Fostering sustainable access to jobs and services
- Securing provision of high quality public services
- Providing for mixed use development
- Conserving and enhancing landscape character and biodiversity

11.12 A number of agencies lead on a variety of programmes, which will assist in delivering this Plan. These programmes will inevitably change over time. Current examples include the Highways Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements, SEEDA's Area Investment Frameworks and the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme.

Meeting the costs of new development

11.13 One of the keys to improving well being in Kent will be to ensure that economic or housing development is supported with the necessary physical and social infrastructure such as schools, transport, health and recreation facilities and open space. While the Structure Plan seeks to make the best use of available infrastructure and facilities, the overall strategy will require the funding and provision of additional infrastructure which must be addressed before development can proceed. The local authorities will work with

service providers and regeneration agencies to establish what new community services are required, particularly in areas undergoing major change and renewal.

11.14 The demand for new services cannot necessarily be met from the tightly constrained budgets of local authorities and other agencies. The costs should normally be borne by the development unless there are exceptional circumstances why this should not be the case and alternative funding is available. Developers may also be asked to make a contribution to affordable housing, including social and key worker housing, where there is a clearly identified community need for it (see Chapter 7 Housing Provision).

11.15 Kent local authorities have put in place detailed guidelines for negotiating development contributions to the cost of community facilities²⁴. Contributions for educational facilities, affordable housing, highways and public transport are the most common. The size of contributions and the way they are used must have regard to local priorities and take into account evidence of exceptional costs incurred in developing sites particularly where previously developed land is involved. Cost-effective solutions such as the shared use of buildings will be encouraged. Ongoing management and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure must also be considered. The rapid pace of development envisaged for the growth areas presents particular challenges in ensuring that the supporting infrastructure is brought forward in a timely way. Masterplanning and the proactive use of Development Briefs have an important role to play in identifying infrastructure and the balance of uses appropriate to a particular locality.

Policy IMP 1: Meeting the costs of community and other infrastructure generated by new development

The local planning authorities will require contributions from developments to meet the costs of providing community, transport and other infrastructure necessary to serve development. Such contributions will be agreed before planning permission is granted and the facilities and/or services will be provided in accordance with an agreed phasing programme and, where appropriate, ongoing management and/or maintenance arrangements.

Monitoring

11.16 The Plan contains the aims, objectives and vision for land use planning in Kent and Medway. Policies provide the direction development should take to help realise that vision. An assessment of the way in which the Vision and Guiding Principles set out in Chapter One is carried into policies is set out in Table IMP1, From Vision to Policy. It demonstrates the strong relationship between the objectives of the plan and the policies it contains.

11.17 Any system for reaching judgements on the effectiveness of the Structure Plan needs like the Plan itself, to be straightforward. Several questions need to be addressed.

- ***What to monitor?*** Local planning authorities are required to keep under review certain factors in their area. These include population dynamics (the size,

²⁴ Kent Planning Officers' Group: Good Practice Guide on Development Contributions :1999 and Addendum 2001

composition and distribution of population), physical and economic characteristics and the communications, transport system and traffic conditions within the area. Progress towards the main targets of the Structure Plan will need to be measured.

- **How to monitor?** Assessing local plan and Local Development Document proposals, analysing planning decisions and the implementation of development. Undertaking surveys to identify change and by establishing base data against which to assess the level of change. Monitoring needs to link policies and plan targets.
- **What to do with the data?** Bulletins and monitoring papers will be published. They need to be informative and contribute to the decision making process so that informed decisions can be made about policy reviews and development plans in general. Evaluation needs to inform plan reviews.
- **Who might also be interested in monitoring?** District Planning Authorities will be interested in information that will help them to prepare Local Development Documents. Local Strategic Partnerships will be able to use information in preparing and reviewing community strategies. The success of Structure Plan policies will also be important in monitoring the progress of regional planning guidance (RPG9) and other regional strategies.

11.18 Regular monitoring of the Plan will ensure that local authorities in Kent and others can respond in an informed way to changing economic, social and environmental circumstances.

