



AGENDA

EXTRAORDINARY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PANEL

Date: Thursday, 19 May 2016

Time: 7.00 pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

Membership: to be confirmed following the Annual Council meeting on 18 May 2016

Quorum = 3

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1. Election of Chairman

To elect a Chairman for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

2. Election of Vice-Chairman

To elect a Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

3. Fire Evacuation Procedure

The Chairman will advise the meeting of the evacuation procedures to follow in the event of an emergency. This is particularly important for visitors and members of the public who will be unfamiliar with the building and procedures.

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closest emergency exit route is, in the event that the closest exit or route is blocked.

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4. Apologies for Absence and Confirmation of Substitutes

5. Declarations of Interests

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that a Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the room while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Corporate Services as Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

PART A REPORTS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

6. Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan - Examiner's Report and next steps

The purpose of the report is to formally receive the report of the Independent Examination into the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Development Plan, to endorse and make the recommended minor modifications to the Plan, to agree to publicise the Council's decision (a decision statement) and approve the organisation of a local referendum.

7. Local Plan Proposed Modifications

The Local Plan Inspector's interim findings and recommendations for modifying the Plan are now complete. The purpose of this report is for Members to agree the main modifications which are necessary to make the plan sound and thereby adoptable. The report and appendices outline the modifications proposed to the Plan for Members comment and agreement. In particular, the report deals with the additional allocations necessary to meet a housing target of 13,192 dwellings to 2031 (776 dwellings per annum) and a 5-year supply of housing land as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. The report takes Members' through the context and rationale for the proposed approach toward allocating sites and the alternatives open to them. The report also highlights the other main modifications being proposed to the Plan, whilst officers will report at the meeting on the findings and way forward following the recent consultation on proposed Local Green Spaces.

Issued on Wednesday, 4 May 2016

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact DEMOCRATIC SERVICES on 01795 417330**. To find out more about the work of the Local Development Framework Panel, please visit www.swale.gov.uk

Director of Corporate Services, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

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Local Development Framework Panel		Agenda Item: 6
Meeting Date	19 May 2016	
Report Title	Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan – Examiner’s Report and next steps	
Cabinet Member	Cllr Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning	
SMT Lead	Kathryn Carr, Director of Regeneration	
Head of Service	James Freeman, Head of Development Services	
Lead Officer	James Freeman, Head of Development Services	
Key Decision	Yes	
Classification	Open	
Forward Plan	Reference number: N/A	
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree to accept the modifications to the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Examiner’s Report (Appendix I); 2. Agree that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the provision made by or under Sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004; 3. Agree to publicise the decision to accept the Examiner’s recommendations; and 4. Approve the organisation of a local referendum to cover the Faversham Town Council area. 	

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to formally receive the report of the Independent Examination into the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Development Plan, to endorse and make the recommended minor modifications to the Plan, to agree to publicise the Council’s decision (a decision statement), and to approve the organisation of a local referendum.
- 1.2 The Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to an independent examination, and the Borough Council has now received the Report of the Examination into the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan by the Independent Examiner (see Appendix I).
- 1.3 The Borough Council’s role is to ensure that the process and procedures have been followed, and that the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with the Local Plan.

2 Background

- 2.1 Faversham Town Council has been undertaking work on the Neighbourhood Plan since October 2011. They were part of the Government's Neighbourhood Planning Vanguard Scheme, and Swale BC was awarded £20k to assist with the development of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 The request by Faversham Town Council that land at Faversham Creek be designated as a Neighbourhood Plan area was confirmed on 20 February 2014, by Swale BC, under Part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 2.3 The six week regulation 16 consultation took place across May/June 2014, and the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to SBC in November 2014.
- 2.4 The Council, in consultation with Faversham Town Council, appointed Timothy Jones, Barrister, FCI Arb, as the Independent Examiner. He decided that a Public Hearing was required. This was held between 5 and 7 October 2015.
- 2.5 On 4 April 2016 Swale BC received the Independent Examiner's Report on the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. The report concluded that with some modifications, the Plan should proceed to referendum, the referendum area being the town of Faversham.

The Examiner's Report

- 2.6 The Examiner had to:
 - decide whether the Plan complied with the provisions set out in the Act with regard to whether the correct process had been followed (Sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004);
 - decide whether the Plan met the 'Basic Conditions' contained in the Act; and
 - make recommendations as to whether the Plan should be submitted to referendum.
- 2.7 The Examiner said that he: "...considers the Draft NP to have a clear structure, being sensibly divided into seven appropriate sections". He also commends it for being "...well written, logical, clear, appropriately concise and intelligible to a reasonably intelligent lay reader with no expertise in town and country planning." This is testament to the hard work and dedication of all of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and the consultant who prepared the Plan.
- 2.8 The Examiner recommended 27 modifications to the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. The most significant modifications are the addition of an Archaeology Policy in the Creek-wide section, and changes to the site-specific policy for site 5, Swan Quay.

- 2.9 The Examiner states clearly in his report that: “My recommended modifications are those that I consider need to be made to secure that the Draft NDP meets these basic conditions, to meet the statutory requirement to specify a plan period and to correct errors.” (Paragraph 39, Examiner’s Report.)
- 2.10 This means that unless Swale BC amends the draft Plan in order to reflect the Examiner’s recommendations, the Plan would not meet the ‘basic conditions’ and the legal requirements and could not proceed to referendum.
- 2.11 Swale BC, as the local planning authority, must now consider whether to accept the Examiner’s recommendations. Officers are content with the modifications suggested, and agree with the Examiner that they make the Neighbourhood Plan acceptable in terms of meeting the basic conditions and the statutory requirements. As set out earlier, if Swale BC do not accept these modifications, the Plan cannot proceed to referendum.
- 2.12 If Swale BC decides to accept the Examiner’s recommendations it must then publish its decision, called a Decision Statement. This must be sent to Faversham Town Council, and to anyone who has asked to be notified of progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. Swale BC must then organise and hold the referendum.

The Referendum

- 2.13 The Counting Officer (Returning Officer) of Swale BC is responsible for making arrangements for the referendum to take place. The referendum will be for residents only, and the Examiner confirmed that the area to be covered by the referendum will be the Town of Faversham, i.e. the Faversham Town Council area.
- 2.14 At least 28 working days before the referendum, the Council must ensure the relevant statements and documents are published on our website.
- 2.15 If more than half of those voting are in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, Swale BC must bring it into force as soon as reasonably practical.
- 2.16 Planning officers are currently working closely with colleagues in Democratic Services to make arrangements for the referendum. Given the current workload of the latter team, with the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May and the EU Referendum in June, and that school holidays are best avoided for any ballot, the earliest time that a referendum could be held would be September/October 2016.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 In the light of the above, it is therefore recommended that Members:
- (i) agree to accept the modifications to the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Examiner's Report (Appendix I);
 - (ii) agree that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the basic conditions and complies with the provision made by or under Sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004;
 - (iii) agree to publicise the decision to accept the Examiner's recommendations; and
 - (iv) approve the organisation of a local referendum to cover the Faversham Town Council area.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Swale BC could decide that it is not satisfied that the Plan, with the Independent Examiner's modifications, meets the legal requirements and basic conditions, and so refuse to pursue the Plan further. However, there is no evidence to justify such an action, and it would result in all the good work done to date being negated. As such this option is not recommended.
- 4.2 Swale BC could propose to make a change to the Plan that differs from the Examiner's recommendations. However, even a modest change to the detail of the Examiner's recommendations, raises the risk that the Plan would not meet the 'basic conditions', and so it could not proceed to referendum and/or it would raise the risk of a legal challenge.
- 4.3 The Plan will only meet the legal requirements and 'basic conditions' if the Examiner's recommendations are accepted. Consequently, the recommendations in paragraph 3.11 are the most appropriate way forward.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Extensive consultation has taken place throughout both the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, and at the statutory stages. The Examiner stated in his report that: "FTC took public consultation seriously and that sufficient consultation resulted from this approach....I also note that a particularly substantial number of local residents made representations in respect of the Plan. If there had been any failure in consultation, I would have been satisfied that it would not have caused substantial prejudice. The consultation met the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 ("the General Regulations")." (Para.6, Examination Report.)

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	This supports the Council's corporate priorities of a borough and a community to be proud of.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>Undertaking the referendum will have both financial and resource implications for the Council. However, the Council can now apply for a £20,000 grant from DCLG due to the successful completion of the neighbourhood planning examination. This money is intended to support both the examination and referendum stage.</p> <p>Democratic Service's estimate that a stand-alone election for the Neighbourhood Plan will cost around £23,000 to administer. There is money allocated in the Planning Policy budget to meet the shortfall from the DCLG grant.</p>
Legal and Statutory	<p>The process of accepting the Examiner's Report and moving forward to a referendum is set out in Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and complies with the provisions made by or under Sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, and in the Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>The rules covering all aspects of organising and conducting the polls are in the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and 2014) and the Neighbourhood Planning (Prescribed Dates) Regulations 2012.</p>
Crime and Disorder	None.
Sustainability	The submitted Neighbourhood Plan was subject to both a Sustainability Appraisal and a Habitat Regulations Assessment. These were published alongside the submission Neighbourhood Plan, and were subject to consultation and discussion at the Examination.
Health and Wellbeing	None.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None.
Equality and Diversity	<p>Paragraph 38 of the Examiner's Report states that: <i>"I welcome the recognition of the need to comply with legislation designed to benefit disabled people and the references in policy to access for disabled people. This shows a recognition of duties under the Equality Act 2010, the principle of equality inherent in EU law and the human rights of disabled people."</i></p>

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Report of the Examination into the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan by the Independent Examiner
- Appendix II: Recommended Modifications table

8 Background Papers

8.1 The following background papers are provided (as hyperlinks):

- the neighbourhood plan proposal (including a map of the area to which the plan relates);
- the consultation statement; and
- the basic conditions statement.

FAVERSHAM CREEK NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

(Submission Version November 2014)

**Report of the Examination into the Faversham Creek
Neighbourhood Plan**

Timothy Jones, Barrister, FCI Arb,

Independent Examiner



No 5 Chambers,

Birmingham - London - Bristol - Leicester

April 2016.

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Report of the Examination into the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

1. Introduction

Neighbourhood planning

1. The Localism Act 2011 Part 6 Chapter 3 introduced neighbourhood planning, including provision for neighbourhood development plans. A neighbourhood development plan should reflect the needs and priorities of the community concerned and should set out a positive vision for the future, setting planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications. If approved by a referendum and made by the local planning authority, such plans form part of the Development Plan for the neighbourhood concerned. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

2. This report concerns the Submission Version of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Development Plan (“the Draft NDP”).

Appointment and role

3. Swale Borough Council (“SBC”), with the agreement of Faversham Town Council (“FTC”), has appointed me, to examine the Draft NDP. I am a member of the planning bar and am independent of SBC, FTC, and of those who have made representations in respect of the Draft NDP. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by it.

4. My examination has involved considering written submissions, a hearing at the Alexander Centre Faversham, an accompanied site visit and unaccompanied site visits at different states of the tide. The site visits included the neighbourhood plan area and neighbouring parts of the town of Faversham.

5. My role may be summarised briefly as to consider whether certain statutory requirements have been met, to consider whether the Draft NDP meets the basic conditions, to consider human rights issues, to recommend which of the three options specified in paragraph 13 below applies and, if appropriate, to consider the referendum area. I must act proportionately, recognising that Parliament has intended the neighbourhood plan process to be relatively inexpensive.

2. Preliminary Matters

Public consultation

6. I am satisfied that the Consultation Statement and the summary of consultation on page 13 of the draft NDP are accurate and that FTC took public consultation seriously and that sufficient consultation resulted from this approach. I bear in mind that town councillors are democratically accountable, subject to a code of conduct and likely to be in close contact with the community they represent. I also note that a particularly substantial number of local residents made representations in respect of the plan. If there had been any failure in consultation, I would have been satisfied that it would not have caused substantial prejudice. The consultation met the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (“the General Regulations”).

Other statutory requirements

7. I am satisfied of the following matters:

- (1) The Draft NDP area is that part of Faversham Creek and the land adjoining it shown on the plan on its page 15. FTC is authorised to act in respect of this area (Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (“TCPA”) s61F (1) as read with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“PCPA”) s38C (2)(a));
- (2) The Draft NDP does not include provision about development that is excluded development (as defined in TCPA s61K), and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area (PCPA s38B (1));
- (3) No other neighbourhood development plan has been made for the neighbourhood area (PCPA s38B (2)); and
- (4) There is no conflict with PCPA s38A and s38B (TCPA Sch 4B para 8(1)(b) and PCPA s38C (5)(b)) other than mentioned in the next paragraph.

8. The Draft NDP does not specify the period for which it is to have effect. This is a statutory requirement that must be complied with.¹ I recommend specifying a period that corresponds with the emerging Swale Local Plan. In any event it should not specify a termination date later than 2031. The exact detail is a matter for FTC.

Recommended modification 1

The draft NDP must specify a period, either 2016-2031, or 2016 to such year (no later than 2031) as FTC considers appropriate.

¹ PCPA s38B(1)(a).

3. The Extent and Limits of an Examiner's Role

9. I am required to consider whether the Draft NDP meets the basic conditions specified in TCPA Sch 4B para 8(2) as varied for neighbourhood development plans, namely:

(a) Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the Plan;

(d)² The making of the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;

(e) The making of the Plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area);

(f) The making of the Plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and

(g) Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the Plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the Plan.

10. There is one prescribed basic condition:³ *“The making of the neighbourhood development plan is not likely to have a significant effect on a European site (as defined in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010) or a European offshore marine site (as defined in the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects)”*.

11. The combined effect of TCPA Sch 4B para 8(6) and para 10(3)(b) and the Human Rights Act 1998 means that I must consider whether the Draft NDP is compatible with Convention rights. ‘Convention rights’ are defined in the Human Rights Act 1998 as (a) Articles 2 to 12 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (“the Convention”), (b) Articles 1 to 3 of its First Protocol, and (c) Article 1 of its Thirteenth Protocol, as read with Articles 16 to 18 of the Convention. The Convention rights that are most likely to be relevant to town and country planning are those under the Convention’s Article 6(1), 8 and 14 and under its First Protocol Article 1.

12. In my examination of the substantial merits of the Draft NDP, I may not consider matters other than those specified in the last three paragraphs. In particular I may not consider whether any other test, such as the soundness test provided for in respect of examinations under PCPA s20, is met. Rather it is clear that Parliament has decided not to use the soundness test, but to use the, to some extent, less demanding tests in the basic conditions. It is not my role to write or to rewrite a neighbourhood development plan to reflect my personal views.

² The omission of (b) and (c) results from these clauses of paragraph 8(2) not applying to neighbourhood development plans (PCPA s38C (5)(d)).

³ Sch 2 of the General Regulations prescribes this.

13. Having considered the basic conditions and human rights, I have three options, which I must exercise in the light of my findings. These are: (1) that the Draft NDP proceeds to a referendum as submitted; (2) that the Draft NDP is modified to meet basic conditions and then the modified version proceeds to a referendum; or (3) that the Draft NDP does not proceed to referendum. If I determine that either of the first two options is appropriate, I must also consider whether referendum area should be extended. My power to recommend modifications is limited by statute in the following terms:

The only modifications that may be recommended are—

(a) modifications that the examiner considers need to be made to secure that the draft order meets the basic conditions mentioned in paragraph 8(2),

(b) modifications that the examiner considers need to be made to secure that the draft order is compatible with the Convention rights,

(c) modifications that the examiner considers need to be made to secure that the draft order complies with the provision made by or under sections 61E(2), 61J and 61L,

(d) modifications specifying a period under section 61L(2)(b) or (5), and

(e) modifications for the purpose of correcting errors.⁴

14. The word “only” prevents me recommending any other modifications. That includes any proposed ‘minor modification’ that does not fall within one of the above five categories. My report therefore concentrates on the Submission draft and not on later proposed ‘minor modifications’. I should add that I would not describe several these as minor and I have some sympathy for Ms Taylor’s concern as to lack of consultation in respect of these. While I understand the reasons why FTC, SBC and English Heritage (“EH”) (now Historic England) agreed their Statement of Common Ground, the word “only” in the statutory provision does not allow me discretion in the matter. The mere fact that a modification is desirable is not a sufficient ground to recommend it. If they consider it appropriate FTC and SBC may use the Statement of Common Ground or a rewriting of it without substantial alteration as a background paper. For the reasons given below I have accepted the proposed new policy HE4 and some of the proposed wording in respect of Site 02 Ordnance Wharf and Site 05 Swan Quay.

4 Consideration of Objections

15. I have given all objections careful consideration, but have not felt it necessary to comment on most of them. Rather in accordance with the statutory requirement I have concentrated on giving reasons for my recommendations.⁵ Where I am required to consider

⁴ TCPA Sch 4B para 10(3).

⁵ TCPA Sch 4B para 10(6).

the effect of the whole Draft NDP, I have, of course, borne it all in mind, including, where appropriate, recommended modifications.

16. Underlying many objections is a familiar problem in the field of town and country planning: a tension (and sometimes a conflict) between those who wish to retain and restore historic aspects of an area and those who consider that this is impracticable, or practicable only to a limited extent. The gist of the disagreements is briefly summarised in the middle two paragraphs on the second column of the Draft NDP's page 13. It is not my role to determine the relative merits of this in a broad sense; nor is it my role to say, whether, if I had been responsible for drawing up the Draft NDP, I would have reconciled the differences in the same way. Rather it is my role to consider the basic conditions and other matters specified above. These conditions are considered more fully in section 6 below. They include national and adopted local strategic heritage policies. Such policies are made in a context that includes statutory provisions, including those under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the LBA").

17. There were some criticisms of the past actions of various bodies and individuals. It is not my role to judge these.

5. Public Hearing

18. The general rule is that the examination of the issues by the examiner is to take the form of the consideration of the written representations. However an examiner must cause a hearing to be held for the purpose of receiving oral representations about a particular issue in any case where the examiner considers that the consideration of oral representations is necessary to ensure (1) adequate examination of the issue or (2) a person has a fair chance to put a case. The latter does not apply: No persons have shown themselves unable to put their case in writing. In particular, there is no reason to believe that any person who wished to make representations lacked adequate literacy in the English language. Having considered the written material, I concluded that (1) applied in respect of certain matters and issued guidance and directions in respect of this. The public hearing took place over three days in Faversham.

19. I would like to thank all those who participated in the hearing. They did so in a courteous and intelligent manner and impressed me with their knowledge and dedication. Although I have not found it necessary to detail the extensive representatives, I have found them helpful, have taken time considering them and, to the extent that they relate to my role, borne all in mind. While I have found that it is appropriate for the NDP to continue to allow some development, I have been impressed by the level of local interest in and commitment to the area's built heritage and find this reassuring for the future of those sites that most merit preservation.

6. The Basic Conditions and Human Rights

Regard to national policies and advice

20. The first basic condition requires that I consider whether it is appropriate that the plan should be made “*having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State*”. A requirement to have regard to policies and advice does not require that such policy and advice must necessarily be followed, but it is intended to have and does have a significant effect.

21. The principal document in which national planning policy is contained is the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) (“the Framework”) and I have borne that in mind. I have also borne in mind national Planning Practice Guidance (“NPPG”), particularly its section on neighbourhood planning, and the Written Ministerial Statement of 25th March 2015 (“the WMS”).

Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development

22. The second basic condition means that I must consider whether the making of the Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Unless the Draft NDP, or the Draft NDP as modified, contributes to sustainable development, it cannot proceed to a referendum. This condition relates to the making of the Plan as a whole. It does not require that each policy in it contribute to sustainable development.

23. The bulk of the Framework constitutes guidance on sustainable development. As its para 6 says, “*The policies in paragraphs 18 to 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government’s view of what sustainable development... means in practice for the planning system.*”

General conformity with the development plan’s strategic policies

24. The third basic condition means that I must consider whether the Draft NDP is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority. The development plan means the adopted development plan, not any emerging plan. This accords with normal usage in planning statutes and has been confirmed by Supperstone J in BDW Trading (t/a Barratt Homes) v Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council, where he said: ⁶

... the only statutory requirement imposed by Condition (e) is that the neighbourhood plan as a whole should be in conformity with the plan as a whole. Whether or not there

⁶ [2014] EWHC 1470, para 82.

was any tension between one policy in the Neighbourhood Plan and one element of the emerging Local Plan was not a matter for the Examiner to determine.

25. Lewis J quoted this without criticism in R. (Gladman Developments Ltd) v Aylesbury Vale District Council.⁷ Even if I had any doubts about this (and on the contrary I am of the respectful opinion that it is correct), I would be obliged to follow it. The same applies to SBC and FTC.

26. There is no conformity requirement in respect of supplementary policy.

27. The adjective ‘*general*’ allows a degree of (but not unlimited) flexibility and requires the exercise of planning judgement. This condition only applies to strategic policies. In assessing whether a policy is strategic, one must bear in mind the advice in NPPG para 074.⁸

28. The relevant part of the development plan is the Swale Borough Local Plan (“SBLP”), which was adopted in February 2008. The saved policies of plans relating to waste and minerals are not relevant. There is also an emerging Local Plan that is expected to run until 2031. As explained above basic condition (e) does not apply to this. Of SBLP’s policies, policies B1 and AAP2 are particularly important in the context of the issues raised by representations

29. SBLP’s Local Plan policy B1 states:

“Supporting and Retaining Existing Employment Land and Businesses

1. *Land and buildings currently in employment use will be retained for that use unless it is: inappropriately located for any employment use, and having an unacceptable environmental impact in an area; or demonstrated by expert advice that the site is no longer suitable for any employment use; or demonstrated by market testing that there is insufficient demand to justify its retention for any employment use; or allocated in the Plan for other purposes.*

In cases involving a change of use or redevelopment for residential purposes, the Council will additionally require proposals to: (a) demonstrate, by reference to 1a) to d) above, that a mixed use approach to the site, involving a viable level of replacement or alternative employment provision, is not appropriate; and (b) that there is no conflict with Policy SH1.

2. *Proposals for the expansion of existing businesses on-site, or onto adjoining land, will be permitted provided the expansion proposal would not result in a loss in the supply of small sites or units which are specifically intended for start-up businesses. Where expansion would*

⁷ [2014] EWHC 4323 (Admin), [2015] JPL 656.

⁸ NPPG, Neighbourhood Planning para 074, Reference ID: 41-074-20140306.

result in the development of greenfield land, mitigation measures will be required to minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and landscape.”