Approach to Monitoring

11.19 Table IMP2 Measuring Progress²⁵ outlines the proposals for monitoring the plan. Within each of the four themes set out in Chapter One it establishes:

- **Issues of Strategic Importance for Monitoring**

Matters which go to the heart of this plan but for which no specific performance indicators or targets have been identified. This may be due to difficulties of measurement or data collection, or perhaps it is a large and complex subject area. Monitoring these issues will be fundamental to measuring the success of the Structure Plan. For instance on the supply and occupation of employment land and the health of local labour and property markets.

- **Indicators and Headline Targets**

These indicators have been selected to focus principally on the land use planning issues upon which the Structure Plan has significant influence. A number of wider contextual indicators have been identified - for these the Structure Plan is but one of a number of influences on the outcomes.

- **Key Delivery Agencies**

Responsible for 'championing' that element of the Plan²⁶.

²⁵ To be inserted

Kent and Medway Structure Plan 2003

11.20 The performance indicators outlined in Table IMP2 were chosen as being both practical and measurable. The headline targets have been drawn either directly from policies in the plan or from other established policy documents (for instance community or regional strategies) which mirror policy aims within the Structure Plan. In due course a more detailed technical paper will be produced to amplify the assessment of these targets further.

11.21 Regular reviews of progress towards achieving the headline targets will be produced (annually or every two years), supplemented with more detailed reports on particular themes where these are considered necessary. These reports will be of value in drawing up local development documents, as well as for emerging sub-regional planning policies and other strategies or policy documents.

Table Imp 1: From Vision to Policy

This table tracks the evolution of the themes and principles contained within Chapter One into the specific policies developed within succeeding chapters.

Theme / Principle	Supported by Plan Policies <u>(to be revised)</u>
Nurturing Kent and Medway's Environment & Resources	
Protecting the countryside, minimising greenfield development and making the most of opportunities for the re-use of previously developed land especially within existing towns and other substantial communities.	SP1, SS3, SS7, SS9, HP3, HP4, HP6 FP2, E1-7, QL4
Anticipating and reducing the impact of future climate change including stronger protection and management of areas of potential flood risk, reducing demand for energy and moving towards renewable energy sources.	SP1, E12, E13, E14, E21, E22
Protecting and enhancing Kent's land, air and water environments. Ensuring that development does not create unacceptable levels of pollution and that development that would be sensitive to pollution are protected from its effects . is protected from it	SP1, E15, E16, E17, E18, E19, TP23,
Protecting high quality agricultural land.	FP8
Conserving and enhancing Kent's natural habitats and biodiversity.	SP1, E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10
Promoting sensitive and comprehensive approaches to the assessment and protection of the countryside, that reflect its character and biodiversity as well as its natural beauty.	E2, E3, E4, E7
Conserving and enhancing Kent's historic environment.	SP1, QL6, QL7, QL8, QL9, QL10
Prudent use and management of water and other natural resources, including safeguarding of viable mineral reserves from sterilisation.	SP1, E18, E19, M12
Reducing disposable waste to a minimum and disposing of it so as to achieve maximum benefits from recycling and reducing its potential for environmental pollution.	WM1-6
Using wisely the natural environment to provide leisure, recreational, cultural and educational opportunities for local communities.	QL14-17, E9
Fostering Prosperity and Well Being	
Increasing economic opportunity and reducing economic disparities within Kent, through commitment to regeneration and improved economic performance in North Kent, the coastal	SS1-2, NK1, NK3, EK1, EK2, EK3, CC3, FP1, FP3,