30. I am satisfied that this is a strategic policy. The NDP must therefore be in general conformity with it.

31. SBLP’s policy AAP2 states:

“Faversham Creekside

An Area Action Plan is designated for Faversham Creekside, as shown on the Proposals Map. Within this area the Borough Council will seek to ensure that it continues to function as a place of special interest and activity with strong associations with the water, and will specifically encourage the regeneration of the creek basin for commercial and tourism purposes, including use of the basin and its wharfage for historic craft. Planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would result in the loss of land or buildings suitable for employment uses or, on appropriate sites, would not involve active use or management of the creek itself. All development proposals will:

- 1. maintain or enhance a mix of uses and activity that respect the maritime, industrial and residential character, as appropriate to the varied parts of the AAP area;*
- 2. maintain or enhance an environment appropriate to enable traditional waterside activities to flourish, including, where appropriate, financially contributing toward improving and maintaining the navigability of the creek channel and its infrastructure, including providing wharfage and moorings;*
- 3. preserve or enhance the area's special archaeological, architectural and historic character, including its open spaces; and*
- 4. avoid any significant adverse environmental impacts and where possible enhance the biodiversity interest of neighbouring internationally designated sites for nature conservation.*

The Borough Council will expect development to:

- (a) preserve or enhance landmark and other important buildings, waterside structures and details;*
- (b) preserve and create access to the waterside, including wharfage and moorings, and where appropriate provide for a creekside walk;*
- (c) by use of its grain, scale, form and theme of materials, be creekside in character;*
- (d) retain existing greenspace and, where appropriate provide new areas; and*
- (e) retain or enhance existing townscapes, including those in the views of higher ground.*

A Supplementary Planning Document will be prepared and adopted by the Council to guide matters relating to the Area Action Plan.”

32. I am satisfied that this is a strategic policy. The NDP should therefore be in general conformity with it.

EU obligations

33. The fourth basic condition requires me to consider whether the Draft NDP breaches or is otherwise incompatible with, EU obligations. I have in particular considered the following Directives: the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) (“the SEA Directive”); the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU); the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC); the Wild Birds Directive (2009/147/EC); the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC); the Air Quality Directive (2008/50/EC); and the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). I am satisfied that no issue arises in respect of equality under general principles of EU law or any EU equality directive.

34. Faversham Creek Trust and Brents Community Association consider the SEA should have been prepared earlier than it was (June 2015). I agree. In some cases that could cause serious problems. However, I note that no participants at the hearing sought an adjournment to enable them to deal with the SEA more fully. In the light of the need to act proportionately, to avoid delay unless necessary and to avoid extra costs, I did not consider it appropriate to adjourn the hearing of my own motion without any application from any of the parties, all of whom were clearly well able to put their cases. In this case I consider that the late preparation of the report has not resulted in the Draft NDP being different from what it would otherwise have been and I do not consider that any party has suffered prejudice as a result. On the contrary the very extensive public involvement throughout this matter has ensured compliance with both the Aarhus Convention and the article 6(1) Convention right.

35. I am satisfied that the making of the NDP would not breach, and be otherwise incompatible with, EU obligations.

European site and European offshore marine site

36. The Swale, including most of the creek beyond Iron Wharf/Brents Boatyard is a designated a Ramsar site and a Special Protection Area (SPA).⁹ I am satisfied that the making of the NDP would not be likely to have a significant effect on these or any other European site or European offshore marine.

⁹ SEA para 7.3.3.

Human Rights

37. It is also necessary to consider whether the Draft NDP would cause any Convention right to be breached. English Planning law in general complies with the Convention. This matter can also be dealt with briefly in advance of detailed consideration of the contents of the Draft NDP. I have considered whether anything in the Draft NDP would cause a breach of any Convention right. In particular I have considered the Convention's Articles 6(1), 8 and 14 and its First Protocol Article 1. Nothing in my examination of the Draft NDP indicates any breach of a Convention right. It is therefore not necessary to consider human rights in the parts of this report that deal with specific parts of the Draft NDP.

38. I welcome the recognition of the need to comply with legislation designed to benefit disabled people¹⁰ and the references in policy to access for disabled people.¹¹ This shows a recognition of duties under the Equality Act 2010, the principle of equality inherent in EU law and the human rights of disabled people.

39. It will be apparent from the above that, having been satisfied in respect of basic conditions (f) and (g) and human rights, I have needed to concentrate on basic conditions (a), (d) and (e). My recommended modifications are those that I consider need to be made to secure that the Draft NDP meets these basic conditions, to meet the statutory requirement to specify a plan period and to correct errors.

7. The Draft NDP

40. The Draft NDP has a clear structure, being sensibly divided into seven appropriate sections: Vision + Objectives; Background to the Plan; Urban Analysis; Context of the Creek; Creekwide Policies; Site Specific Policies; and Plan Monitoring. I commend it for being well written, logical, clear, appropriately concise and intelligible to a reasonably intelligent lay reader with no expertise in town and country planning.

41. The following sections of the report consider whether modifications are needed to make the Draft NDP comply with basic conditions (a), (d) and (e). I have concluded that some modification is necessary, but that with this, the Draft NDP can proceed to a referendum and that, if passed by that, it would be appropriate that the NDP should be made. My recommended modifications are in Appendix A. I have not in this report given detailed written consideration to every part of the Draft NDP. I have, before writing it, considered the whole of it. Minor self-explanatory corrections are only mentioned in Appendix A.

42. The Draft NDP says:¹²

¹⁰ Pages 21 and 37 – the statutory references are out of date – see Appendix A.

¹¹ Pages 37 and 44.

¹² Page 19, 1st column.

“The neighbourhood plan must not be treated as a collection of individual development sites. Instead, it must be seen as a neighbourhood in its own right, one that contributes to the overall success of Faversham town as a whole.”

43. I share that view and recognise that it is necessary to consider the draft NDP as a whole. Nonetheless like the Draft NDP I shall, while keeping this in mind, consider the sites in turn both because this is the practicable approach and because the sites vary considerably.

8. The first four sections

44. I have no concerns in respect of the first three sections and no concerns of substance in respect of the fourth section - minor matters that need correcting are in Appendix A.

9. Creekwide Policies

45. While the Draft NDP mentions archaeology in its text, it has no policy to deal with this. I have had regard to national policies contained in the Framework’s paras 128, 139, 169 and at two points in its Glossary. I have also considered and accept the potential for archaeology agreed between FTC, SBC and EH. In these circumstances I do not consider that it would be appropriate to make an NDP in an area with such considerable archaeological potential without a policy covering archaeology. A proposed policy was included in the Statement of Common Ground and Schedule of Minor Modifications agreed by FTC, SBC and EH. That has been available to members of the general public and was considered at the hearing. I see no reason to depart from it significantly. I therefore recommend modification to add it.

Recommendation 6

On page 27 after policy HE4 insert a new policy

“HE4. New development will be designed to preserve nationally important archaeological remains in-situ. Archaeological remains of local or regional significance will be either preserved in situ or subject to archaeological investigation so as to advance understanding of the significance of archaeological remains that provide evidence of the development of the Creek’s historic maritime and industrial uses. The preservation of evidence of the area’s development during the Middle Ages and of the development of the Faversham gunpowder and boat-building industries will be given a particularly high priority. Development proposals should be informed by discussion with the archaeological adviser used by Swale Borough Council and, where appropriate, by a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation in order to determine the nature, condition and extent of archaeological remains that may be present and the appropriate response to these.”

46. The Design Quality policies do not conflict with any basic condition, the Framework, the development plan’s strategic policies, or the WMS. I do not recommend any modification to them or to any part of page 28.

47. It is necessary to define the Local Green Spaces clearly. At present the Draft NDP does this partly through the plan on page 46. While the rest is clear from the text and on the ground on my site visits, that is not sufficient. I am satisfied that these green spaces satisfy the Framework’s paras 76 and 77. It is therefore necessary to include a plan showing the Local Green Spaces and to modify policy NE2.

Recommendations 8 and 9

Replace policy NE2 with

“NE2 The green spaces to either side of the Albion Taverna and between the Upper Brents and Crab Island and shown on the plan on page ... shall be designated as Local Green Spaces.”

Add a plan that shows the designated Local Green Spaces specified on page 33 column 1.

48. The last sentence on page 36 states what a future policy of FTC and SBC will do. An NDP cannot do that. Any such policy would require consultation with representatives of those who live in vessels.

Recommendation 10

Delete the last sentence on the second column of page 36

49. The reference to “DDA compliant” in policy INF3 is out of date. The Equality Act 2010 repealed and replaced the whole of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Recommendation 11

Replace policy INF3 with the following:

“INF3 Any new road and footpath surface treatments and street furniture, including signage, will be in accordance with the standards specified in the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy, and shall be comply with legislation that protects disabled people.”

10. Site Specific Policies

50. The section on site-specific policies is the most controversial, mainly for the reason stated in paragraph 16 above. It requires the most detailed consideration.

Site 01 The Purifier

51. I was impressed by the use for boatbuilding and for training in maritime skills to which the Purifier Building is being put. I was also impressed with the building itself. This

use contributes to sustainability¹³ and should be protected both from development on the site and from nearby development that might cause problems for the building continuing its present use. That use is a mixed use that includes B2 use, some of which is in the open air. Bearing in mind my accompanied site visit, I accept Ms Akhurst's evidence in respect of use. Whether that B2 use is currently lawful is not clear; but, in any event, I have no reason to believe that the current use would be enforced against. Rather the likelihood is that, even if not lawful now, it will become lawful over time. It is important that the draft NDP acknowledges this B2 use. Otherwise future neighbours might allege that any B2 use was new. Policy P1 is too restrictive and would create an inaccurate impression for future decision-makers and I recommend its modification.

Recommendation

Replace policy P1 with the following:

"P1 The building and its curtilage are to be used for small business workshops, together with associated educational uses (mixed use B1, B2 and D1)."

53. It should be noted that as a mixed use, change of use within, for example, B2 is not automatically permitted by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.

Site 02 Ordnance Wharf

54. The site is derelict and unused. While I understand the desire to limit its use to traditional maritime activities I am not persuaded that this is realistic in this particular location. In particular, even if I felt that it was within my power to recommend the proposed minor modification to policy OW1 (which I do not), I would have no reason to believe that this would be viable. On the other hand I am concerned that any development on this site should not cause problems to the Purifer in the form of complaints about noise and other nuisance from the latter. This would be undesirable in itself and also contrary to the desire to retain employment uses contained in SBLP policies B1 and AAP2. At the hearing Ms Taylor for the landowner assured me that it would be possible to carry out development on Ordnance Wharf that would not suffer nuisance from the Purifer Building and referred to sketch plan SK03 rev C, which shows the built development on the far side of Ordnance Wharf from the Purifer Building. I accept her assurance as to possibility, but consider that achieving this would involve considerable care in development management.

55. I recommend that policy OW5 and the related text on page 42 be strengthened to reflect this.

¹³ Particularly in the light of the shortfall in jobs in Faversham: SEA para 7.7.1.

Recommendations 15 and 18

Replace the 5th indent on the second column on page 42 with the following:

“New development must have regard for the presence of the adjacent Purifier Building and respond in an appropriate manner to the scale, massing and materials of this existing built form. Modern designs that contrast with the Purifier will be encouraged, as will more traditional designs — both approaches need to be of high quality design. New development must also have regard for the existing uses the adjacent Purifier Building and through location, sound insulation and external and internal layout avoid adverse impact on those uses.”

Replace policy OW5 with the following:

“OW5 Any new development must have regard to the presence of the Purifier site adjacent and the impact new development will have upon the setting and must avoid adverse impact on use of this existing building.”

56. I am also concerned in the light of government policy on archaeology that it would be inappropriate not to draw attention to the site’s archaeological potential. While not all of the suggested ‘minor modification’ is needed, it does have the advantage of having been available for public consideration.

Recommendation 14

A new paragraph should be inserted after the first paragraph in column 1 of page 42 in the following terms:

“Archaeological investigation has identified a section of stone wharf walling with a timber staircase leading down to the Creek and the stone base of a crane, each of which is believed to be evidence of the 18th-century gunpowder wharf.”

Recommendation 17

An eighth indent should be added on page 42.

“Any new development proposal should be informed by further archaeological investigation, including areas that were not accessible for previous investigations. New development should be designed to preserve and better reveal the significance of archaeological remains that illustrate the historic role of the wharf as a part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works, including the previously identified sections of 18th Century wharf and crane base, which should be included in publicly accessible space where practical.”

Recommendation 19

A new policy OW8 should be added on page 43

“OW8 New development should be designed to preserve or enhance evidence of the site’s historic role as part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works as wharfs, including provision for conservation of the 18th Century wharf walls and stone crane base with a wharf edge space and revealing identified archaeological remains as publicly accessible space, where practical. New buildings must be designed to avoid the loss of archaeological remains including by the use of appropriate construction techniques.”

Site 03 BMM Weston

57. This was a relatively uncontroversial site and I have no reason to take a different view on the acceptability of the proposals for it. I have not added the proposed archaeological policy since I do not consider that this site needs such a policy in addition to the Creekwide policy. I recognise that there is a tension between the proposals and SBLP policy B1, but have concluded that the degree of conflict (after allowance is made for my recommending strengthening of policies to protect employment uses in sites 01 and 05) would not such as to breach the general conformity requirement. It is not my role to determine whether an old planning permission was commenced. The draft NDP is correct in saying that it was not constructed. I do not recommend any modification in respect of site 03.

Site 04 Frank and Whittome

58. This is also a relatively uncontroversial site. I do not recommend any modification in respect of it.

Site 05 Swan Quay

59. Site 05 is in a particularly sensitive location. As the plan on page 46 shows, it is to the north of a critical cluster of heritage assets (TS Hazard with undesignated heritage assets) and existing local landmarks, next to the Creek and at a location that is clearly visible from the publicly accessible Brents Swing Bridge and the proposed (in my opinion rightly) Designated Local Green Space at Front Bents. Two listed buildings, TS Hazard (built in the 15th century as a town warehouse and grade II*) and the Faversham Creek Hotel (18th-century, grade II) are very close to it and within the site the early 19th-century Chandlery building is listed grade II. It contains a maritime use (sail-making) in a modern building that is in an appropriate style for its location and that contributes to jobs in a town that has a shortfall of jobs.¹⁴ I am not persuaded that the possibility that somewhere might be found for this in new development is a likelihood or a risk worth taking. As such, the loss of this employment use

¹⁴ SEA para 7.7.1.

would conflict with SBLP policies B1 and AAP2 and would be of sufficient importance to prevent the NDP being in general conformity with the development plan.

60. In considering this site, I have had regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This includes:

- The Framework's 10th core principle, "*conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations*";¹⁵
- The special position of designated heritage asset's in the Framework's paragraph 65; and
- The Framework's specific advice on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment;¹⁶

61. I also note

- The fact that the LBA in general and the general duties under its ss 66 and 72 underpin government and local policy in respect of listed buildings and their settings and of conservation areas;
- The references in the SBLP to Faversham's "*outstanding range and quality of historic buildings*" and its "*rich architectural and historical heritage reflecting its naval and maritime history, its Roman and medieval legacy and its industrial heritage and archaeology*";¹⁷
- The protection for existing buildings provided in SBLP's policy AAP2's "*preserve or enhance landmark and other important buildings, waterside structures and details*"; and
- The fact that EH had serious reservations about the appropriateness of the development proposed.¹⁸

62. The proposals,¹⁹ which I recognise are illustrative, that Ms Taylor showed me for redevelopment of this site, did not impress me. Rather they illustrated the risk of gentrification of a part of the Creek that maintains something of its old character. I do not consider that residential development of this site would occur without gentrification. I recognise that, for some people, more open views of the creek down Quay Lane would be attractive, but this factor does not begin to outweigh my concerns about the historic damage of the proposals.

¹⁵ Framework, para 17.

¹⁶ Framework, paras 126 to 141.

¹⁷ Para 2.5

¹⁸ Letter from English Heritage South East of 18.12.2015, page 7.

¹⁹ Dwg 06900-SK-118 Rev C.

63. I consider that the first two paragraphs on page 47's column 1 are inadequate for this particularly sensitive site. The suggested 'minor modification' gives a better and adequate description, which corresponds with my opinion following my site visits. Accordingly I recommend modification to replace the existing text.

Recommendation 20

Replace the first two paragraphs on page 47's column 1 with the following:

“This site was formerly used by the Frank and Whittome Joinery Company and comprises four buildings:

The first, the Chandlery building set at right angles to the Creek, is listed grade II and is an early 19th-century industrial building last used as an office. Attached to the rear of this is the second building, a shed dating from the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries, which has been re-clad in weatherboarding to the south and west sides. This is currently vacant, but as an attached building would require listed building consent for any alterations that would affect its contribution to the listed building's historic or architectural interest.

The third building is an open shed with a metal-trussed roof with a long elevation to Conduit Street with attached modern offices built in the 1990s. As an industrial building illustrating the working history of this part of the Conservation Area, the form, shape and scale of the open sided shed makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The fourth building is a modern building built for the joinery company (c. 1990), constructed in brick and weatherboard and now occupied by a sail maker. The low level of the building, its sensitive choice of materials (preserving an industrial aesthetic) and its position set back from the Creek's edge creating a wharf space, means this building has integrated well with the Conservation Area and retained a distinct working edge to the Creek with views over it to the surrounding historic buildings.

The site provides a long section of timber wharf fronting the Creek with an open space of quay behind, each of which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area as part of the historic working Creekside. A slipway within the site provides one of the few points of access for boat launching in this side.

The site lies adjacent to the medieval Town Quay and close to the Grade II listed 15th-century warehouse now 'TS Hazard'. The site is likely to have formed a part of the Abbey wharfs from the medieval period and is known to have included a dock in the late 18th Century. The potential for a waterlogged environment and the likelihood of successive phases of wharf development, as well as development of buildings and structures for associated uses throughout the site's history creates a high potential for remains of archaeological interest and, potentially, those of national importance.”*

64. Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, I would not consider it appropriate to make the Plan if the proposals in the draft NDP in respect of Swan Quay remained. Without modification, basic conditions (a) and (e) would not be met. I would also have given considerable weight in the balance exercise basic condition (d) requires to the negative contribution to the achievement of sustainable development that these proposals would entail. However since I am recommending modification to meet basic condition (a) and (e), I need not consider the latter point more fully.

65. In addition to my rejection in principle of the approach to site 05, I do not consider that three and three and a half storey (or higher) buildings would be appropriate in this location. This is not based on public opposition,²⁰ which is not a matter for the examination stage of the draft NDP, but on my assessment of the impact of such buildings. I agree with the criticisms of such tall buildings by Mr Harrison, whose architectural and conservation expertise I note with respect.²¹ I am of course aware that there are taller buildings in other part of the Creek, but I do not consider that these set a precedent in this sensitive location.

Recommendation 21

On page 47 delete the bottom half of column 1 from and including the heading “*Suggested Redevelopments, Designs and Land Uses*” and the whole of column 2 replace with:

“The current nature of the site, including its role as part of the setting of nearby listed buildings should be preserved and enhanced.

- Land uses could include offices/workshops (Class B1), maritime general industrial (B2 limited by condition) and a gallery (Class D1) and some limited car parking, but not dwelling houses (Class C3). It may be possible to permit new building consistent with the site’s current character. If so, they should be constructed in yellow stock brickwork and slate roof with metal framed windows.*
- In the event of any substantial development on the site a Creekside walkway must be provided along the frontage of the site in front of all the buildings.*
- Moorings to be provided along the frontage suitable for a range of sizes of craft.*
- Any redevelopment will need to provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by Southern Water. There should be an adequate gap between the wastewater pumping station and development to allow odour dispersion and help prevent an unacceptable impact from vibration. Development proposals*

²⁰ Faversham Creek Trust and Brents Community Association Response to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation, page 29.

²¹ Submission of objection to Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan 15.12.2014.

must ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

• Close to this site is the junction of Quay Lane and Conduit Street. The Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy sets out a project to form a sitting-out area for the Faversham Creek Hotel and formation of a square with better quality paving, measures to encourage slower traffic including a shared surface and measures to improve the boundary treatments of adjoining sites.

The neighbourhood plan places responsibility firmly upon any applicant to demonstrate the appropriateness and suitability of their proposed design through the formal planning application process. This demonstration must be made with regard to the range of policies in this neighbourhood plan, not just the site-specific ones. It must also comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 66 and 72.”

66. For the above reasons I also recommend modification of policies SWQ1 and SWQ2.

Recommendations 22

Replace policies SWQ1 and SWQ2 with:

“SWQ1: Use classes: the site shall be used for a mix of office and workshops (Class B1) retail, maritime general industrial (Class B2 limited by condition), and may be used for a gallery (Class D1). It shall not be used for dwelling houses (Class C3).

“SWQ2 Public walkways shall be created along the Creek frontage and to the extent that is consistent with the site’s character through the site from Belvedere Road.”

67. Policy SWQ3 would remain unaltered.

68. I accept that the proposed policies SWQ4 and SWQ5 in the ‘minor modifications’ are needed.

Recommendation 23

After policy SWQ3 add the following:

“SWQ4. Existing buildings and features identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, both within the site and in its surroundings should be retained and where practical enhanced, within proposals for new development through the careful design of new buildings and landscaping and sensitive reuse of historic structures. In conformity with National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, the optimum viable use of the site will be considered as that which best sustains and reveals its historic significance as part of the Conservation Area, whilst ensuring its future maintenance.

SWQ5. Development proposals will need to be informed by a programme of archaeological assessment, possibly including evaluation, completed according to a written scheme of investigation agreed with the Swale Borough Council. The design and construction method of new development will be required to preserve nationally important remains in-situ. Where it might be agreed that archaeological remains might be removed as part of development this will need to be in accordance with a programme of archaeological works agreed with Swale Borough Council and designed to advance understanding of the significance of the archaeological assets to be lost.”

Site 06 Former Oil Depot

69. This site is currently vacant. As a former oil depot it is likely that that decontamination costs will be high. This means that any redevelopment is likely to require a use with a high land value, all the more so if the cost of a public walkway and moorings is to be met by the developer. The approach of the Draft NDP, does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any modifications.

Site 07 Former Coach Depot

70. The site is currently underused by businesses that are not maritime and do not require a waterside location. The approach of the Draft NDP, does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any modifications.

Site 08 Standard Quay

71. Site 8 includes an important collection of listed buildings: a grade II* listed building (the old granary) and also grade II listed buildings (former warehouses). These are of obvious and considerable importance both individually and as a group. The appearance of the site includes car-repair, which detracts from it, and antique, café and garden centre uses that appear to serve tourism. The approach of the Draft NDP, does not conflict with any basic condition. I have no power to follow the proposed ‘minor modifications’ to delete “*Activities associated with maritime trades are to be encouraged*” and I would not in any event consider this deletion to be appropriate in the light of SBLP policy AAP2. I do not recommend any modifications.

Site 09 Standard House

72. Standard House is a grade II listed building. Bearing the LBA s66 and my sites visits in mind I consider that the ‘minor modification’ to the fourth indent on page 54 is needed.

Recommendation 24

Replace the fourth indent in column 1 on page 54 with

“The open character of the curtilage and isolated position of the house must be maintained and enhanced. Parking in front of the building is considered inappropriate.”

73. I also agree that the ‘minor modification’ to the fifth indent on page 54, which more clearly reflects what is intended in a sensitive location, is needed.

Recommendation 25

Replace the fifth indent in column 1 on page 54 with

“To the south of Standard House, including the existing later industrial building and vacant land, there is potential for new development to provide housing of two storeys in traditional materials.”

74. Similarly I consider that the more detailed version of policy STH4 is needed.

Recommendation 26

Replace policy STH4 with

“STH4. Any new housing development must be of no more than two storeys and should be located to preserve the prominence of Standard House as a landmark on the Creekside in views along the Creek and from Standard Quay and the footpath.”

75. Subject to that, the approach of the Draft NDP, does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any other modifications.

Site 10 Fentiman’s Yard

76. This site is behind and within the setting of the old granary grade II* listed building. Any development must as matter of law comply with the LBA s66. I have considered whether this should be specified in policy, but decided that it is not necessary. The approach of the Draft NDP, does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any modifications.

Site 11 Brents Industrial Estate

77. This is not a particularly sensitive site. The approach of the Draft NDP does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any modifications.

Site 12 Iron Wharf

78. The proposed retention of this site’s existing uses is clearly of benefit. The importance of Oyster Bay House (listed grade II), an impressive landmark building is rightly

recognised. The approach of the Draft NDP does not conflict with any basic condition. I do not recommend any modifications.

11. The Referendum Area

79. The designated plan area would not be an appropriate referendum area. It is an irregular shaped area of land that to a substantial extent excludes residential areas that benefit greatly from it and whose residents relate to it. Significant effects of the draft NDP extend beyond the plan area into the town of Faversham. I have no hesitation in accepting that *“The Creek does not stand alone from the rest of Faversham. It is an integral part of the wider town and its community”*.²² While there will be some effects beyond the town and while I understand with sympathy why the clerk to Luddenham Parish Council has sought a more extended area, I do not consider that these are sufficient to justify further extending the referendum area. I therefore recommend that the referendum area should be the town of Faversham, *i.e.* FTC’s area.

12. Summary of Main Findings

80. I commend the Draft NDP for being well written, logical, clear, appropriately concise and intelligible to a reasonably intelligent lay reader with no expertise in town and country planning.

81. I recommend that the Draft NDP be modified in the terms specified in Appendix A to this report in order to meet basic conditions and to correct errors. I am satisfied with those parts of the Draft NDP to which I am not recommending modifications.

82. With those modifications the Draft NDP will meet all the basic conditions. Specifically

- I have had regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, and, having done so, am of the firm view that that it would be appropriate to make the NDP as modified by my recommendations;
- The making of the NDP as modified by my recommendations contains substantial elements that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and taken as a whole would contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the NDP as modified by my recommendations would be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area;

²² Draft NDP, page 16, 1st column.

- The making of the NDP as modified by my recommendations would not breach, and would not otherwise be incompatible with, EU obligations;
- The making of the NDP as modified by my recommendations would not be likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects).

83. The relatively limited nature of the modifications that I recommend is such that they will not give rise to any further obligations under the SEA Directive.

84. The Draft NDP as modified by my recommendations would in all respects be fully compatible with Convention rights contained in the Human Rights Act 1998.

85. I consider that it is appropriate that the Draft NDP as modified by my recommendations proceed to a referendum and recommend that it does so, the referendum area being the town of Faversham.

Timothy Jones, Barrister, FCI Arb,

Independent Examiner,

No 5 Chambers

March 2016.

Appendix A: Recommended Modifications

1. Front Cover

The draft NDP should specify a period, either 2016-2031, or 2016 to such year (no later than 2031) as FTC considers appropriate.

2. Page 20, column 1, 2nd paragraph:

Replace “plans” with “plan”, “presnts” with “presents” and “creek” with “Creek”.

3. Page 21, column 1,

Replace “Disability Discrimination Act” with “the requirements for disabled people that arise by virtue of the Equality Act 2010”.

4. Page 22, column 1, 1st para

Replace “Section” with “paragraph”.

5. Page 24

Either give the area, or delete “(hectares yet to be agreed)”.

6. Page 27 after policy HE4

Insert a new policy:

“HE4. New development will be designed to preserve nationally important archaeological remains in-situ. Archaeological remains of local or regional significance will be either preserved in situ or subject to archaeological investigation so as to advance understanding of the significance of archaeological remains that provide evidence of the development of the Creek’s historic maritime and industrial uses. The preservation of evidence of the area’s development during the Middle Ages and of the development of the Faversham gunpowder and boat-building industries will be given a particularly high priority. Development proposals should be informed by discussion with the archaeological adviser used by Swale Borough Council and, where appropriate, by a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation in order to determine the nature, condition and extent of archaeological remains that may be present and the appropriate response to these.”

7. Page 32, column 2

Replace “respond” with “response”.

8. *Page 33*

Replace policy NE2 with:

“NE2 The green spaces to either side of the Albion Taverna and between the Upper Brents and Crab Island and shown on the plan on page ... shall be designated as Local Green Spaces.”

9. *In an appropriate location*

Add a plan that shows the designated Local Green Spaces specified on page 33 column 1.

10. *Page 36, column 2*

Delete the last sentence on the second column.

11. *Page 37*

Replace policy INF3 with the following:

“INF3 Any new road and footpath surface treatments and street furniture, including signage will be in accordance with the standards specified in the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy, and shall be comply with legislation that protects disabled people.”

12. *Pages 39 and 40*

The plans should either contain a key or direct readers to a key elsewhere.

13. *Page 41*

Replace policy P1 with the following:

“P1 The building and its curtilage are to be used for small business workshops, together with associated educational uses (mixed use B1, B2 and D1).”

14. *Page 42, after the first paragraph in column 1*

Insert the following:

“Archaeological investigation has identified a section of stone wharf walling with a timber staircase leading down to the Creek and the stone base of a crane, each of which is believed to be evidence of the 18th-century gunpowder wharf.”

15. *Page 42, 5th indent in column 2*

Replace with the following:

“New development must have regard for the presence of the adjacent Purifier Building and respond in an appropriate manner to the scale, massing and materials of this existing built form. Modern designs that contrast with the Purifier will be encouraged, as will more traditional designs — both approaches need to be of high quality design. New development must also have regard for the existing uses the adjacent Purifier Building and through

location, sound insulation and external and internal layout avoid adverse impact on those uses.”

16. *Page 42, 2nd column 6th indent, line 1*

Replace “affects” with “effects”.

17. *Page 42, after the 7th indent*

Add at 8th indent:

“Any new development proposal should be informed by further archaeological investigation, including areas that were not accessible for previous investigations. New development should be designed to preserve and better reveal the significance of archaeological remains that illustrate the historic role of the wharf as a part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works, including the previously identified sections of 18th Century wharf and crane base, which should be included in publicly accessible space where practical.”

18. *Page 43*

Replace policy OW5 with the following:

“OW5 Any new development must have regard to the presence of the Purifier site adjacent and the impact new development will have upon the setting and must avoid adverse impact on use of this existing building.”

19. *Page 43 after policy OW7*

Insert a new policy OW8:

“OW8 New development should be designed to preserve or enhance evidence of the site’s historic role as part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works as wharfs, including provision for conservation of the 18th Century wharf walls and stone crane base with a wharf edge space and revealing identified archaeological remains as publicly accessible space, where practical. New buildings must be designed to avoid the loss of archaeological remains including by the use of appropriate construction techniques.”

20. *Page 47, column 1, first two paragraphs*

Replace these with the following:

“This site was formerly used by the Frank and Whittome Joinery Company and comprises four buildings:

The first, the Chandlery building set at right angles to the Creek, is listed grade II and is an early 19th-century industrial building last used as an office. Attached to the rear of this is the second building, a shed dating from the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries, which has been re-clad in weatherboarding to the south and west sides. This is currently vacant, but as an

attached building would require listed building consent for any alterations that would affect its contribution to the listed building's historic or architectural interest.

The third building is an open shed with a metal-trussed roof with a long elevation to Conduit Street with attached modern offices built in the 1990s. As an industrial building illustrating the working history of this part of the Conservation Area, the form, shape and scale of the open sided shed makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

The fourth building is a modern building built for the joinery company (c. 1990), constructed in brick and weatherboard and now occupied by a sail maker. The low level of the building, its sensitive choice of materials (preserving an industrial aesthetic) and its position set back from the Creek's edge creating a wharf space, means this building has integrated well with the Conservation Area and retained a distinct working edge to the Creek with views over it to the surrounding historic buildings.

The site provides a long section of timber wharf fronting the Creek with an open space of quay behind, each of which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area as part of the historic working Creekside. A slipway within the site provides one of the few points of access for boat launching in this side.

The site lies adjacent to the medieval Town Quay and close to the Grade II* listed 15th-century warehouse now 'TS Hazard'. The site is likely to have formed a part of the Abbey wharfs from the medieval period and is known to have included a dock in the late 18th Century. The potential for a waterlogged environment and the likelihood of successive phases of wharf development, as well as development of buildings and structures for associated uses throughout the site's history creates a high potential for remains of archaeological interest and, potentially, those of national importance."

21. Page 47, from and including the heading "*Suggested Redevelopments, Designs and Land Uses*" until the end of column 2

Delete all and replace with:

"The current nature of the site, including its role as part of the setting of nearby listed buildings should be preserved and enhanced.

- Land uses could include offices/workshops (Class B1), maritime general industrial (B2 limited by condition) and a gallery (Class D1) and some limited car parking, but not dwelling houses (Class C3). It may be possible to permit new buildings consistent with the site's current character. If so, they should be constructed in yellow stock brickwork and slate roof with metal framed windows.
- In the event of any substantial development on the site a Creekside walkway must be provided along the frontage of the site in front of all the buildings.
- Moorings to be provided along the frontage suitable for a range of sizes of craft.

- Any redevelopment will need to provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by Southern Water. There should be an adequate gap between the wastewater pumping station and development to allow odour dispersion and help prevent an unacceptable impact from vibration. Development proposals must ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.
- Close to this site is the junction of Quay Lane and Conduit Street. The Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy sets out a project to form a sitting-out area for the Faversham Creek Hotel and formation of a square with better quality paving, measures to encourage slower traffic including a shared surface and measures to improve the boundary treatments of adjoining sites.

The neighbourhood plan places responsibility firmly upon any applicant to demonstrate the appropriateness and suitability of their proposed design through the formal planning application process. This demonstration must be made with regard to the range of policies in this neighbourhood plan, not just the site-specific ones. It must also comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 66 and 72.”

22. *Page 48, column 1*

Replace policies SWQ1 and SWQ2 with:

“SWQ1: Use classes: the site shall be used for a mix of office and workshops (Class B1) retail, maritime general industrial (Class B2 limited by condition), and may be used for a gallery (Class D1). It shall not be used for dwelling houses (Class C3).

“SWQ2 Public walkways shall be created along the Creek frontage and to the extent that is consistent with the site’s character through the site from Belvedere Road”.

23. *Page 48, after policy SWQ3*

Add the following:

“SWQ4. Existing buildings and features identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, both within the site and in its surroundings should be retained and where practical enhanced, within proposals for new development through the careful design of new buildings and landscaping and sensitive reuse of historic structures. In conformity with National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, the optimum viable use of the site will be considered as that which best sustains and reveals its historic significance as part of the Conservation Area, whilst ensuring its future maintenance.

SWQ5. Development proposals will need to be informed by a programme of archaeological assessment, possibly including evaluation, completed according to a written scheme of investigation agreed with the Swale Borough Council. The design and construction method of

new development will be required to preserve nationally important remains in-situ. Where it might be agreed that archaeological remains might be removed as part of development this will need to be in accordance with a programme of archaeological works agreed with Swale Borough Council and designed to advance understanding of the significance of the archaeological assets to be lost.”

24. *Page 54, column 1, 4th indent*

Replace with:

“The open character of the curtilage and isolated position of the house must be maintained and enhanced. Parking in front of the building is considered inappropriate.”

25. *Page 54, column 1, 5th indent*

Replace with:

“To the south of Standard House, including the existing later industrial building and vacant land, there is potential for new development to provide housing of two storeys in traditional materials.”

26. *Page 54, column 2, policy STH4*

Replace this with:

“STH4. Any new housing development must be of no more than two storeys and should be located to preserve the prominence of Standard House as a landmark on the Creekside in views along the Creek and from Standard Quay and the footpath.”

27. *Updating*

Where indisputable primary facts change, the draft UDP should be appropriately modified. For example, if the change to the name of Davington Priory Ward occurs before the referendum, pages 7 and 29 should be modified accordingly.

Appendix B: Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in this report:

Convention	European Convention on Human Rights
Draft NDP	Submission Version of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Development Plan (November 2014)
EH	English Heritage (the relevant part of which is now Historic England)
EU	European Union
Framework	National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, March 2012)
FTC	Faversham Town Council
General Regulations	Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
LBA	Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
NDP	Neighbourhood Development Plan
NPPG	national Planning Practice Guidance
para	paragraph
PCPA	Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)
reg	regulation
s	section
SBC	Swale Borough Council
Sch	Schedule
SEA Directive	Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
WMS	Written Ministerial Statement of Eric Pickles MP of 25 th March 2015.

Please note that where I use the verb *'include'*, I am not using it to mean *'comprise'*. The words that follow are not exclusive.

Appendix II: Recommended Modifications

Number	Page/Paragraph number/ etc	Recommendation
1	Front Cover	The draft NDP should specify a period, either 2016-2031, or 2016 to such year (no later than 2031) as FTC considers appropriate.
2	Page 20, column 1, 2nd paragraph	Replace “plans” with “plan”, “presnts” with “presents” and “creek” with “Creek”.
3	Page 21, column 1	Replace “Disability Discrimination Act” with “the requirements for disabled people that arise by virtue of the Equality Act 2010”.
4	Page 22, column 1, 1st para	Replace “Section” with “paragraph”.
5	Page 24	Either give the area, or delete “(hectares yet to be agreed)”.
6	Page 27 after policy HE4	Insert a new policy: “HE4. New development will be designed to preserve nationally important archaeological remains in-situ. Archaeological remains of local or regional significance will be either preserved in situ or subject to archaeological investigation so as to advance understanding of the significance of archaeological remains that provide evidence of the development of the Creek’s historic maritime and industrial uses. The preservation of evidence of the area’s development during the Middle Ages and of the development of the Faversham gunpowder and boat-building industries will be given a particularly high priority. Development proposals should be informed by discussion with the archaeological adviser used by Swale Borough Council and, where appropriate, by a programme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation in order to determine the nature, condition and extent of archaeological remains that may be present and the appropriate response to these.”
7	Page 32, column 2	Replace “respond” with “response”.
8	Page 33	Replace policy NE2 with: “NE2 The green spaces to either side of the Albion Taverna and between the Upper Brents and Crab Island and shown on the plan on page ... shall be designated as Local Green Spaces.”
9	In an appropriate location	Add a plan that shows the designated Local Green Spaces specified on page 33 column 1.
10	Page 36, column 2	Delete the last sentence on the second column.
11	Page 37	Replace policy INF3 with the following: “INF3 Any new road and footpath surface treatments

		and street furniture, including signage will be in accordance with the standards specified in the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy, and shall be comply with legislation that protects disabled people.”
12	Pages 39 and 40	The plans should either contain a key or direct readers to a key elsewhere.
13	Page 41	Replace policy P1 with the following: “P1 The building and its curtilage are to be used for small business workshops, together with associated educational uses (mixed use B1, B2 and D1).”
14	Page 42, after the first paragraph in column 1	Insert the following: “Archaeological investigation has identified a section of stone wharf walling with a timber staircase leading down to the Creek and the stone base of a crane, each of which is believed to be evidence of the 18th-century gunpowder wharf.”
15	Page 42, 5th indent in column 2	Replace with the following: “New development must have regard for the presence of the adjacent Purifier Building and respond in an appropriate manner to the scale, massing and materials of this existing built form. Modern designs that contrast with the Purifier will be encouraged, as will more traditional designs — both approaches need to be of high quality design. New development must also have regard for the existing uses the adjacent Purifier Building and through location, sound insulation and external and internal layout avoid adverse impact on those uses.”
16	Page 42, 2nd column 6th indent, line 1	Replace “affects” with “effects”.
17	Page 42, after the 7th indent	Add at 8th indent: “Any new development proposal should be informed by further archaeological investigation, including areas that were not accessible for previous investigations. New development should be designed to preserve and better reveal the significance of archaeological remains that illustrate the historic role of the wharf as a part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works, including the previously identified sections of 18th Century wharf and crane base, which should be included in publicly accessible space where practical.”
18	Page 43	Replace policy OW5 with the following: “OW5 Any new development must have regard to the presence of the Purifier site adjacent and the impact new development will have upon the setting and must avoid adverse impact on use of this

		existing building.”
19	Page 43 after policy OW7	Insert a new policy OW8: “OW8 New development should be designed to preserve or enhance evidence of the site’s historic role as part of the Home Works of the Faversham Gunpowder Works as wharfs, including provision for conservation of the 18th Century wharf walls and stone crane base with a wharf edge space and revealing identified archaeological remains as publicly accessible space, where practical. New buildings must be designed to avoid the loss of archaeological remains including by the use of appropriate construction techniques.”
20	Page 47, column 1, first two paragraphs	Replace these with the following: “This site was formerly used by the Frank and Whittome Joinery Company and comprises four buildings: The first, the Chandlery building set at right angles to the Creek, is listed grade II and is an early 19th-century industrial building last used as an office. Attached to the rear of this is the second building, a shed dating from the turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries, which has been re-clad in weatherboarding to the south and west sides. This is currently vacant, but as an attached building would require listed building consent for any alterations that would affect its contribution to the listed building’s historic or architectural interest. The third building is an open shed with a metal-trussed roof with a long elevation to Conduit Street with attached modern offices built in the 1990s. As an industrial building illustrating the working history of this part of the Conservation Area, the form, shape and scale of the open sided shed makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The fourth building is a modern building built for the joinery company (c. 1990), constructed in brick and weatherboard and now occupied by a sail maker. The low level of the building, its sensitive choice of materials (preserving an industrial aesthetic) and its position set back from the Creek’s edge creating a wharf space, means this building has integrated well with the Conservation Area and retained a distinct working edge to the Creek with views over it to the surrounding historic buildings. The site provides a long section of timber wharf fronting the Creek with an open space of quay behind, each of which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area as part of the historic working

		<p>Creekside. A slipway within the site provides one of the few points of access for boat launching in this side. The site lies adjacent to the medieval Town Quay and close to the Grade II* listed 15th century warehouse now 'TS Hazard'. The site is likely to have formed a part of the Abbey wharfs from the medieval period and is known to have included a dock in the late 18th Century. The potential for a waterlogged environment and the likelihood of successive phases of wharf development, as well as development of buildings and structures for associated uses throughout the site's history creates a high potential for remains of archaeological interest and, potentially, those of national importance."</p>
21	<p>Page 47, from and including the heading "Suggested Redevelopments, Designs and Land Uses" until the end of column 2</p>	<p>Delete all and replace with:</p> <p>"The current nature of the site, including its role as part of the setting of nearby listed buildings should be preserved and enhanced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land uses could include offices/workshops (Class B1), maritime general industrial (B2 limited by condition) and a gallery (Class D1) and some limited car parking, but not dwelling houses (Class C3). It may be possible to permit new buildings consistent with the site's current character. If so, they should be constructed in yellow stock brickwork and slate roof with metal framed windows. • In the event of any substantial development on the site a Creekside walkway must be provided along the frontage of the site in front of all the buildings. • Moorings to be provided along the frontage suitable for a range of sizes of craft. • Any redevelopment will need to provide a connection to the nearest point of adequate capacity in the sewerage network, as advised by Southern Water. There should be an adequate gap between the wastewater pumping station and development to allow odour dispersion and help prevent an unacceptable impact from vibration. Development proposals must ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes. • Close to this site is the junction of Quay Lane and Conduit Street. The Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy sets out a project to form a sitting-out area for the Faversham Creek Hotel and formation of a square with better quality paving, measures to encourage slower traffic including a shared surface and measures to improve the boundary treatments of adjoining sites. <p>The neighbourhood plan places responsibility firmly</p>

		upon any applicant to demonstrate the appropriateness and suitability of their proposed design through the formal planning application process. This demonstration must be made with regard to the range of policies in this neighbourhood plan, not just the site-specific ones. It must also comply with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sections 66 and 72.”
22	Page 48, column 1	Replace policies SWQ1 and SWQ2 with: “SWQ1: Use classes: the site shall be used for a mix of office and workshops (Class B1) retail, maritime general industrial (Class B2 limited by condition), and may be used for a gallery (Class D1). It shall not be used for dwelling houses (Class C3). “SWQ2 Public walkways shall be created along the Creek frontage and to the extent that is consistent with the site’s character through the site from Belvedere Road”.
23	Page 48, after policy SWQ3	Add the following: “SWQ4. Existing buildings and features identified as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, both within the site and in its surroundings should be retained and where practical enhanced, within proposals for new development through the careful design of new buildings and landscaping and sensitive reuse of historic structures. In conformity with National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, the optimum viable use of the site will be considered as that which best sustains and reveals its historic significance as part of the Conservation Area, whilst ensuring its future maintenance. SWQ5. Development proposals will need to be informed by a programme of archaeological assessment, possibly including evaluation, completed according to a written scheme of investigation agreed with the Swale Borough Council. The design and construction method of new development will be required to preserve nationally important remains in-situ. Where it might be agreed that archaeological remains might be removed as part of development this will need to be in accordance with a programme of archaeological works agreed with Swale Borough Council and designed to advance understanding of the significance of the archaeological assets to be lost.”
24	Page 54, column 1, 4th indent	Replace with: “The open character of the curtilage and isolated position of the house must be maintained and

		enhanced. Parking in front of the building is considered inappropriate.”
25	Page 54, column 1, 5th indent	Replace with: “To the south of Standard House, including the existing later industrial building and vacant land, there is potential for new development to provide housing of two storeys in traditional materials.”
26	Page 54, column 2, policy STH4	Replace this with: “STH4. Any new housing development must be of no more than two storeys and should be located to preserve the prominence of Standard House as a landmark on the Creekside in views along the Creek and from Standard Quay and the footpath.”
27	Updating	Where indisputable primary facts change, the draft UDP should be appropriately modified. For example, if the change to the name of Davington Priory Ward occurs before the referendum, pages 7 and 29 should be modified accordingly.