towns of East Kent and the former East Kent coalfield.	
Pursuing targeted economic development, including support for high value added activities and skills development, business clusters and knowledge based industries to boost the competitiveness of the Kent economy and existing businesses.	FP1, FP3, FP4
Securing employment led growth and development, especially within the areas in North and East Kent which require regeneration.	SS1, FP1, FP3, FP4,
Supporting indigenous growth of enterprise and employment. Helping existing businesses to grow and provide new jobs	FP3, FP4, FP5
Providing for sustainable growth in the economically successful parts of Kent, whilst addressing the pockets of deprivation which occur within them.	SS1, WK1, WK2, WK3, WK4, CC2
Sustaining and improving the economic health and vitality of Kent's rural communities and helping the rural economy to diversify .	SS5, SS6, FP5, FP6, FP7,
Capitalising on Making the most of the role of Thames Gateway as a national and regional priority for economic growth, regeneration and infrastructure investment.	SS1, SS2, SS3, NK1, NK2, NK3, FP1, FP3, FP4, HP1
Promoting Ashford as a regional growth point whilst ensuring that wider benefits accrue to the economy of East Kent in particular. the economy of East Kent in particular also benefits	SS1, SS2, CC1, FP1, FP3, HP4
Promoting sustainable tourism which capitalises on Kent and Medway's assets.	EK1, FP9-12
Securing Quality , Investment and Infrastructure in Regeneration and Development	
Providing attractive new communities which are safe , secure and convenient places in which to live and work and which encourage a sense of place and local distinctiveness	
Supporting the regeneration and renaissance of our principal urban areas, including neighbourhood renewal, redevelopment and improvement in key inner urban locations. Regenerating and revitalising Kent's principal urban areas through neighbourhood renewal, redevelopment and improving key inner urban locations	SS1, SS2, FP13, FP14, FP15, FP18, HP3, HP5, HP7, HP8, QL1, QL3, QL4, QL5, QL12, IMP1
Securing balanced and timely provision of housing, jobs, infrastructure and community services. Supporting existing and enhanced services and infrastructure through development. Balancing the provision of homes, jobs, infrastructure and community services and making sure they are provided at the right time. Ensuring development brings with it improvements in services and infrastructure.	SP1, SS2, HP1, QL11, QL12, IMP1
Promoting and investing in efficient transport that will serve future needs, tackle congestion, avoid unacceptable environmental damage and makes best use of existing road and rail infrastructure.	SP1, TP1-25

<p>Adopting innovative and high quality design to use land, water, energy and other resources more efficiently and to provide for changing lifestyles and preferences. Insisting on high quality design that uses land, water, energy and other resources more efficiently and provides for changing lifestyles and preferences</p>	<p>SP1, QL1, QL3, QL4, QL5, QL11, QL12, QL13</p>
<p>Encouraging a sense of place, local distinctiveness and the provision of safe, secure and attractive communities and working environments.</p>	
<p>Maintaining the character and separation of settlements through maintenance retention of the Green Belt and definition of strategic gaps.</p>	<p>SS7, SS8, SS9, QL1, QL2</p>
<p>Enhancing choice, opportunity and accessibility</p>	
<p>Ensuring that planning policies and practice in Kent and Medway promote social independence and take into account the needs of all sections of the community.</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Providing sufficient housing of a suitable range, quality and diversity for people in Kent and Medway.</p>	<p>SP1, HP1, HP7, HP8, HP9, HP10,</p>
<p>Concentrating development at the principal urban areas that are the major focal points for employment, public services and transport facilities.</p>	<p>SS2, SS3, FP14-17</p>
<p>Promoting more mixed use developments of the right pattern and density that uses land efficiently, increases accessibility, reduces the need to travel, particularly by car, and is planned to meet social, cultural and economic needs.</p>	<p>SS4, FP14, QL5</p>
<p>Ensuring that decisions on development and transport achieve good accessibility to services and jobs and a choice of means of transport for people and goods make it easy for people to reach local services and jobs and provide a choice of transport for people and goods</p>	<p>SP1, SS2, SS5, TP1, TP6-9</p>
<p>Ensuring that physical access to transport and community services and buildings whether public or private, new or existing, is improved for the benefit of all whilst recognising the value of heritage buildings. Ensuring that access to all buildings, transport and services is improved for everyone while avoiding undue impact on buildings of important heritage value</p>	<p>SP1, TP1, TP6</p>