Local Development Framework Panel Meeting	Agenda Item: 7
Meeting Date	19 May 2016
Report Title	Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Proposed Main Modifications
Cabinet Member	Cllr Gerry Lewin, Cabinet Member for Planning
SMT Lead	Kathryn Carr
Head of Service	James Freeman
Lead Officer	Gill Harris
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number:
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Members consider and agree, as appropriate, the 'boxed' recommendations as set out in the report; 2. That Members agree, subject to any further amendments, the publication and consultation of the proposed Local Plan modifications, as set out in Appendix 1, and that it, together with the representations received, be forwarded to the Inspector as speedily as possible after the close of consultation; 3. That Members agree that delegation be given to the Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair in respect of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. any further drafting of the modifications consultation document undertaken prior to its publication; ii. finalising the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (Appendix 4 and 5) and published for consultation; iii. revisions to Technical Paper No.2 on Local Green Spaces and the subsequent main

	<p>modifications required; and</p> <p>iv. the publication for consultation of the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.</p>
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1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Local Plan Inspector’s interim finding and recommendations in respect of increasing the housing land supply in the Plan were reported to the 25 February 2016 meeting of the Panel, together with an indication of the necessary actions and indicative programme for the way forward. The Inspector has now issued the final tranche of interim findings and recommendations for modifying the plan.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is for Members to agree the main modifications which are necessary to make the plan sound and thereby adoptable.
- 1.3 The report and appendices outline the modifications proposed to the Plan for Members comment and agreement. In particular, the report deals with the additional allocations necessary to meet a housing target of 13,192 dwellings to 2031 (776 dwellings per annum) and a 5-year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF. The report takes Members through the context and rationale for the proposed approach toward allocating sites and the alternatives open to them which examines:
- the provision of sites and the proportionate boost for Faversham;
 - the balance of emphasis between Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey;
 - locations for growth on the Isle of Sheppey;
 - locations for growth at Sittingbourne;
 - locations for growth at Rural Local Service Centres; and
 - locations at other villages.
- 1.4 Drawing upon a draft sustainability appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment, the report makes recommendations for sufficient additional sites to exceed the dwelling target to help support the 5-year housing land supply and provide for contingencies. The report sets out the implications arising for various parts of the Borough, but the outcomes include a proportionate boost in provision to Faversham and the rural areas in line with the Inspector’s findings.
- 1.5 The main focuses for the recommended additional allocated housing sites are at Sittingbourne, Faversham, Minster and Halfway, Iwade and Newington. The allocations themselves are shown in the table below (see also maps in Appendix 2).

Recommended allocation	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings proposed
SW Sittingbourne	SW/703	564
Land at The Bell Centre, Bell Road, Sittingbourne	SW/343	120
Belgrave Road, Halfway	SW/165	140

Recommended allocation	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings proposed
Barton Hill Drive, Minster	SW/194	620
Land Inc. of Scocles Road and Elm Lane, Minster	SW/705	50
Land at Chequers Road, Minster	SW/457	10
Land at Graveney Road, Faversham	SW/334	90
Perry Court Farm, Faversham	SW/413	370
Phase II Lady Dane Farm, Faversham	SW/096	60
West Brogdale Road, Faversham	SW/441	66
Preston Fields, Salters Lane, Faversham	SW/233	217
The Tracies, Calloways Lane, Newington	SW/010	5
Land north of High Street, Newington	SW/407	115
Iwade expansion	SW/183, 123 and 117	572
TOTAL		2,999

- 1.6 The report also highlights the other main modifications being proposed to the Plan, whilst officers will report at the meeting on the findings and way forward following the recent call for proposed Local Green Spaces from the local community.
- 1.7 All the modifications will be subject to formal six-week public consultation at the end of June, alongside Sustainability Appraisal and HRA findings. Any representations will be forwarded to the Inspector who is likely to re-convene the Examination at a later point this year, before making a Final Report on the plan for its, hopeful, adoption early in 2017.
- 1.8 Further work on a Transport Strategy, Implementation and Delivery Schedule and a Local Green Spaces Technical Paper will also be required.
- 1.9 Members are asked to agree the recommendations, in effect endorsing the modifications and supporting documentation for consultation.

2 Background

Purpose of and structure of this report

- 2.1 The Local Plan Examination hearing ended on 16 December 2015, although the process is not yet complete. The Inspector's interim findings were received in late January (Parts 1 and 2) and March (Part 3).
- 2.2 These interim findings indicate the scope of the 'main modifications' needing to be made to make the plan sound, but also that the detailed modifications proposed by the Council during the Examination should go forward to consultation.
- 2.3 A large number of additional (minor) modifications were also presented to the Examination, such as updating, corrections etc. and this minor editing has and will continue up to the point of consultation. These minor changes are not the subject of further consultation. A draft consultation document has been prepared that includes all the modifications made, with the main modifications highlighted as tracked changes. This is provided at Appendix 1. The document contains a significantly greater number of main modifications than were proposed at the Examination. This is because of the additional changes arising mainly from the Inspector's recommended increase in housing target and the need to include the relevant evidence associated with it.
- 2.4 Although the consultation document in Appendix 1 is at a reasonably advanced stage, Members should view it as work in progress as there remains highlighted text needing further work to be completed before the consultation commences. The main areas of work concern Chapter 8 (The Implementation and Delivery Plan), together with any site specific infrastructure needs needing to be reflected in Chapter 6 (Site Allocations) and, the open space and sport requirements arising from new developments. Any changes agreed by Members will also need to be incorporated.
- 2.5 This report considers the most significant of the main modifications that will be required to make the plan sound and is structured under the following sections:
 - 1) Background to the evidence in respect of additional housing allocations.
 - 2) The scope of Members considerations.
 - 3) The housing land supply and the scale of the task.
 - 4) Overview of the main considerations for site selection.
 - 5) The 'discounting' of site options contrary to the Local Plan strategy or with 'showstopper' constraints.
 - 6) Considering the remaining sites with potential for allocation.
 - 7) Conclusions and overall picture of land supply.
 - 8) Considering other main modifications and next steps with specific reference to:
 - a. The approach to Gypsies and Travellers;
 - b. Affordable housing;
 - c. New regeneration policies for the Port of Sheerness and Kent Science Park;

- d. Local Green Spaces; and
 - e. Infrastructure provision.
- 2.6 Boxed recommendations are made at key stages in the report, with an overall recommendation for Members to approve the modifications document (Appendix 1) and its associated evidence for consultation and re-submission to the Inspector.
- 2.7 The following appendices are provided with this report:
- 1) Appendix 1: The draft 'tracked-change' version of the modified Local Plan which includes the Main Modifications. This is, in effect, the consultation document.
 - 2) Appendix 2: Maps showing the existing allocated and proposed to be allocated sites (also to be displayed at the meeting).
 - 3) Appendix 3: Maps indicating the locations of all sites considered via the SHLAA and **not** recommended for allocation (also to be displayed at the meeting).
 - 4) Appendix 4: Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report Addendum. This is referred to as appropriate in the main report.
 - 5) Appendix 5: Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment. This is referred to as appropriate in the main report.

Section 1: Background to the evidence in respect of considering additional housing allocations

1) The Inspector's interim findings

- 2.8 The Inspector's interim findings most relevant to this report were that:
- The objectively assessed housing need (OAN) was 776 dwellings per annum and that this should be adopted as the dwelling target for the Borough, with the Council being required to allocate additional sites to meet it.
 - The Local Plan period was revised to 2014-31, making a total housing target of 13,192 dwellings over 17 years.
 - The evidence base to support the plan, particularly the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment were found to be NPPF compliant and sound.
 - The Plan's settlement strategy of two panning areas was confirmed with the focus of development on the Kent Thames Gateway part of the Borough. A 'proportional boost' to allocations in Faversham and rural areas and within the context of the settlement strategy was recommended.
 - There appeared to be no barriers to delivering 776 dwellings per annum, based on international, national or local environmental designations, flood risk or heritage assets, but the impact upon local countryside gaps would need to be considered.
 - The Duty to Co-operate during plan preparation and on the additional work to inform proposed modifications was found to have been met.
 - There was no need to rely upon an early Local Plan Review and the Plan should plan positively for the full period to 2031.

- Use of a windfall allowance of 110 dwellings per annum in the post 5-year period was confirmed.
- It could be appropriate to use the ‘Liverpool’ method (see explanation later) to deal with housing land supply shortfalls.
- Unless the Government issues further guidance, the requirement for Gypsies and Traveller pitches on housing allocations should be removed with no need to prepare a Part 2 Local Plan. The Inspector concluded that the outstanding portion of the re-calculated need could be met from windfall planning applications.
- The area-based variable requirements for affordable housing was endorsed;
- Further transport modelling may be required to test the impact of meeting higher housing numbers.
- Subject to modifications the plan can mitigate impacts upon European designated sites.
- Policies relating to landscape designations and countryside gaps are robust.

2) Existing and new evidence being prepared by the Council

- 2.9 Para. 47 of the NPPF requires Local Plans to meet the full, objectively assessed needs (OAN) for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 2.10 Work undertaken in 2013 (SHMA Update and Development Needs) had already indicated an OAN of 740 dwellings per annum (dpa) for Swale and had also concluded that there was no high level (‘showstopper’) environmental constraints acting as a bar to meeting it. At that time, Members considered that there were delivery and infrastructure constraints impacting upon the achievement of higher housing numbers and that a lower housing target should be pursued (540 dpa), with an early review of the plan advocated. This was the basis of the submission plan.
- 2.11 Before the Examination, the Inspector indicated serious concerns in respect of the Council’s position on housing numbers, viability, infrastructure and its reliance upon an early local plan review. It was agreed that the Council should prepare additional pieces of evidence to support the Examination process, including:
1. [Strategic Housing Market Assessment September 2015](#): This updated work determined that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in Swale was 776 dpa (13,192 dwellings for the plan period) and that this included 190 dpa for [affordable housing](#). [Employment forecasting](#) also indicated as necessary some supporting 10,900 jobs or 130,000 sq. m (60 ha) of employment floorspace (‘B’ class). The SHMA led to the publication of a [Council position statement](#) (PS) via which the findings of the SHMA were accepted. It indicated that should further sites be required, this would be achieved in accordance with the strategy of the plan, whilst addressing environmental constraints (inc. best and most versatile agricultural land) in accordance with paras. 110/112 and 113 of the NPPF.
 2. [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2014/15](#): SHLAA are prepared to demonstrate a deliverable and developable supply of land for at least the next five years. This updated work examined the deliverability of sites necessary to meet the potential OAN and concluded that to do so would require several re-assessments

against environmental criteria; namely that harm to some local environmental criteria would need to be accepted in the interest of boosting housing supply. This harm would principally involve further encroachment into locally important countryside gaps and harm to non-designated landscapes.

3. The [Sustainability Appraisal Parts 1 and 2](#) (SA): SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan, and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising positives. An SA is legally required and undertaken in-line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004. In recognition of the likelihood of potential modifications, the first step involved preparation of two 'interim' reports, to inform discussion at Examination Hearings. The Post Submission Interim SA Report 1 presented information on 'Broad strategy alternatives', whilst Post Submission Interim SA Report 2 - presented information on 'Site options'. The appraisal concluded that whilst an increased housing target would have some adverse environmental consequences, some significant, there would also be likely significant adverse effects socially and economically if the target were not increased.
4. [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) (HRA): The objective of this assessment was to test the implications on the integrity of European designated wildlife sites arising from potentially increased development targets. The HRA concluded that provided mitigation measures were in place (as already proposed by the Local Plan), such likely significant effects could be avoided.
5. [Ranking Assessment of sites](#): Taking the Council's position statement as its starting point, this provided a ranked list of some 112 sites across a series of descending tiers (A-G) using primarily environmental criteria.
6. Having regard to the above evidence, the [Council's Examination statement \(Matter 4.10\)](#) engaged in an open discussion over the appropriateness of certain locations and sites.

2.12 The Inspector found the above evidence to be robust and drew upon both the Council's position statement and its Examination statements in the interim findings. Whilst no single piece of evidence represents the sole basis upon which to allocate additional sites, Members should view the evidence as a whole as relevant to the decisions needing to be made. This evidence is drawn upon, as appropriate, by this report.

2.13 Members should now also note the preparation of the following new evidence:

1. [New sites](#): During the Examination a number of additional prospective sites were submitted to the Council by landowners and developers. This led to a formal 'call for sites' in January – February 2016 (supported by the Inspector) to ensure that all possible sites were considered and a consistent approach taken. This process yielded an additional 86 sites.

[Sustainability Appraisal \(SA\) Report Addendum](#): It was recognised that further SA work was required to support the modifications process. Subsequent to the hearings, the task was to develop and appraise 'reasonable alternatives' (to inform preparation of draft modifications) and then prepare an SA Report Addendum for publication alongside draft modifications. The draft SA Report Addendum has now been drafted (albeit it requires some further work ahead of publication) and is

included as Appendix 4 to this item. The SA Report Addendum is structured in three parts:

- Part 1 - Explains the process of developing reasonable alternatives presents the appraisal of reasonable alternatives and explains how this fed-into modification-making. The 'spatial strategy alternatives' consider the implications of three different broad approaches (extra growth at Iwade, West Sheppey and Sittingbourne) that might be taken to the allocation of additional sites for circa 3,000 homes.
- Part 2 - Presents an appraisal of the draft modifications document (Appendix 1 to the Panel report). This is still under preparation at the time of writing. Any issues arising will be reported at the Panel meeting.
- Part 3 - Explains 'what happens next'.

There are also a number of appendices linked to 'Part 1', with several presenting information on site options (both recommended and non-recommended). Notably, Appendix IV ranks the site options in order of preference (by applying a particular methodology). All the sites have now been ranked in Appendix IV of the SA, with the results of the [Ranking Assessment of sites](#) exercise undertaken to inform the Examination carried across and updated, together with the additional 'call for sites'. This is work in progress and subject to further change before the consultation. This review does not attempt to align with the SHLAA, although account is taken of its analysis. It represents a rapid and high level review and is relatively simplistic and mechanistic in its approach. An important consideration is that it does not generally take into account mitigation that might be possible.

The assessment takes the sites and places them within seven 'tiers' (where Tier A is best performing) as follows:

- *Tier A:* Sites that may be unconstrained and broadly suitable for allocation.
- *Tiers B-F:* Those sites judged as having no significant environmental constraints, but with landscape issues, with varying weight added between the Tiers.
- *Tier G:* Sites associated with 'significant' environmental constraints.

Within the tiers, sites are ranked according to: 1) landscape sensitivity, followed by 2) the location of the site in terms of the settlement strategy; followed by 3) the size of the site, with larger sites ranking higher.

2. The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): HRA are required for the plan to be in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. Its objective is to: identify any aspects of the Local Plan that would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites; and to advice on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects are identified. If a Local Plan cannot be screened out as being unlikely to lead to significant effects, then an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required in order to devise measures that can be incorporated into the Local Plan to ensure that no adverse effect on the integrity of internationally important wildlife sites would result. The latest draft HRA has

concluded that the plan, as proposed to be modified, can be screened out because of the considerable mitigation proposals already built in. The draft HRA can be found at Appendix 5.

3. Addendum to Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2014/15: This updates the earlier work to deal with the new sites submitted during the Examination and the most recent call for sites, together with other changes arising since the Examination. This will be finalised and published for the consultation and has been referred to, as appropriate, in this report. A 'work in progress' draft has been provided in the Member's Room. As with the main SHLAA, all the sites are categorised against a number of 'sweeps' that illustrate the implications of sites:
- *Sites failing the SHLAA methodology*: Such sites are considered as significantly failing one or more of the steps used to assess suitability, availability and achievability, or failing to fall at one of the settlements identified by the scope of the original assessment. For purposes of this Panel report only (i.e. not used by the SHLAA addendum itself), these sites are referred to as 'Sweep 0'. Such sites present strong reasons for their non-allocation.
 - *Sweep 1*: Comprises sites which have met the criteria for suitability, availability and overall achievability as set out by the original SHLAA methodology. Such sites would be very strong contenders for allocation, unless other issues not considered by the SHLAA dictate otherwise.
 - *Sweep 2*: Comprises sites that could come forward if methodology criteria is adjusted to allow sites with minor/moderate failings/impacts in terms of access to services or landscape/visual issues. Are likely to require serious consideration for allocation when need is balanced with their adverse impacts, unless other issues not considered by the SHLAA dictate otherwise.
 - *Sweep 3*: Comprises sites that could come forward if the methodology criteria is adjusted more significantly to include sites with moderate/major failings/impacts in terms of e.g. access to services and landscape/visual issues. These sites require more careful consideration of the balance between benefits and adverse impacts. Many are unsuitable for allocation, but the more suitable could be required to meet the development target and/or 5-year supply.

Section 2: The scope of Members considerations

- 2.14 Clearly the Council is not starting this stage of plan-making with a blank canvass. The Inspector's interim findings have resolved a number of matters that strongly dictate the modifications needing to be agreed. This section considers the main areas.

1) Settlement strategy and development distribution

- 2.15 In setting the development targets for the plan, the Inspector (para. 28 of the Part 2 interim findings) endorsed the settlement strategy, as set out by Policy ST3:

"The work that the Council has done places it in an informed position to sensitively nudge the housing target upwards across the Borough so that growth continues to be focused on the Thames Gateway area, but with a proportional boost to allocations in

Faversham and the rural areas. This is consistent with the approach suggested by the Council in paragraph 38 of its PS and the evidence is now available to enable those difficult decisions to be made in a logical and consistent way.”

- 2.16 The Inspector’s Part 3 findings (para. 5) also further endorses the strategy:
- “However the Plan’s approach is informed by robust evidence, it aligns with the Plan’s vision and it is supported by sustainability appraisal. The settlement strategy successfully addresses the core principles set out in paragraph 17 of the NPPF, particularly with regard to driving and supporting economic development and conserving the natural environment and heritage assets, whilst taking account of the different roles and character of different areas.”*
- 2.17 This led to the conclusion: *“The settlement strategy is soundly based and consistent with national policy subject to allocating additional sites to meet OAN whilst maintaining the broad proportional balance of growth between the two planning areas”*
- 2.18 This means that the Panel should consider any modifications on the basis set by the current settlement strategy and the comments made by the Inspector. The terms ‘proportional boost’ and ‘proportional balance’ may provide the Council with some limited flexibility as to how allocations should be approached at Faversham and the rural areas. As a minimum, Members should ensure that the percentage split of development at Faversham and the rural areas does not fall from the submission plan level. However, proportionately boosting growth at Faversham and the rural areas could raise the possibility of considering an appropriate further increase in the percentage split; a possibility mooted by the Council’s examination statement ([Matter 4.6](#)) which referred to (para. 14) a ‘nudge in the emphasis of growth at Faversham’.
- 2.19 Any such ‘nudge’ should remain firmly within the context of the overwhelming majority of growth being focused on the Thames Gateway Planning Area. Members can note that much of the Council’s earlier sustainability appraisal material referred to the Faversham and rest of Swale Planning area as receiving around 13.5% share of the total growth¹, although this can now be calculated as 12.1% because of the changed plan base-date, numerical and other changes since the plan was submitted.
- 2.20 Caution needs to ensure that debates do not become ‘locked in’ to such percentages or perceptions of ‘fairness’ in distribution, when the primary objective must be to meet needs in accordance with the approved strategy. However, when considering any further development allocations in the Faversham planning area and the appropriate scale of any ‘nudge’, it should be borne in mind that relatively modest percentage point changes at Faversham require large absolute numbers of additional dwellings relative to a small town with constraints acknowledged by the Inspector. Ultimately, the Council must avoid any justified charge of producing modifications that do not accord with the settlement strategy and the Inspector’s findings. The overall risk to the soundness of the plan is that the Council could create a different plan that would no longer accord with its own strategy and/or Local Plan Vision.

¹ Includes allocations, completions, extant planning permission and windfalls.

2) Environmental constraints

2.21 Whilst the strategy is a fixed and sound feature of the plan, there still remains some scope to consider both distributional and site based capacity issues arising from environmental constraints. That said, by endorsing parts of the Council's own position statement, the Inspector has put down markers for considering such constraints. In para. 17-18 of the Part 2 findings, it is noted that:

"The Council has revisited these constraints as part of the evidence update and summarises its approach to the environmental and infrastructure constraints in its PS. This concludes that subject to confirmation by SA and HRA work and based on the Plan's settlement strategy, no barriers to delivering the revised OAN delivery of 776 dwellings per annum appear to be presented by international, national or local environmental designations, flood risk or heritage assets.

The PS notes that the impact of any further site allocations should be considered individually against these considerations. Additionally, the individual and cumulative impact of any new allocations on important local countryside gaps and locally sensitive landscapes should be assessed, whilst any loss of the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land will need to be taken into account as proposed by the Council in paragraph 42 of the PS. On this basis I endorse the conclusion in the PS that in principle environmental capacity does not prevent the Plan meeting the OAN"

2.22 In terms of considering additional sites, in accordance with para. 110 of the NPPF, allocations should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in the Framework. The Inspector's findings that designations represent 'no barriers' to achieving the OAN needs to be read in conjunction with the Council's position statement (PS) (referenced by the Inspector). Here, in para. 21, the Council states designations should 'not be impacted upon', whilst para. 40 goes indicates that the Council will work to the 'premise that sites involving international, national or local landscape and biodiversity designations should (and can) be avoided'.

2.23 Whilst the issue of international and national designations presents no particular issues², impacts upon local landscape designations are likely to be most relevant when considering sites at Sittingbourne and, to a lesser extent, at Boughton and Dunkirk.

2.24 In the case of agricultural land, para. 112 of the NPPF indicates that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, Councils should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality – known as Best and Most Versatile (BMV). Use of BMV agricultural land will be necessary, due to insufficient levels of available and suitable brownfield sites and locations with lower quality agricultural land. Read in conjunction with para. 110 of the NPPF, this means the approach should be that use of BMV (Grades 1,2 and 3a) should be avoided as far as possible by use of lower quality land (i.e. grades 3b and above) until the consistency with other policy objectives becomes unsustainable.

2.25 Para. 112 of the NPPF also require the economic and other benefits of BMV land to be taken into account. Members should note the evidence presented to the Local Plan

² Impacts upon international designations do require assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

Examination in SBC/PS/088 [Agricultural Land Value in Swale](#) (26 October 2015) which stated that losses of BMV are likely to be irreversible, with the estimation that for every 100 ha of BMV land lost, £0.7 million - £1.7 million of output and between 5 and 13 jobs in agriculture could be lost.

2.26 In terms of the spatial implications of this issue, the impact will be felt most strongly on Sheppey and to a more limited extent at Iwade where the resources of lower quality land are located. Where pursuit of the BMV objective begins to conflict with issues such as local landscape impact or accessibility, then the balance to be made between these objectives becomes a key judgement.

2.27 The Inspector also indicates, in para. 26 of Part 2 of the interim findings, the implications for non-designated areas, including local countryside gaps:

“However the ranked assessment in particular, whilst noting the presence of locally defined Important Countryside Gaps, makes it clear that this definition does not necessarily preclude the allocation of sites within the gaps. This is consistent with the wording of DM Policy 25, which recognises that allocated sites may lie within the defined Countryside Gaps.”

2.28 In this instance, use of the approved strategy will mean that to increase the housing target, it will be those gaps on Sheppey and at Sittingbourne that will be most impacted upon.

3) Submitted Local Plan allocations

2.29 The existing Local Plan submitted allocations have been found to be ‘soundly based’ by the Inspector and the Council does not need to revisit the principle of them. Some existing allocations have been the subject of modification as a result of updating or discussion at the Examination with developers and where these have impacted upon housing numbers, they are considered in section 3.

3 Proposals

Section 3: The housing land supply and the scale of the task

3.1 To judge the extent of the new housing allocations required, it is important to agree the Council’s housing target and to set out the current position of the Borough’s housing land supply, explaining how it is calculated.

1) The Housing target

3.2 At the Panel meeting on 25 February, Members noted the Inspector’s interim findings on the new housing target and endorsed officers’ actions taken to act upon the Inspector’s recommendations. Before proceeding to consider the proposed main modifications that lead on from this, Members should determine whether they wish to modify the plan’s housing target on the basis of the OAN as indicated by the Inspector in the Part 2 interim report.

- 3.3 The Local Plan was submitted on the basis that community views had been reflected, having regard to viability issues and the delivery of essential infrastructure. The Council's position has not ultimately prevailed and the Inspector has confirmed that the OAN should be met in full with a housing target to reflect it.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding whether the risks of not achieving the plan's new higher housing target remain, the balance of risks has now shifted to a clear and urgent need to secure a sound and adopted Local Plan. The Inspector is aware that this presents the Council with difficult choices and Members will know that a likely result will be greater participation from concerned residents, Parish Councils and community groups. Additionally, a large number of likely omitted sites (some completely new at this late stage of the process) before the Inspector will remain, with some developers no doubt undeterred from challenging the plan, despite the clear steer given by the Inspector which should have otherwise represented a 'reality-check' for them. It is hoped that some will apply such a check in recognition of both the approved strategy of the Plan and the limits on the amount of extra land needing to be allocated.
- 3.5 The need to secure an adopted Local Plan and the lack of a basis upon which to pursue the Council's previous position means that the Panel are recommended to adopt a housing target of 776 dpa (13,192 for the revised plan period 2014-2031). This will also require the adoption of an associated employment floorspace target of 130,000 sq. m (60 ha) of land, this having already been secured through current plan allocations.

DEVELOPMENT TARGETS

Recommendation 1:

That the Panel agree to increase the housing target of the Local Plan to 776 dpa (13,192 dwellings for the revised plan period), with a 'B' class employment target of 130,000 sq. m (60 ha).

2) Housing land supply

- 3.6 It is necessary to understand some of the detail of housing land supply. The total housing land supply is made up from the following components:
- a. completions since the start of the plan period;
 - b. planning permissions yet to commence or be completed;
 - c. any allowance made for future windfall completions; and
 - d. sites to be allocated by the Local Plan.
- 3.7 Since the local plan was submitted there have been changes to the supply of housing in the Borough that should be taken into account:
1. The Local Plan base date and shortfalls: An important factor impacting upon the land supply is the Inspector's recommendation for a change in the Plan period from 2010/11-2031 to 2013/14-2031, with year one of the 17-year plan period being the

1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015³. This enables the 2010/11-13/14 period of poorer housing performance to be absorbed into the new population projections that have determined the new housing target – in other words these past backlogs no longer affect the 5-year supply going forward to the same extent.

This is positive, but there remain challenges because the first year of the plan's completions performance for 2014/15 has already been 158 dwellings less than the target of 776 dpa. The NPPF requires this shortfall to be 'made up' with the addition of a 5% 'buffer'. This means that within the 5-year supply, the annualised rate of 776 dpa has already increased in just one year to either 825 or 848 dpa (depending on how the five-year housing land supply is calculated – see discussion at paras. 3.11-17). This results in an upward pressure on the amount of additional sites needing to be allocated to achieve a 5-year supply. With the next three monitoring years of completions also forecast at less than 776 dpa, these shortfalls, if they materialise, will also feed into future increases in the annualised rate that will also have to be 'made up'. It should also be noted that such shortfalls are also impacted upon by changes in the levels of planning permissions granted each year and this cannot easily be predicted. Although the Council is not currently at the point of persistent under delivery against the 5-year supply emerge, there is the risk of a future imposition of a 20% 'buffer' as per NPPF policy should this occur.

2. Monitoring updates: Several monitoring years have passed since the housing information within the submission Local Plan was published. Housing delivery information for the modified plan will use the position as at 1st April 2015. This not only means that the 'year 1' completions and extant planning permissions can be deducted from that needing to be allocated, but also that some submission plan allocations that received planning permission before that date will no longer be included, although their policies may remain in the plan because they will be relevant for the purposes of reserved matters or new applications. A 2015/16 update will be provided to the Inspector and participants at a later date when available.
3. Windfall allowance: A windfall allowance of 1,210 dwellings (110 per annum) is made for the final 11 years of the plan period outside of the immediate 5-year period. Windfalls are non-allocated sites which are not known to the Council, but which come forward on a regular basis. Analysis of past and future trends is used to predict an annual allowance that can be deducted from the amount of dwellings needing to be allocated. A windfall allowance is not included within the first 5 years of the plan period because there is a risk of double counting with sites that have planning permission, but which are yet to be completed. The Inspector has endorsed this approach and this significantly reduces the amount of land needing to be allocated.
4. Development capacity: Members have previously indicated their wish to ensure that maximum capacity is made of currently allocated sites to minimise the need to release further land. Discussions at the Examination, work for the Council by

³ In other words, the plan has 16 years to run.

landscape consultants, alongside further submissions from developers, have revealed some scope/need to change the yields of the following sites:

- a. SW/326 Thistle Hill, Minster (Policy A7): - An additional 47 units to more accurately reflect the likely outcome of build out on the final phases of the site (now 473 in total);
- b. SW/330 Stones Farm, Sittingbourne (Policy A8): - A reduction of 50 dwellings to reflect the likely outcome of the detailed development of the site (now 550 in total);
- c. SW/337 Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne (Policy A9): - This allocation made generous assumptions about the amount of land needed to be retained in open uses due to flood risk. Further discussions between the lead landowner and the Environment Agency indicate that land-raising could be undertaken to potentially considerably increase the number of dwellings that could come forward. It is thought that an additional 176 dwellings can be provided bringing the total to 650. A modified policy is proposed on page 148 of Appendix 1⁴;
- d. SW/111 Milton Pipes, Sittingbourne (Policy A10): - An additional 5 dwellings to reflect the current planning application (now 240 in total);
- e. SW/325 Plover Road, Minster (Policy A11): - The loss of 9 dwellings to reflect that part of the site is likely to be used for retail (now 97 in total);
- f. SW/091 Western Link, Faversham (Policy A12): - An additional 10 dwellings can be allowed for to reflect the current resolution to grant planning permission on the site (now 250 in total);
- g. SW/009 Manor Farm, Sittingbourne (Policy A14): - Landscaping close to the site and the clearance of existing orchard trees indicates scope for an additional 10 dwellings (now 30 in total), although the landowner believes that more is possible;
- h. SW/144 Land east of Station Road, Teynham (Policy A14): - The loss of 13 dwellings to allow for off street parking spaces and the retention of an old orchard (107 in total). A policy for this site is now proposed as a modification (page 181 of Appendix 1);
- i. SW/040/73/ Land to the north of Quinton Road and Bramblefield Lane (Policy MU1): Further discussions with the developers have indicated that a development brief for the site should be prepared and that this should enable an additional 120 dwellings to be provided (now 1,330, plus 50 dwellings expected to fall outside of the plan period);
- j. SW/104 Land at Great Grovehurst Farm (Policy MU1). Further discussions with the developers have indicated a reduction in 10 dwellings (now 120 in total);
- k. SW/997 Oare Gravel Workings (Policy MU4): An additional 30 dwellings can be allowed for to reflect the current resolution to grant planning permission on the site (now 330 in total);
- l. Various sites within Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan (Policy NP1): The draft Local Plan made an allowance of 103 dwellings arising from the NP area. The Examiners report into the NP has required a review of the contributions from SW/353 Standard Quay/Fentimans Yard (a gain of 5 dwellings), SW/424 Swan

⁴ Note that page number references are from the consultation document not the Panel papers.

Quay/Frank and Whittome (a loss of 14 dwellings in total). In total, these losses and gains lead to a reduction from 103 to 94 dwellings (a net loss of 9 dwellings).

- 3.8 In total these changes amount to an additional 325 dwellings to be found from existing allocations.

CHANGES TO LOCAL PLAN ALLOCATIONS

Recommendation 2:

That the Panel agree the reported changes to the land supply of existing Local Plan allocations amounting to an additional 325 dwellings.

3) The scale of the task

- 3.9 Due to changes in housing monitoring since the Local Plan was submitted, setting out the scale of the task is unfortunately not straight forward. The following is therefore a guide only.
- 3.10 A starting point is a comparison of housing numbers in the submitted Local Plan with the new housing target of 13,192 dwellings. Evidence to the Examination (SBC/PS/014) provided a position concerning the submitted plan updated to 1st April 2015 monitoring. However, this needs to be re-calculated to match the new base date of the plan of 1 April 2014 and to reflect one year of completions of 618 units, 2,198 dwellings with planning permission yet to be completed and 1,210 windfalls. Applying these changes, against the submitted plan allocations, sites were provided sufficient for 10,661 dwellings (or 666 dwellings per annum for the remaining 16 years). On this basis, to meet a revised dwelling target of 13,192, the Panel indicatively need to identify additional sites for some 2,531 extra dwellings (13,192 minus 10,661). However, with the additional 325 dwellings as a result of the above changes to submission plan allocations, the total indicative number of additional sites needing to be allocated reduces to **2,224 dwellings**. This figure can only be a general guide as the actual final number of dwellings required depends upon the number of actual completions that can be expected within the plan period and this is likely to vary from that shown in the submission plan.

4) Achieving a 5-year supply of housing

- 3.11 The 5-year supply is likely to be one of the principal areas of debate when the Examination reconvenes. Members therefore need to ensure that there are sufficient sites to provide it in accordance with the NPPF and to deal with contingencies. This potentially means allocating a level of sites over and above that necessary to meet the actual target (i.e. above the 2,224 dwellings indicated above). This is because not all of these dwellings will be able to contribute the necessary numbers able to achieve the 5-year supply on a rolling basis or be able to potentially contribute all their completions within the Local Plan period.

- 3.12 In theory (according to the NPPF), allocating additional sites to achieve a continuous 5-year supply should not be necessary because it should simply be a case of bringing forward allocated sites from later phases. However, this is difficult for Swale because of: (a) the longer forecast lead in time for some sites; (b) the poorer viability of some locations; and (c) the immediate forecasts for completions in the next three years being low. Therefore, suitable sites that are able to contribute to the supply with little lead in time in locations that are viable are the best means to supplement the 5-year supply.
- 3.13 The Inspector has been mindful of the difficulties for the Council in the indication that use of the so-called 'Liverpool' method of land supply calculation could be considered. This method allows shortfalls in the 5-year supply to be made up in the total remaining years of the plan. This is in contrast to the 'Sedgefield' approach (currently used by most local authorities) which requires shortfalls to be remedied during the immediate 5-year period. For plans with a greater number of years still to run like Swale, the Liverpool approach presents the more favourable option to use. The two methods make the current difference between 825 (Liverpool) or 848 dpa (Sedgefield) in the immediate 5-year period, but, in the shorter-term, the advantages are likely to be greater for Swale if shortfalls increase because they can be spread out over a longer period.
- 3.14 However, whilst the Liverpool method helps the Council, the Inspector appears to only see its use as temporary (although the Council could and should argue an extension of its use when the Examination reconvenes). Furthermore, to make a smooth transition from low levels of completions in the early years to an expected peak period for the middle years of the plan (as highlighted by the Inspector) provides a major challenge that could well still require a considerable market step change in completions from year three onwards, despite any supporting actions that may be put in place by the Council. Some may regard such a step change as debatable, but it is nevertheless necessary if a 5-year supply is to be achieved against the new housing target.
- 3.15 Relying upon this step change is a particular risk given the immediate low forecast levels of completions, reliance upon urban regeneration sites for a part of the expected 5-year supply and other as yet unknown elements of the supply (see section 7). Apart from the risks to the soundness of the plan, risks will come from unallocated sites coming forward and being able to advance arguments as to shortfalls in the 5-year supply. However, acting as a positive counter is the likelihood of increased forecast completions entering the latter end of the 5-year period. Whilst this approach may provide some additional comfort to the land supply figures that will eventually be provided to the Examination, an appropriate allocation of additional sites over and above the 13,192 total is strongly advocated to underpin the achievement of a 5-year supply, to allow for contingencies and minimise further risks.
- 3.16 The extent to which additional sites should be allocated is a judgement for Members, especially as they will be perceived by many communities as unnecessary. Improving the land supply by this means without significantly inflating the bottom line total number of dwellings for the plan period is difficult. Each additional site will not usually contribute all of its dwelling numbers within the 5-year supply, so quite modest gains for the 5-year supply normally result in greater increases to the overall number supplied in the plan period as a whole e.g. a 500 dwelling allocation, after lead in times are taken into account, may only contribute 80-100 of those dwellings in the 5-year supply.

3.17 Despite these difficulties and potential outcomes, to reduce the risks overall to the soundness of the Local Plan, additional sites, over and above that necessary to meet the plan target, have been built into the report recommendations. Members will be able to see the outcomes of this approach, and a potential means to address any concerns, at Section 7.

Section 4: Overview of the main considerations for site selection

3.18 Before considering the pool of prospective sites for allocation, this section reviews the main overarching matters needing to be considered.

1) Differences between plan-making and decision-making

3.19 There are differences between the approaches taken toward a planning application for housing and that for allocating sites in the Local Plan. Planning applications could be permitted on sites that do not accord with the settlement strategy because there is a lack of a 5-year supply and because the harm is not significant enough relative to other benefits. For the Local Plan though, the approach is more akin to ensuring that the best and most suitable sites with the closest fit to the settlement strategy are allocated. Therefore, permissions granted on non-allocated sites in the recent past should not be necessarily taken as indicating that other sites in the same location should be now allocated. Once the Plan has secured a 5-year land supply, there should be much less need to permit sites which do not accord with the settlement strategy on grounds of inadequate land supply.

2) The NPPF

3.20 The outcome of the modifications should ensure that the plan continues to accord with the NPPF. Plans should look to achieve sustainable development and pursue gains across its economic, social and environmental dimensions (para. 8). Para. 14 of the NPPF provides for the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for plan-making, means that local planning authorities/local plans should:

- positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area;
- meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless:
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole; or
 - specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

3.21 The NPPF contains a series of core planning principles (para. 17). Table 1 highlights the most relevant of these for the current stage of plan-making, alongside some of the 'on the ground' implications for Swale. Other elements of the NPPF are highlighted elsewhere as appropriate.

Table 1 NPPF Core Planning principles with commentary for Swale context

NPPF Principle	Commentary
<p>Take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts⁵ around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities within it.</p>	<p>The overwhelming number of additional allocations will be greenfield sites and the modified plan will have its greatest impact on the countryside surrounding towns and villages, notably the separation between them and on undesignated landscapes. The harm associated with these impacts (after mitigation) must be so significant as to outweigh the need for development and its benefits.</p>
<p>Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.</p>	<p>This echoes the Inspector’s conclusions and the Council’s position statement. Biodiversity and landscape designations should be avoided, or if this is not possible, mitigation should be achieved and significant harm should only remain where benefits outweigh that harm. Lower quality agricultural land should be used until such times as the consistency with other policy objectives becomes unsustainable. Loss of high quality land is inevitable.</p>
<p>Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value.</p>	<p>Despite the recommended increases in development yields on existing brownfield allocations and on other recommended sites, there are insufficient brownfield sites available to meet the increased housing number.</p>
<p>Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.</p>	<p>Will normally be a site based issue, but may also need to be considered for sites within the setting of certain settlements. Where substantial harm would occur, this should normally point to the need for an alternative to be considered. Less than substantial harm should be weighed against benefits.</p>
<p>Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable.</p>	<p>Close adherence to the settlement strategy of the plan should normally ensure that this principle is followed. The increase in housing target deepens the search into rural areas, notably the Rural Local Service Centres, with more variable ranges of public transport choices and access to facilities than the main urban locations.</p>

3) The Council’s Examination Position Statement

3.22 With much of the Council’s Examination Position Statement (PS) (SBC/PS/031) acknowledged by the Inspector, attention is drawn to the approach toward additional allocations outlined in paras. 37-44 summarised as follows:

⁵ Swale has no Green Belt, but the rest of the principle applies.

- Site selection should be via the continuance of the Local Plan settlement strategy (Policy ST3) with the appropriate emphasis given by its two planning areas.
- The need to consider site-based contributions toward the three dimensions of sustainable development, as set out by paras. 6-10 of the NPPF.
- Allocations will prefer sites of the lowest environmental value, namely outside international, national or local landscape and biodiversity designations, alongside the avoidance of sites within Flood Zone 3A and those substantially affecting heritage assets and Air Quality Management Plan Areas.
- Significant harm to non-designated environmental assets/constraints and matters affecting the transport network should continue to strongly influence the distribution and location of development.
- The avoidance of best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV), outside of environmentally designated sites, will be pursued until such times as significant conflict with other sustainability objectives arises, e.g. poorer access to jobs and services.
- Viability issues will be taken into account, but within the context of the overall plan strategy.

4) Policy ST3 The Settlement Strategy

3.23 Policy ST3 represents the agreed settlement strategy of the submission plan. It provides Members with the ability to narrow down the scope of sites needing to be considered. It is important that the settlement tiers within the Policy should be maintained and recommendations for new allocations have been made on the basis of preserving the relative weight of development at each settlement tier. The net result of Members considerations should therefore be that:

1. Sittingbourne continues provides the main focus of development; followed by a lesser scale of growth at
2. Faversham and Sheerness urban centres, the latter supported by the urban local centres of Queenborough/Rushenden and Minster and Halfway, having strong regard to the relative weighting provided by the Thames Gateway as appropriate; followed by a lesser scale of growth at
3. the Rural Local Service Centres, as the main growth points for the rural areas, but representing the third tier of growth overall. Provision in these locations will be variable and relative to whether or not they are in a Thames Gateway location, allied to general considerations of environmental constraints and general accessibility; and, if necessary, followed by a lesser scale of growth at
4. the other villages identified by Policy ST3.

3.24 Where Members may be minded not to support a recommended allocation at a given settlement, they should consider two matters: (1) that the removal of a site(s) could require a new replacement site(s) to be proposed; and (2) that if a replacement site(s) is at a lower order settlement, whether the benefits of such a site(s) at a 'lesser' location would clearly outweigh the position of the 'disputed' recommended site(s) at the higher

order settlement. To support these judgements, 'sense-check' options are provided at key points in the report and again at Part 4.

5) Judgements affecting environmental issues

3.25 The following is a summary of how environmental matters should be considered:

- Landscape and visual impacts: Harm may be overall or in combination minor, moderate or major. The NPPF refers to significant harm in the context of an assessment of all harm (not just landscape) relative to benefits. Major adverse landscape impacts are likely to indicate harm at greater levels greater than significant. Both the terms 'major' and 'significant' are however used, with 'significant' used in situations where harm may be less than 'major', but still significant in terms of the NPPF. Harm that is significant or worse (after mitigation) may be a strong reason to discount a site, although balancing this against benefits still needs to be undertaken. Harm to designated sites should be considered relative to the status of the designation as provided by para. 113 of the NPPF. Whilst local landscape designations are the lowest tier recognised by the NPPF, their status should be taken into account relative to a non-designated area.
- Locally Important Countryside Gaps: Although endorsed as a policy by the Inspector for DM purposes, unless there is a significant harm upon the gap in question, they should not be viewed as being overriding of development needs (although, the impacts can be considered alongside other impacts and benefits). This view is endorsed by the Inspector. Once the land supply is confirmed, its validity as a DM policy is supported.
- Biodiversity impacts (locally designated and undesignated sites): The approach is for the avoidance of harm in the first instance and then mitigation and, if necessary, compensation. Any remaining harm needs to be weighed against overall benefits and the significance of any formal designation. Some sites may be undesignated, e.g. traditional orchards, but contain national or local priority habitats and/or species. These may be so significant as to prevent allocation, or indicate a need for the allocation to retain and promote their enhancement. Protected species may also be an issue which will need to be assessed in accordance with statutory and other guidance. Issues potentially affecting European designated sites are considered by the HRA and a plan will be found unsound if it results in likely significant effects that cannot be mitigated. Addressing this issue might require an allocation to include a suitable accessible natural green space (SANG) on site, alongside a tariff payment to address off-site recreational impacts. However, an HRA would need to conclude that the approach would be sufficient.
- Agricultural land: See paras 2.24-25.
- Flood risk impacts: The Council should follow a sequential test by which sites outside areas of risk should take preference. Where a site needs/should be allocated within an area at flood risk, the Council should follow the exceptions tests and ensure appropriate mitigation is undertaken to make the site safe.

- Heritage assets impacts: Allocations should not lead to substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, unless it can be demonstrated that this is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. The specific circumstances that might allow this, listed by para. 133 of the NPPF, will rarely be an issue for allocations. Whilst new housing is a public benefit, it is unlikely to be unique to a particular site and could be provided elsewhere without the harm. Where there is less than substantial harm, this can be weighed against public benefits. Regard should also be given to the Historic England Good Practice Advice Notes - Note 1 Historic Environment in Local Plans. Cumulative impacts from incremental changes on the significance of a heritage asset, most likely to the setting, will also need to be considered.
- Local Green Spaces (LGS): These are further considered by Section 8. However, any prospective development allocation should be considered in the context of meeting the plans development needs in a sustainable way rather than using a proposed LGS to block a development site. In other words, it is important to meet the development needs of the Borough before confirming the Local Green Spaces in accordance with national planning policy/practice.
- Transport impacts: Allocations should only be prevented on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe.
- Pollution impacts: New development should prevent unacceptable risks from pollution. In the case of air quality, para. 124 of the NPPF states that planning policies should sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking into account the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. Account should also be given of the potential for developments outside an AQMA to worsen the situation. Decisions should ensure that any new development in Air Quality Management Areas is consistent with the local air quality action plan. No objections in principle to the recommended sites in the report have been identified; however, relevant policies for sites should contain requirements for air quality assessments and mitigation.

6) The benefits of development

- 3.26 Allied to the consideration of environmental and other adverse impacts, Members should balance these against the benefits of the site in question (para. 14 NPPF). Common to all sites of course will be the provision of housing, but it will also be other potential benefits which Members will need to particularly weigh up. These may include new community provision, transport improvements, employment or open space. The weight to be given to such issues is a matter of judgement.

Section 5: The ‘discounting’ of site options contrary to the Local Plan strategy or with ‘showstopper’ constraints

- 3.27 Given the interim conclusions reached by the Inspector, together with other evidence already available, Members do not need to consider in detail all the sites submitted to

the Local Plan Examination, SHLAA and subsequent call for sites. Via a sifting process, it is possible to confidently discount a relatively large number of sites from the process which will enable Members to focus on the remainder.

3.28 Table 2 provides a list of those site options which are considered to clearly lie outside of the settlements listed by Policy ST3 and which can be immediately discounted. The location of sites can be referenced from the maps in Appendix 3.

Table 2 Site submissions outside the scope of Policy ST3

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Land at Norton Ash Garden Centre	SW/452	In the countryside at no settlement identified as suitable for allocations. Isolated in terms of para. 55 of the NPPF (currently subject of planning appeal).
Graveney sites	SW/730 and 731	A settlement not identified by Policy ST3 and which has no defined built up area boundary.
Radfield Farm, nr. Teynham	SW/719	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations.
Sites close to Eastchurch prisons	SW/752 and 788	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations.
Land at Shurland Farm, Eastchurch	SW/711	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. The site is additionally considered to have significant to major adverse visual impact not capable of mitigation to acceptable levels.
Land at Kent Science Park	SW/777	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Site specific policy proposed for this location against which planning applications can be considered.
Sites in the Bobbing Corridor and at Keycol Hill	SW/168* ⁶ , 451*, 708, 709 ⁷ , 710, 720, 725, 735, 755, 756, 792	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Also included in Table 3. SW/792, 735, 755 and 756 are additionally considered to have significant to major adverse visual impact not capable of mitigation to levels where their benefits outweigh such impacts. Sites located to the west of the A249 will significantly impact upon the settlement separation of Sittingbourne with Bobbing Hill, Bobbing, Howt Green and Iwade.

⁶ * Sites subject to planning application with reference to para. 49 of the NPPF.

⁷ Also considered within Sittingbourne section of the report.

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Cambray Farm, Stickfast Lane, Bobbing	SW/088	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Isolated in terms of para. 55 of the NPPF.
Site at North Street, Sheldwich	SW/754	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Isolated in terms of para. 55 of the NPPF.
Milstead Manor Farm, Manor Road, Milstead	SW/737	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Isolated in terms of para. 55 of the NPPF.
Land at Funton Brickworks, nr. Lower Halstow	SW/371	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Isolated in terms of para. 55 of the NPPF.
Land at Tonge Church	SW/716	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. It would also substantially harm a designated heritage asset.
Land south of Tonge Mill Country park	SW/776	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. It would also substantially harm a designated heritage asset and result in significant harm to a proposed Local Green Space designation.
Sites at Hartlip	SW/782, 791	In the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations.

3.29 In Table 3 below, there are some sites, which whilst located at settlements within Policy ST3, are judged as falling outside of the settlement or planning area strategy. At this stage, the list of sites is short, but once the task of allocating sites is complete, this category would potentially be expanded as other sites acting cumulatively could also be regarded as contrary to the strategy and discounted for that reason. At the present, Table 3 includes only those sites that are so significant in their scale as to place them beyond both the scope of what is expected from the Council by way of modifications and beyond the overall strategy of the Plan. They can be discounted at this stage. The location of sites can be referenced from the maps in Appendix 3.

Table 3 Sites contrary to the endorsed strategy

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Land at Selling Road,	SW/778	A scale of development which in its own right would account for nearly all of the land required to meet development needs

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Faversham		<p>which, in turn is in a location which is only required to proportionately boost its supply. The scale of development would represent a new option not tested at a much earlier stage of the process. The site, alongside others, is noted by the SA (footnote to page 23) as a potential option for consideration as part of a Local Plan review.</p> <p>Development would lead to transport impacts upon J7 of the M2. These would not be capable of mitigation without major and currently unplanned for improvements.</p>
Sites to the west of the A249 in the Bobbing Corridor	SW/168* ⁸ , 451*, 708, 709 ⁹ , 710, 720, 725, 735, 755, 756, 792	<p>Also included in Table 2. Cumulatively and, in some cases, singly, to accommodate such a scale of growth would require a change to the settlement strategy not tested by the Local Plan process. The sites, alongside others, are noted by the SA (footnote to page 23) as a potential option for consideration as part of a Local Plan review.</p> <p>Note that SW/725 was assessed as part of the SHLAA and did not progress beyond sweep 0, having failed at step 2 of the process.</p>

3.30 There are also a small number of sites which either before or after mitigation are too small to allocate, i.e. they would produce less than 5 dwellings. These are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Site too small for allocation

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Adjacent Eastchurch village hall, Warden Road	SW/713	For SW/713 although having no clear constraint, it should not be considered ahead of other sites. It is also too small for allocation in the Local Plan.
Land at 179-183 Borden Lane, Sittingbourne	SW/796	The site is too small for allocation. In any event, as the site would potentially represent 'town-cramming' due to loss of urban greening, a planning application may be the most appropriate way to determine both the principle and detail of development.
Land between Park Drive and Hales Road, Tunstall/Sittingbourne	SW/712	The site is likely to be too small to allocate once site constraints are considered (trees, garden land). In any event, development would result in some harm to setting of

⁸ * Sites subject to planning application with reference to para. 49 of the NPPF.

⁹ Also considered within Sittingbourne section of the report.

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
		<p>conservation area. As a potential 'garden-grabbing' site, this may be more appropriately examined in context of detailed planning application.</p> <p>The site may also contribute part of the separation between Tunstall and Sittingbourne; however, this too would require detailed examination at the planning application stage.</p>
111 The Street Boughton	SW/434	Relates to land to the rear of at the rear of the car park to the Queens Head public house. The site is on steep topography and is densely vegetated, whilst the relationship with the pub car park would be an awkward one. Once these matters are considered, the site is likely to be too small to allocate.
Site at Doddington	SW/789	<p>Technically outside of settlement, but included here for avoidance of doubt. The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. It should only be considered if 'higher order' locations are not suitable.</p> <p>In any event, due to its limited frontage, the site is likely to be too small for allocation.</p>

3.31 The [ranking exercise](#) undertaken for the 2015 Examination, now updated for the SA, included sites within its lowest 'Tiers' F and G. These were sites with 'showstopper' constraints or sites that were unavailable or unsuitable for housing due to other uses. These can also be discounted from further consideration. The location of sites can be referenced from maps in Appendix 3.

Table 5 Sites discounted as a result of 'showstopper' or other constraints

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Doubleday Lodge, Sittingbourne	SW/454	Withdrawn
Land fronting Milton Creek, Gas Road, Sittingbourne	SW/062	Flood risk, unsuitable environment
45 Key Street, Sittingbourne	SW/067	Not available
189 Park Road, Sittingbourne	SW/307	Not available
Rear of Middletune Avenue, Sittingbourne	SW/309	Not available
Rear of 40 Tonge Road, Sittingbourne	SW/311	Not available

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Car Park, Shortlands Road, Sittingbourne	SW/322	Not available
Milton Pipes, Church Marshes	SW/092	Not available
Eurolink Way, Sittingbourne	SW/338	Not available
Gas Road, Sittingbourne	SW/351	Not available. Unsuitable environment for housing site.
Sittingbourne Community College	SW/214	Loss of open space/playing field
Borden Grammar School, Sittingbourne	SW/402	Loss of open space/playing field
Sittingbourne Community College	SW/429	Loss of open space/playing field
Great Grovehurst Farm, Sittingbourne	SW/075	Not available
Land at North East Sittingbourne	SW/068	With planning permission
KCC Highways Depot, Faversham	SW/210	Not available, but see Table 5
Joyce Field, Water Lane, Ospringe	SW/455	Substantial harm to designated heritage asset, loss of allotments
Reedland Crescent, Faversham	SW/305	Not available
Flood Lane, Faversham	SW/357	Flood risk, loss of open space
Brents Industrial Estate, Faversham	SW/355	Not available. Unsuitable environment for housing site.
Abbey School, Faversham	SW/403	Loss of open space/playing field
Woottons Farm, Minster	SW/234	Withdrawn
Adj. Park Lodge, The Broadway, Minster	SW/189	Flood risk
Park Lodge, The Broadway, Minster	SW/189	Flood risk
Land at Rushenden	SW/456	Flood risk, AHLV, SPA, SSSI

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
Brielle Way, Queenborough	SW/042	Flood risk
Land adj. Queenborough Rd and Sunnyfields Drive, Halfway	SW/421	Flood risk, AHLV, countryside gap
Land at Queenborough Rd	SW/404	Flood risk, AHLV, countryside gap
Whiteway Road, Queenborough	SW/207	Flood risk
Stoneyard Depot, Sheerness	SW/205	Not available
Sites at Checkmate Ltd., New Road, Sheerness	SW/728, 729	The sites would result in the unjustified loss of employment land, the development of land at risk of flooding in a location unlikely to satisfy the sequential and exceptions test in the NPPF. The sites would also represent poorer quality living environments than alternatives.
Sheerness Golf Club	SW/736	Flood risk, significant landscape, settlement separation and visual harm.
Park Lodge, The Broadway, Minster	SW/186	Flood Risk
Danley Middle School, Halfway	SW/115	Loss of open space/playing field
HBC Engineering Solutions, Power Station Road, Halfway	SW/169	With planning permission
Lands at Harts Park, Leysdown	SW/232	Not available.
Land at the East of Woodside, Boughton	SW/003	Woodland loss and potential subsidence
Land East of Woodside, Boughton	SW/015	Woodland loss and potential subsidence
Newington Manor, Bull Lane, Newington	SW/097	Substantial harm to designated heritage asset
Cellar Hill, Teynham	SW/142	Substantial harm to designated heritage asset, loss of orchard and

Location	SHLAA ref.	Commentary if appropriate
		rural amenity, significant harm to landscape of valley to the east which outweighs any benefits of development.
Oak Lane, Upchurch	SW/045	Impact on proposed Local Green Space Designation, loss of allotments.
Four Gun Field, Upchurch	SW/094	With planning permission.

Recommendation 3:

That the Panel agree that the sites in Tables 2-5 be discounted from further consideration.

Section 6: Considering the remaining sites with potential for allocation

3.32 This section considers the main site options that could potentially contribute to meeting the additional housing numbers. Where appropriate a short summary of the site's SHLAA position and 'ranking' is also provided. These, together with the SA and other considerations enable Members to further narrow down the decision making needing to be made. At the end of each site option, there are concluding remarks which are intended to act as 'sense-checks' for and challenges to the recommendations made.

1) The provision of sites and the 'proportionate boost' for Faversham

3.33 Following Policy ST3 would require the issues at Sittingbourne, the main Borough urban centre, to be examined first. However, it is appropriate to consider options at Faversham first, as this has a bearing on the remainder of development requirements elsewhere. Provided that the tiers of settlement are not altered as a result, there is no fundamental difficulty with this and the most appropriate starting point to determine the degree of boost is to consider the contending sites themselves.

3.34 An increased provision for Faversham town will have already been partly provided by commitments made in 2015/16 via the 66 dwellings granted on appeal at Brogdale Road¹⁰ (SW/441 and rank Tier B, SHLAA sweep 2). The site (Figure 1) can also be allocated because of its suitability and compliance with the settlement strategy and because any harm associated has been determined as acceptable – in other words it would have been allocated regardless.

3.35 In the case of Perry Court Farm (SW/413 370 dwellings and 18,525 sq. m of employment uses and ranked Tier B, SHLAA sweep 3), as shown in Figure 2, a

¹⁰ Permission granted after the monitoring year of 2014/15.

resolution to grant outline planning permission was agreed on 31 March 2016. Given this, the site should be considered in its own right for allocation. The site has been controversial, but its allocation would not substantially harm designated heritage assets with the site also visually well contained by land-form and man-made features. Where there is harm, there are prospects for mitigation which would reduce it to levels less than significant. The site offers the additional benefits of employment, open space and transport enhancements (junction improvements) and is in a viable location capable of contributing to the 5-year supply. The site is recommended for allocation, in short because of its suitability and compliance with the settlement strategy, its sustainable location and because allocation of the site is not so significantly harmful as to outweigh its benefits.

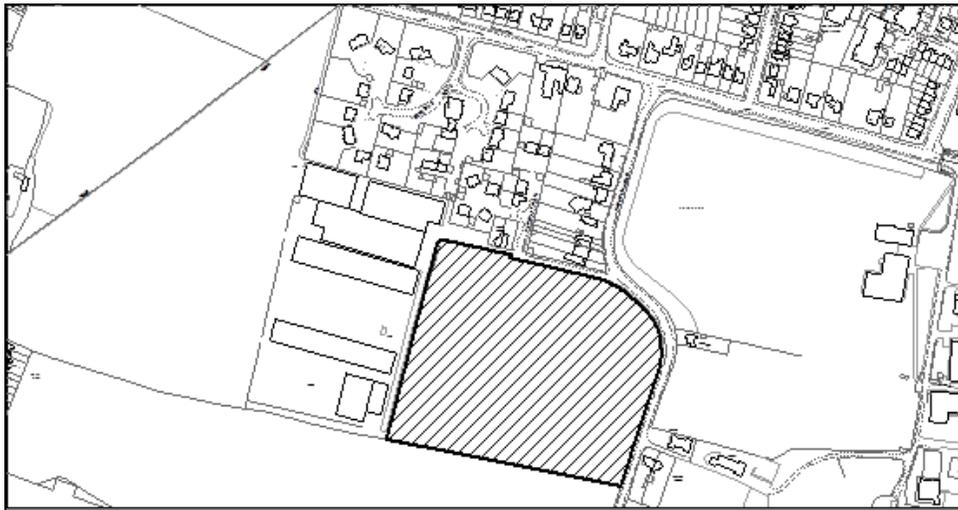


Figure 1 SW/441 Land at Brogdale Road, Faversham

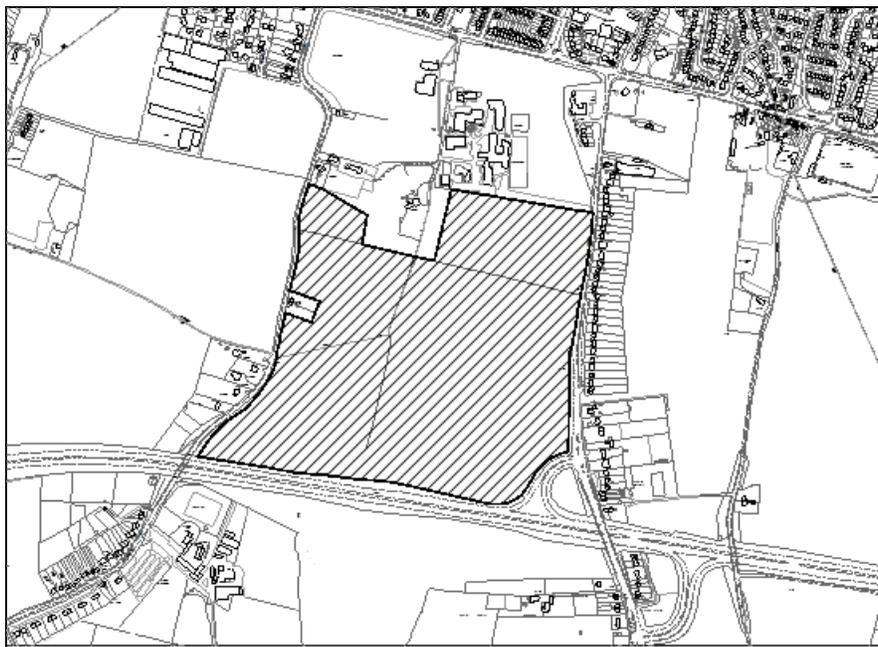


Figure 2 SW/413 Land at Perry Court Farm, Faversham

- 3.36 Allocation of both these sites is important in terms of ensuring an adequate supply of sites and that the appropriate levels of allocations are made at Faversham having had regard to the Inspector’s interim findings. The allocations and their policies are shown on pages 187 and 222 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.
- 3.37 Even including the above allocations, the Panel should consider whether a further ‘nudge in emphasis’ toward the town is appropriate without harm to the plan’s Vision and strategy.
- 3.38 To focus on those sites most appropriate to consider, Table 6 discounts a number for the reasons stated. Their location can be referenced from the maps in Appendix 3.

Table 6 Sites discounted as not suitable at Faversham

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA ‘sweep’	Ranking ‘Tier’	Commentary if appropriate
Land east of Faversham	SW/080	350	0	D	<p>Would, when considered cumulatively with other preferred committed sites be contrary to the planning area strategy by virtue of disproportionately boosting the land supply.</p> <p>Development would also extend the town beyond the capacity of the local landscape to accommodate change and lead to significant to major harm not outweighed by any benefits.</p> <p>Development would lead to transport impacts upon J7 of the M2. These would not be capable of mitigation without major and currently unplanned for improvements.</p>
Sites to the north-east of Faversham (Abbey Farm and Abbey Fields)	SW/430, 431, 795	106, 525, 6	0	G, G, G	<p>Would, when considered cumulatively with other preferred committed sites be contrary to the planning area strategy by virtue of disproportionately boosting the land supply.</p> <p>Although variable in scale, all the sites are demonstrated to be substantially harmful to the heritage and landscape setting</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking 'Tier'	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>of the town and to designated heritage assets and lead to significant to major harm not outweighed by any benefits.</p> <p>Some further consideration would need to be given to SPA issues which may require significant on-site mitigation.</p>
KCC Highways Depot, Preston	SW/210	28	2	B	<p>Although claimed as 'available' by the landowners, the site is reliant upon the relocation of current activities to an, as yet, unidentified location.</p> <p>In any event, once available, the site falls within the settlement boundary and can be considered for development via a planning application as a windfall site.</p>
Land adjacent Mindon, 9 Ashford Road and Orchard cottages	SW/081, 751	70, 30	0	G, G	The sites are demonstrated to be substantially harmful to designated heritage assets.
Perry Court Farmhouse, London Road	SW/794	60	0	G	The site is demonstrated to be substantially harmful to the setting of an undesignated heritage asset.
Sites to the south west of Faversham and at Ospringe	SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 701, 797	42, 308, 136, 64, 227, 300, 51	0	G, G, G, G, G, G, G	<p>Would, when considered cumulatively with other preferred committed sites be contrary to the planning area strategy by virtue of disproportionately boosting the land supply.</p> <p>Although variable in scale, the sites are demonstrated to be substantially harmful to the heritage and landscape setting</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking 'Tier'	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>of the town and to designated heritage assets and lead to significant harm not outweighed by any benefits.</p> <p>Individually the sites are considered to result in significant to major visual and landscape harm. (Not SW/046/047) Sites also fail to conserve and enhance the AONB by virtue of impacts upon its setting.</p> <p>Cumulatively, the sites would impact upon the AQMA at Ospringe and whilst individually sites may be able to address this issue, these sites should not be preferable to others at the town.</p>
Land at Bysing Wood Road, Faversham	SW/733	25	0	G	<p>Considered in Faversham context for the avoidance of doubt. However, the site does not adjoin the built up area boundary to the town and can be regarded as being in the countryside away from identified settlement and not identified as suitable for allocations. Additionally, development would be significantly harmful to a local landscape designation and local wildlife site leading to harm that substantially outweighs any benefits.</p> <p>Development would be viewed as an illogical cluster of housing unrelated to the urban area.</p>

3.39 The above discounting leaves a number of remaining options to further boost growth at Faversham:

- a. Policy MU5 Land at Lady Dane Farm;

- b. SW/334 Former Nova Garden Furniture premises, Graveney Road; and
- c. Policy A6: Land east of Faversham.

- 3.40 The first opportunity is at the existing allocation at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane. Policy MU5 references the potential for a second phase of development, including housing. Taking into account the land required for a second phase of employment, the need for further open space and the possibility of a new primary school, there is potential for a minimum additional 60 dwellings. This increase is recommended. The allocation and its policy are shown on page 217 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.
- 3.41 A second opportunity is at the former Nova Garden Furniture site at Graveney Road (SW/334 and ranked Tier A, SHLAA sweep 2). The site, shown in Figure 3, is currently allocated for mixed uses (housing unspecified) with the objective of retaining land in employment use. However, despite its good location, adverse development costs indicate that its future as an employment site may be in some doubt, whilst its redevelopment wholly for housing could provide some 90 dwellings on a brownfield site with little wider impact. Therefore, this site is now recommended as an allocation wholly for housing. The allocation and its policy are shown on page 163 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.
- 3.42 Adjoining the Nova site, shown in Figure 4, is a 2.0 ha existing draft employment allocation (Policy A6) which requires access from the Nova site (a separate access being unacceptable in highway terms). This could lead to employment traffic passing through the recommended housing site at SW/334 which may be considered undesirable. Members have the option to consider the 'conversion' of the Policy A6 employment allocation to housing, but the principle of the employment allocation has already been considered by the Inspector and found to present no soundness issues. Its 'conversion' to housing would be a loss of potential employment provision at the town and it should therefore only be revisited if there are strong reasons to so do.
- 3.43 The landowner of Policy A6 is willing to see the site developed for housing instead of employment (SW/783 rank Tier A, SHLAA sweep 0). This could provide about 60 dwellings, although its topography and location next to existing commercial uses may reduce this significantly and may not overall make this a particularly desirable or suitable housing allocation. A shared access between housing and employment does present certain design and layout challenges for the Nova site, but they do not appear insurmountable, even though some reduction in overall yield on the Nova site may be needed to achieve it. However, Member's views in respect of the shared access and the change in policy toward the A6 (SW/783) employment allocation are requested.

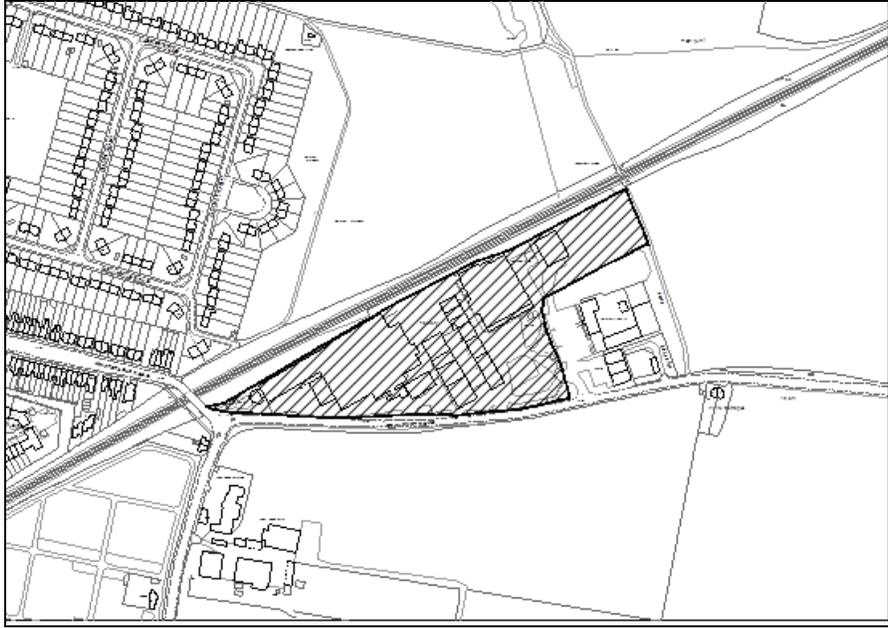


Figure 3 SW/334 Former Nova site, Graveney Road, Faversham

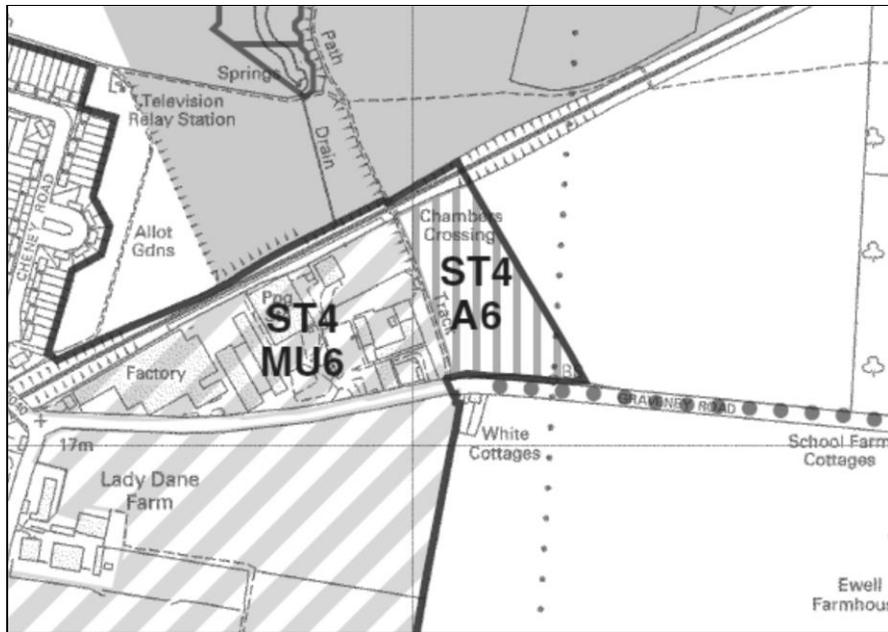


Figure 4 Land east of Faversham, marked as Policy ST4 and A6 (SW/783).

- 3.44 The above changes (excluding the Policy A6 issue) would give an extra 150 dwellings at Faversham. Given the need to achieve a 5-year supply, Members could consider whether the emphasis upon Faversham should be extended still further. It is on this basis that the following potential site options are put forward:
- a. Land at Preston Fields (SW/233 and ranked Tier C, SHLAA sweep 3) – 217 dwellings; and
 - b. Land east of Ham Road (SW/700 and ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 3) – 156 dwellings.



Figure 5 SW/233 Land at Preston Fields, Faversham

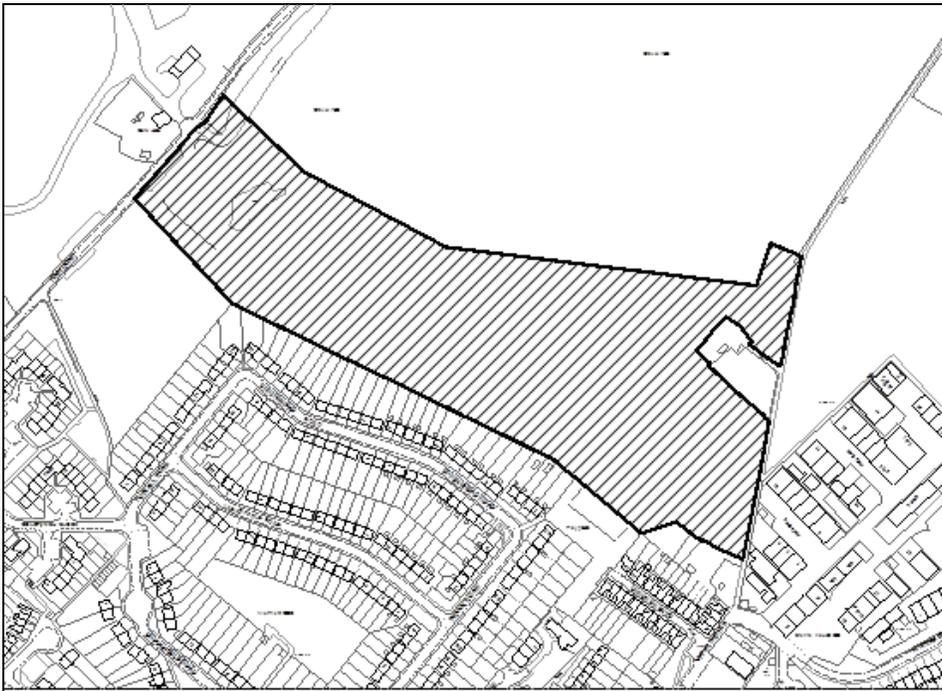


Figure 6 SW/700 Land east of Ham Road, Faversham

- 3.45 Heritage evidence before the Examination ([SBC/PS/010 Faversham Town Heritage and Landscape Study](#)) indicated that both sites fell within areas that were of 'high' contribution to heritage and landscape setting. In the light of this, discussions with both developers have led to amended proposals in response to potential adverse impacts.
- 3.46 SW/700 at Ham Farm site has been reduced in size from 8.5 ha to the 3.5 ha in Figure 6. Despite this, it is considered to have greater and significant visual impacts than SW/233 due to its position within an exposed landscape. There would also remain

some adverse impact upon the heritage setting of the town. Although mitigation could further reduce these impacts, they will remain more significant to those at Preston Fields which is better contained by landform and existing development. Close to the SPA, the Ham Farm site would also need considerable on and off site mitigation to overcome potential concerns as to a likely significant impact on the SPA. This may well require a larger prospective allocation beyond the current site boundaries (perhaps up to the original 8.5 ha) in the form of suitable assessable natural green space (SANG). This has not been advanced by the site promotor and would need to be canvassed with them if Members wished it.

- 3.47 The SW/233 Preston Field site, shown at Figure 5, is not without adverse impact as there would be the loss of attractive rural views to and from the A2 along this shallow valley. There would also be some impacts on heritage assets associated with the adjacent conservation area, although design evidence indicates that this can be mitigated to less than substantial harm. Likewise, landscape impacts could be much reduced by the retention of the southern third of the site as open space. This mitigation would require some reduction in the yield sought by the developer (250 dwellings to 217). Impacts to residents from the adjacent Highways Depot and tip sites are judged as capable of mitigation. The site is also preferable to Ham Farm from an SA and HRA point of view because of its further distance from the SPA/Ramsar.
- 3.48 Both sites involve the use of best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 3.49 In terms of accessibility, the Ham Farm site is in a fairly sustainable location, relatively close to a primary school and supermarket and less than 1 km from the town centre. The Preston Fields site is similarly located, but has better secondary school access and public transport choices. Whilst the A2 itself is a barrier to some degree to pedestrians accessing the town centre, it is not a serious impediment. A clear advantage of the Preston Fields site is its close motorway access whereas the Ham Road site is more distant, either via the Western Link and the A2 at Ospringe (including the AQMA) or via narrow roads to and in the town centre.
- 3.50 With two points of highway access to the Preston Fields site potentially available (A2 and Ashford Road), Kent Highways advise that whilst there may be no objection in principle to development of the site, a transport assessment would be required to determine the most appropriate primary access point. Likewise, a decision will be needed as to whether these points should be essentially linked to bypass the A2/A251 junction. These would be matters to resolve for the Examination.
- 3.51 Although there are merits associated with both locations, it is **not** recommended that both sites should be allocated as this would lead to an over-emphasis of allocations at the town and an exacerbation of an over-supply of allocated sites. It is also **not** recommended that either of these sites be considered as 'replacements' for other allocations recommended by this report. This is because neither site is a better fit relative to other objectives, notably the use of lower quality agricultural land.
- 3.52 So by comparison of the two competing sites, on balance, the Preston Fields site is judged to perform better overall and therefore the Ham Farm site is not recommended for allocation. This is supported by the SA which shows 'clear water' between the two sites.

3.53 Given the levels of concern over the recent Perry Court Farm application, Members will have understandable reservations over a further allocation in a similar location. However, like the Perry Court site, Preston Fields is relatively well contained visually and whilst there are landscape and heritage sensitivities, these can be reduced as described above. However, in the case of landscape impacts, these are judged to be moderate overall, but moderate/significant in localised views. It is therefore acknowledged that the decision here is less clear cut than others in the report, but the need to secure a 5-year supply, whilst addressing arguments as to whether Faversham has received its 'proportionate boost', leads to a recommendation that this additional site also be allocated. The allocation for Preston Fields and its policy are shown on page 166 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.

Conclusions in respect of Faversham

- 3.54 The recommended allocations will achieve the proportionate boost necessary for Faversham and reduce that necessary elsewhere, whilst giving good prospects for improving the land supply. By reference to Table 13 in Section 7, Members will see that the Faversham planning area will have received a boost of 2.9% in allocations, although it is higher than this at the town itself.
- 3.55 With the Brogdale Road and Perry Court Farm sites viewed as, in effect, committed, the Preston Fields site is indicated as the most preferred by the SA. Members could consider further sites without necessarily altering Faversham's position within Policy ST3, but this is likely to stretch too far the notion of a 'proportionate boost'. The contending sites for such a further boost are all problematic. The issues of landscape, heritage and biodiversity concerning SW/700, east of Ham Road are highlighted by the SA. Elsewhere, allocations would need to be considered to the north or south-west, where heritage assets and landscape character/quality would be substantially or significantly/majorly harmed and, again, highlighted by the SA. Alternatively, it would require allocations to the east and west (SW/080, SW783) which would significantly or majorly harm landscape character and quality. All these sites would largely involve BMV land, potentially undermining attempts to utilise lower quality agricultural land elsewhere.
- 3.56 It is also important to highlight the potential for in-combination effects, i.e. many developments cumulatively impacting upon the heritage setting of Faversham. It may also be that higher growth at Faversham, or at certain locations around the town, could result in traffic impacts on the historic centre.
- 3.57 In conclusion, it is considered that provision at Faversham beyond that indicated is not supported by the evidence and that to do so would extend the boost potentially beyond a point which undermines both the strategy for the town and the Local Plan Vision. The recommendation below is therefore commended to Members.

FAVERSHAM SITES

Recommendation 4:

That the Panel:

- a) agree that the sites within Table 6 be discounted from further consideration;
- b) agree the allocation of an additional 60 dwellings at Lady Dane Farm;
- c) agree the allocation of SW/441 and SW/413 at Brogdale Road and Perry Court Farm for 66 and 370 dwellings respectively, together with 18,525 sq. m of employment floorspace at Perry Court Farm;
- d) agree the allocation of SW/334 at the former Nova premises for 90 dwellings
- e) consider whether land to the east of Faversham at Graveney Road (SW/783) should be re-allocated from employment to housing for 40 dwellings; and
- f) agree the allocation of SW/233 at Preston Fields for 217 dwellings and not agree the allocation of SW/700 at Ham Farm.

2) The balance of additional allocations between Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey within the Thames Gateway Planning Area

- 3.58 This decision is required to guide site choices between the two locations. The existing settlement strategy places the main emphasis of growth upon the Thames Gateway (Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey). It is acknowledged that to follow the settlement strategy, set out in Policy ST3, further Sittingbourne should have the greatest emphasis. However, it is important to first resolve the balance of growth between Sittingbourne and Sheppey, but strictly within the context of maintaining an overall outcome where the total of all allocations continue to reflect Sittingbourne's primacy.
- 3.59 There are a number of matters arising from the Examination indicating that the Council needs to re-visit the balance between Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey with a view to exploring an appropriate increase at the latter location:
- (1) Current allocations on Sheppey are considerably lower relative to its population and employment share;
 - (2) Over 600 allocated dwellings were removed from the Local Plan prior to its submission; and
 - (3) The Island has significant resources of lower quality agricultural land.
- 3.60 With levels of growth above that recommended at Sittingbourne considered undesirable (see discussion from para 3.100 onwards), a degree of additional emphasis is appropriate for Sheppey. However, the SA examination of spatial strategy alternatives (Appendix V, page 76) indicates its poorer performance in terms of housing and transport and negative landscape impacts.
- 3.61 Whilst use of best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV grades 1, 2 and 3a) on the mainland is likely to be unavoidable to meet the total additional housing numbers, the failure to maximise the use of suitable sites on lower quality land on Sheppey (and

elsewhere) would raise questions as to whether the plan had complied with para. 112 of the NPPF. Avoiding this issue, or a failure to maximise the potential it offers, would increase the land take of better quality land within the A2 corridor. It would also lessen the Island's contribution in terms of the strategic emphasis of the Thames Gateway relative to locations outside of it.

- 3.62 If the protection of high quality agricultural land on the mainland is pursued to its ultimate conclusion, the entire additional housing land provision for the Gateway area of the Borough could be made on Sheppey. However, this would give rise to the following potential adverse consequences, a number of which are supported by the SA:
- a. Sheppey's position within the settlement strategy in Policy ST3 could usurp that of Sittingbourne;
 - b. Sites more distant from the A249 would be required, which perform less well in terms of accessibility to services and public transport;
 - c. More prominent sites on higher ground would be required. These are visually harmful, in most cases significantly or even majorly so;
 - d. Levels of employment provision on the Island may not be adequate;
 - e. Current viability issues for Sheppey are likely to mean a 'zero' CIL charge for a significant proportion of the Borough's development. An excessive emphasis in this location would impact upon the ability to deliver the supporting infrastructure the plan needs (accepting that some sites may facilitate the delivery of some infrastructure) until such times as viability improved. However, S106 would still be able to be spent, whilst CIL monies collected elsewhere could be spent on Sheppey.
- 3.63 Given the above, it is commended that further additional allocations on Sheppey should be made, but that this should be limited in terms of the conflict with other objectives as highlighted by para. 3.62 a.-e. above. Recommendations later in the report seek to determine the appropriate levels and location for this emphasis.

3) The focus of growth on the Isle of Sheppey

- 3.64 To accord with the settlement strategy, Policy ST3 directs the majority of Sheppey growth at what is referred to as the 'West Sheppey Triangle' (Sheerness, Queenborough-Rushenden, Minster and Halfway) – these being the best connected settlements to employment, facilities and transport opportunities. More specifically, due to flooding risks in this location (see Table 4), attention on site allocations focuses attention on those sites on the higher ground around Minster and Halfway.
- 3.65 To confirm and reinforce this approach, it is though necessary to give some consideration to locations at the eastern end of the Island and whether it is appropriate for contributions to be made there to meeting the land supply.
- 3.66 This issue was noted by the SA (but not as part of the assessment), as part of establishing reasonable alternatives to be tested (para. 5.3.24). As a result, it has been concluded that an East Sheppey alternative is not reasonable:

“Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at East Sheppey (where there are two Rural Local Service Centres); and from a strategic perspective there is a strong

argument for restricting growth here given its isolation/poor transport connections. Whilst in theory it can be argued that growth could address the problem of isolation (and associated relative deprivation), in practice it is not clear that opportunities exist at the current time. Another factor in support of growth here is the resource of lower quality agricultural land, but this is not an overriding factor.”

- 3.67 It is agreed that development on eastern Sheppey could benefit certain remoter communities with new services and infrastructure. It could also enable the Council to pursue further the objective to reduce reliance on BMV land elsewhere (although it seems likely that there is some BMV in parts of eastern Sheppey). However, the sites before the Council (some of which have already been discounted in Tables 2 and 4), do not bring with them compelling cases to demonstrate that the sustainability and isolation of these communities would be significantly enhanced. It would also take disproportionately large numbers of houses with no ultimate guarantee that viability would be able to deliver necessary infrastructure.
- 3.68 The only benefit of extending the search for growth eastward is the use of lower quality agricultural land. Whilst the land quality status would need to be confirmed, the pursuit of such an objective so far east on the Island would be at the expense of other considerations, such as the need to locate development close to services and better transport choices. With Eastchurch and Leysdown some 6 and 10 km respectively from the strategic road network, it seems reasonable to reach a conclusion that beyond Minster the limits of using lower quality land on Sheppey is reached. Furthermore, due to topography and exposure, a number of the sites beyond Minster have significant or even major adverse impacts on the local landscape. Any significant emphasis on east Sheppey would also require further assessment within the HRA given its location close to the SPA/Ramsar.
- 3.69 In conclusion, the pursuit of an eastward approach ahead of that to the west, or indeed elsewhere, is not commended. Whilst all sites in this eastern location are recommended to be discounted in terms of their lesser contribution to sustainable development, Table 7 also includes (acknowledging the SA) other grounds for discounting sites as less favourable than sites to the west. The location of sites can be referenced from maps in Appendix 3.

Table 7 Sites discounted as not required and/or suitable on east Sheppey

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
Land at Leysdown and Warden	SW/758, 781	184, 112	0	B, G	Although Leysdown is a Rural Local Service Centre, the site here (and at Warden) offers few specific benefits that would lead them to being allocated ahead of alternatives (notwithstanding concerns over the settlements accessibility to

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					higher order services).
Sites at Eastchurch	SW/155, 196	16, 515, 2	0	C, D	<p>In the case of SW/155, the landscape impacts are considerably less, although are judged to be moderately harmful in views from the south/south-west. The site is though not well-related to the existing built form and would create development pressures in an undeveloped and largely rural landscape. It should only be considered in the absence of other more suitable locations.</p> <p>In the case of SW/196, the prominent and exposed topography on these higher slopes would make development significantly (major in the case of SW/196) harmful in the landscape significantly outweighing any benefits.</p>
Sites at Plough Road, Eastchurch	SW/001, 159	57, 8	0, 3	D, B	<p>In the case of SW/001, the site is peripheral to local services and located on a pleasant rural lane. Development would not strongly relate to any existing settlement and urbanise the rural landscape. Development would also be significantly harmful in views from the north, east and west, significantly outweighing any benefits.</p> <p>In the case of SW/159 (Land at The Dantlings), the site has been found as suitable by the SHLAA. Whilst the site is relatively accessible and development might be</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					accommodated without significant harm, its choice as a housing allocation is less favourable than alternatives elsewhere.

3.70 Comments are also required in respect of two other sites. The first at SW/129, shown at Figure 7 (ranked Tier D, SHLAA sweep 0), is at The Bunnybank Eastchurch and could provide 40 dwellings. It forms an accessibly located site close to the centre of the village and well contained in the wider landscape. However, it forms a very pleasant undeveloped setting to the western approaches to the village and development would be moderately to significantly harmful. It also should be noted that the site has been put forward for consideration as a Local Green Space. Ahead of considering that issue, whilst the above harm may not be sufficient to outweigh an overriding need to develop at Eastchurch, there are preferable locations available and therefore the site is not recommended.

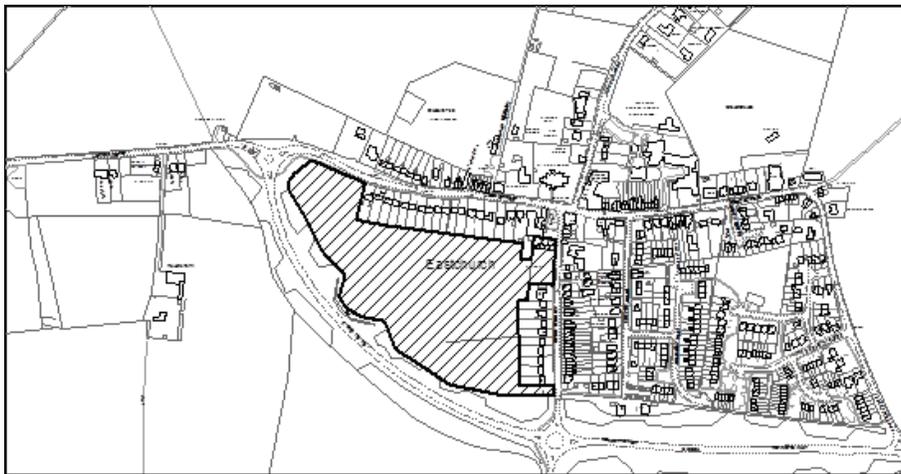


Figure 7 SW/129 Land at The Bunnybank, Eastchurch

3.71 The second site, shown in Figure 8, is to the north/north-east of Eastchurch. Following discussions with the landowner, SW/197 (ranked Tier NA, SHLAA sweep 3) was significantly reduced from its earlier submission, both to limit harm to heritage assets and to reduce adverse landscape impacts due to the position of the village on elevated and exposed land with views from land to the north and west.

3.72 Despite the amendments from the landowner, significant to major adverse impacts are judged as remaining. Should Members believe that the advantages of the site significantly outweigh these impacts, it is recommended that the scale of the site should be further reduced with the levels of landscape and heritage setting mitigation increased. Even with further site reductions, the remaining landscape harm would be

significant and its advantages would need to be judged as outweighing this harm. However, given that Members do not need to consider this site further for the reasons set out in paras. 3.67-68, its allocation is not recommended.

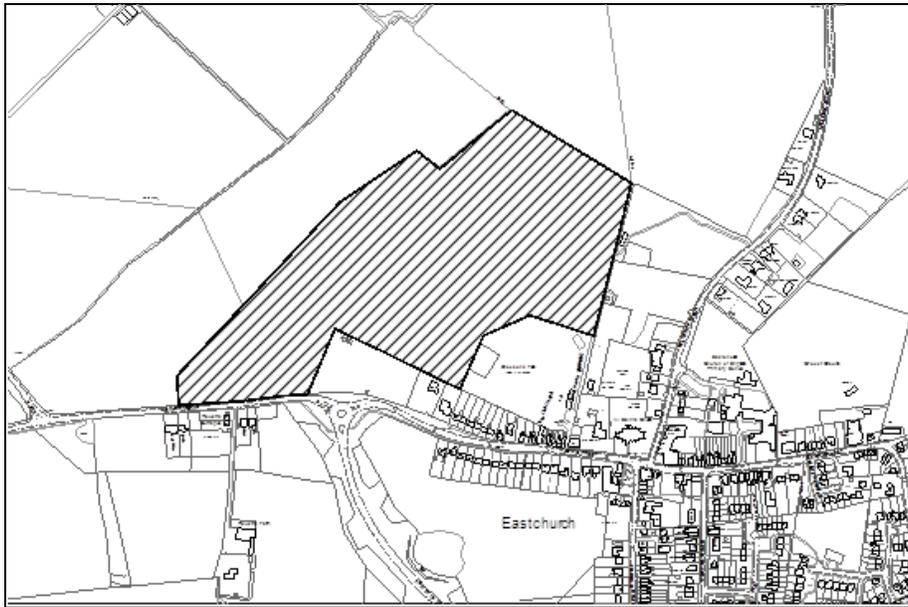


Figure 8 SW/197 Land north of Eastchurch

4) The site options at the western settlements of the Isle of Sheppey

- 3.73 With a focus appropriately established at the 'West Sheppey Triangle', suitable sites there need to be identified. Due to low lying sites already having been discounted, the only site options around Minster and Halfway are considered. In this respect, there are site options to the east and west of Minster.
- 3.74 Analysis within the current SA report - see the table within Appendix III that deals with West Sheppey - indicates, in broad terms, that sites to the west of Minster and southwards at Halfway are more favourable, both in terms of better connections to existing services and a reduced landscape impact.
- 3.75 That said, development would not be without adverse visual and landscape impacts due to the open landscape and higher topography, although the extent of these impacts can be reduced by mitigation. This is in contrast to sites to the east, north and north east of Minster where there are greater scales of visual and landscape impact that remain significant or even major after mitigation. In some instances, there is also substantial harm to a designated heritage asset (Minster Abbey).
- 3.76 These conclusions enable a number of sites to be recommended for discounting. These are shown in Table 8. The location of sites can be referenced from maps in Appendix 3.

Table 8 Sites discounted as not suitable at Minster and Halfway

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
Land rear of Chequers Road/Scocles Road, Minster	SW/459, 706	9, 61	3, 0	G, G	<p>Due to the steep topography and relationship with Minster, there would be significant to major landscape and visual harm arising from these sites which could not be mitigated to acceptable levels where benefits would outweigh the harm. The sites would also give rise to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset in terms of impacts upon views to of Minster Abbey and its hill-top setting. The setting of Minster would be likewise harmed.</p> <p>Development would also significantly harm the extensive and long distance views of the Swale marshes to the south and be detrimental to the amenities and functioning of the footpath across the site.</p> <p>There would also be detrimental erosion of a green wedge between developments.</p>
Land rear of Nelson Road/Scocles Road, Minster	SW793	120	0	G	<p>Due to the steep topography and relationship with Minster, there would be significant and major landscape and visual harm arising from this site which could not be mitigated to acceptable levels where benefits would outweigh the harm. The site would also give</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>rise to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset in terms of impacts upon views to of Minster Abbey and its hill-top setting. The setting of Minster would be likewise harmed.</p> <p>There would also be detrimental erosion of a green wedge between developments.</p>
Land south of Elm Lane, Minster	SW/799	10	0	D	<p>An incongruous site in terms of its relationship with the existing settlement form. Development would appear highly prominent in views from the north and south and would overall be significantly harmful in terms of landscape/visual impact.</p> <p>There would also be detrimental erosion of a green wedge between developments.</p>
Land at Gilbert Hall Farm, Minster	SW/779	574	0	G	<p>Due to the steep topography and relationship with Minster, there would be significant and major landscape and visual harm and loss of a green wedge between developments, all arising from this site which could not be mitigated to acceptable levels where benefits would outweigh the harm. The site would also give rise to substantial harm to a designated heritage asset in terms of impacts upon views to of</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>Minster Abbey and its hill-top setting. The setting of Minster would be likewise harmed.</p> <p>Development would also significantly harm the extensive and long distance views of the Swale marshes to the south and be detrimental to the amenities and functioning of the footpath across the site.</p> <p>There would also be detrimental erosion of a green wedge between developments.</p> <p>The site also represents grade 3a agricultural land, which is a rare resource on Sheppey.</p> <p>Site considered and rejected for allocation by a Local Plan Inspector in 1998.</p>
Land at Windy Gap, Chequers Road, Minster	SW/044, 780	106, 70	0, 0	D, G	<p>Development would significantly and majorly harm the landscape of the locality including the extensive sea views afforded. SW/0780 also potentially impacts upon an SSSI, whilst SW/044 may have some localised interest.</p> <p>Development would also significantly harm a proposed Local Green Space designation (if agreed). In any event, there would also be detrimental erosion of a</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					green wedge between developments. These impacts outweigh any benefits of the development of these sites.
Land r/o 33 Highfield Road, Minster	SW/019, 158	70, 21	0, 0	D, C	SW/019 has the greater impact, but development of either site would significantly harm the landscape by virtue of its exposed and elevated position where benefits would outweigh the harm. Local biodiversity issues would need to be confirmed.
Land to the east of Parsonage Farm, Minster	SW/184	29	0	G	The site would be substantially harmful to the setting of a designated heritage asset. The land also comprises former orchard (a UK BAP priority habitat).
Danley Farm, Minster Road, Halfway	SW/021, 038	224, 22	0, 0	G, G	These sites would be substantially harmful to a designated heritage asset and the separation of Minster with Halfway. Sites are also at high flood risk.

- 3.77 Whilst sites to the east of Minster have been discounted, there are three sites in this general location which merit further discussion:
- SW/457 Land at Chequers Road – 10 dwellings (ranked Tier B, SHLAA sweep 2);
 - SW/705 Land at Scocles Road/Elm Lane Minster – 50 dwellings (ranked Tier B, SHLAA sweep 2); and
 - SW/133 Land to the east of Scocles Road – 575 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0).

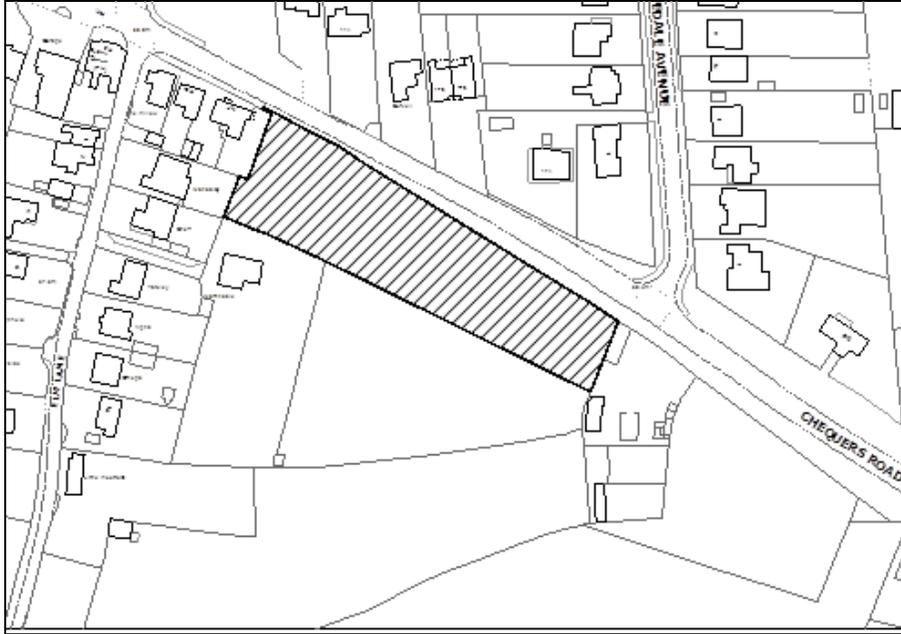


Figure 9 SW/457 Land at Chequers Road, Minster

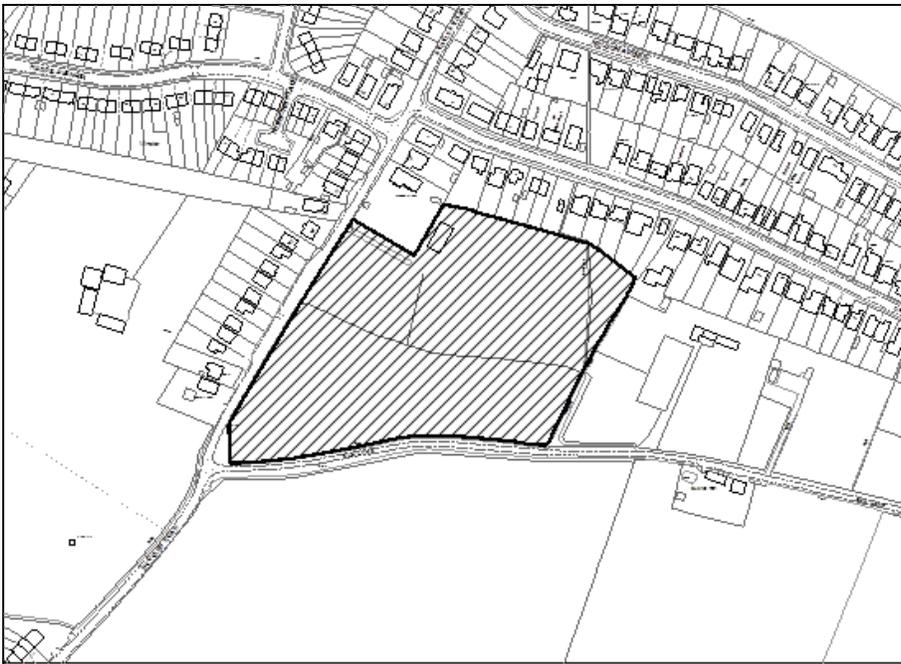


Figure 10 SW/705 Land at Scocles Road/Elm Lane, Minster

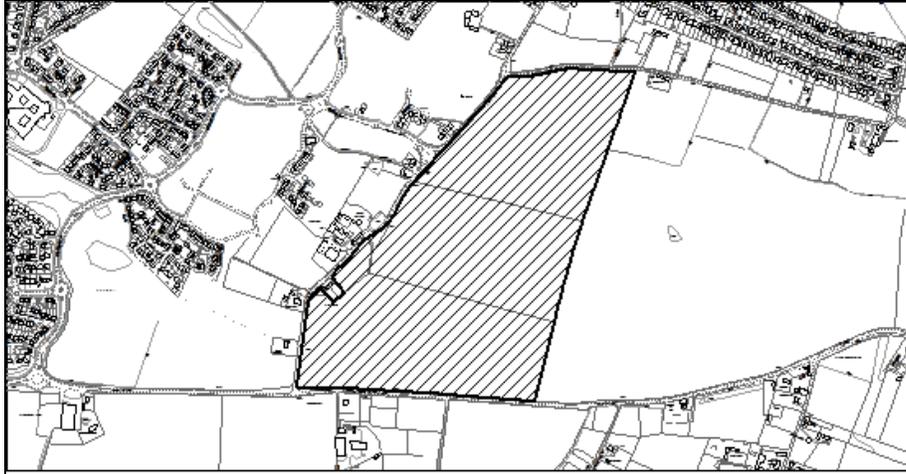


Figure 11 SW/133 Land to the east of Scocles Road, Minster

- 3.78 In the case of SW/457, shown as Figure 9, these dwellings can be accommodated on a frontage site with minimal harm to the surrounding landscape and without precedence for further ribbon development on sites which would be more visually exposed. Likewise, SW/705, shown as Figure 10, has merit. Unlike sites to the south and north, its containment by vegetation and the higher ground lying immediately to the south, leads to only moderate visual impact, although it will give rise to pressures to develop adjacent land. Both sites are amongst the more preferable highlighted by the SA (page 49). They are recommended to Members and will increase the use of lower quality agricultural land. The allocations and their policies are shown on pages 155 & 158 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.
- 3.79 In the case of SW/133, shown as Figure 11, this is a major potential land release to the east of Thistle Hill, where there would be significant to major landscape and visual harm which cannot be easily mitigated. This is because of views of the site from the south and from the higher ground to the north looking southwards toward the Swale. There would also be additional adverse and cumulative impacts on the setting of the listed building at Scocles Court. Should Members consider allocating the site, a reduction in the landscape and heritage impacts could be achieved by a significant reduction in dwelling numbers from the 575 promoted by the developer to circa 370 dwellings. This would involve limiting development to the northern half of the site with the southern half provided as landscape mitigation/open space. This in turn would enable some localised landscape benefits to be taken into account. However, this approach has not been tested with the developer and even if it were to be agreed, it is likely that significant visual harm would remain, particularly within the southward views from the higher ground to the north.
- 3.80 Analysis within the current SA report - see the table within Appendix III that deals with West Sheppey - notes the site as one of the lesser preferable options, highlighting landscape, heritage and traffic constraints and its poorer relationship with Minster.
- 3.81 The benefits of the site can be acknowledged in terms of providing a potential 'bypass' for the narrow Scocles Road routed through the site, together with the financial contributions that could be made to highway improvements on the Lower Road further

to the west. The site is also of a scale that could provide local facilities, although none have been specifically identified.

- 3.82 To allocate the site would require the Panel to conclude that the balance of these benefits (including the ability to considerably increase the use of lower quality agricultural land) were sufficient to outweigh any impacts. The evidence and SA do not point the Panel in this direction. There are other sites with lesser impacts, including those further to the west. Overall the site's advantages are not judged to outweigh its impacts and SW/133 is not recommended as suitable for allocation ahead of other recommended sites.
- 3.83 To arrive at the final point to determine the extent of the emphasis of growth on Sheppey, attention needs to be focused at the more generally suitable west of Minster location where there are considered to be two sites that should be further examined:
- SW/194 (also incorporating SW/184) Land at Barton Hill Drive – 620 dwellings (ranked Tier C, SHLAA sweep 2); and
 - SW/165 Land at Belgrave Road – 140 dwellings (ranked Tier B, SHLAA sweep 2).

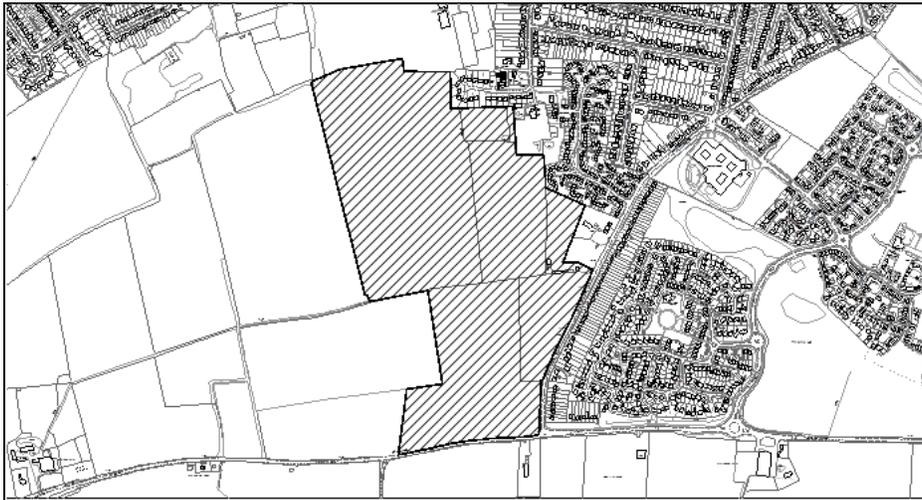


Figure 12 SW/194 Land at Barton Hill Drive, Minster



Figure 13 SW/165 Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway

- 3.84 Members are asked to re-consider their previous decision to remove these sites as allocations after they were included in the 2013 draft Local Plan because of residents' concerns. In the case of SW/194 at Barton Hill Drive, Figure 12 shows the boundaries to the site to have been modified from that in the 2013 Local Plan to now better reflect the undulating landform and provide for substantial landscaping/open space for mitigation. This involves a reduced land-take closer to the Lower Road with an increased area to the north, whilst a variable level of density suggests that its yield could be increased from the 550 units proposed by the 2013 draft Local Plan, to 620 dwellings. This will still only be at a density a little over 35 dpa, but is in recognition of the landscape mitigation required. Of these sites, the SA (page 49) notes both sites amongst the better performing of those considered.
- 3.85 Whilst there is some visual and landscape harm, mitigation is likely to lead both to some landscape benefits with any overall remaining harm judged as moderate. Overall, this is a lesser scale of landscape and visual harm than previously allocated and from what would result on land to the east of Minster at, for example, SW/133.
- 3.86 Substantial harm (having regard to cumulative impacts) to the heritage setting of Parsonage Farm can be avoided by mitigation using open space and the retention and management of the former orchard which could also provide a pedestrian link through to Parsonage Chase (subject to third party agreement). This old orchard is subject to SW/184, which is not recommended for allocation in its own right, due to the loss of habitat and impact upon heritage setting.
- 3.87 Overall, the adverse impacts need to be balanced with the increased overall numbers of housing that can be provided on lower quality agricultural land, together with the open space and landscape enhancements that would be achieved. Importantly, the site is able to facilitate the much needed junction improvement and road widening to the A2500 Lower Road.
- 3.88 It should be noted that the landowner has also promoted a much larger site at SW/721 (ranked Tier F, sweep 0, see Figure 14), capable of accommodating over 2,100 dwellings on land both further to the west and north of the Barton Hill Drive site. Notwithstanding the benefits that this scale of development could potentially provide, development would result in significant to major visual impacts and a major and detrimental reduction in the separation of Minster and Halfway with Queenborough. It is not recommended.



Figure 14 SW/721 Land north of Lower Road, Minster

- 3.89 In the case of SW/165 at Belgrave Road, shown as Figure 13, the site is visually almost completely contained in wider views by the higher ground of Furze Hill to the south and is considered to be a logical rounding off of existing built development. There are some local access, open space and possible drainage concerns, but these are not considered severe.
- 3.90 For both SW/194 and SW/165, although of concern to Members in 2013-14, a decision not to allocate these sites now would seriously undermine the Council's overall approach, as set out in this report. Whilst there is some harm associated with them, they are not judged as significant enough to outweigh the overall benefits, including the need for housing. Both sites are therefore strongly recommended for allocation.

Other Sheppey matters

- 3.91 One site, SW/321 (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0) on land at Southsea Avenue, Minster, shown as Figure 15, has previously been reported as unavailable for development because of difficulties in securing the agreement between the landowners that include the Borough Council. It is understood that this position has now changed and that the land is to be transferred to a single landowner/developer.

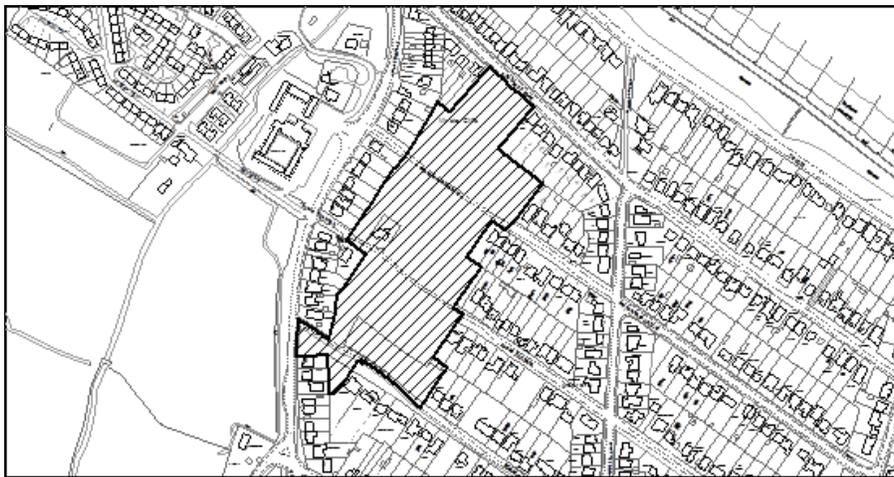


Figure 15 SW/321 Land at Southsea Avenue, Minster

- 3.92 However, in the years that the site has been vacant, it has become thickly vegetated and the likelihood of ecological interests having established themselves is high. These would need to be assessed before the site could be soundly allocated. This assessment has not been undertaken. Whilst as an urban site, its development may be judged as preferable to an urban greenfield extension, it is not previously developed land and therefore comprises a greenfield urban site. In any event, the absence of ecological information means that its allocation cannot be safely recommended. In addition, much of the site is also subject to flood risk (Zone 2 and 3) and a site flood risk assessment would be required, although this is only likely to constrain development of part of the site.
- 3.93 Members should also note that the area is to be considered for Local Green Space designation (to be reported at the meeting). Putting the green space designation to one side (which would prevent development of the site in its own right), the above constraints could potentially be considered at the planning application stage once the necessary surveys had been undertaken. The site is not recommended for allocation.

Concluding remarks in respect of the Isle of Sheppey

- 3.94 The recommendations are intended to increase provision at Sheppey's western settlements commensurate with their position in Policy ST3 and in recognition of the lower quality of agricultural land there and the lesser landscape impacts (compared with further east). Whilst there are adverse impacts for Sheppey associated with further growth there, the change in development target from that in 2013-14 has shifted the balance of decision making to require the reconsideration of sites.
- 3.95 The recommendations strike a balance between increasing the use of non-BMV land and other objectives. In particular, the inclusion of sites with greater visual and transport impacts, together with poorer accessibility, to the east of Minster has been avoided. Increasing provision at Sheppey over and above that recommended would bring the conflict with these other objectives sharply into focus. In particular, the in-combination adverse landscape impacts of allocating sites both to the east and west of Minster would be very significant indeed.
- 3.96 The above conclusions are supported by the SA examination of spatial strategy alternatives (Appendix V, page 76), where additional provision over and above that recommended is examined. The option has poor performance in terms of transport and housing, with negative landscape impacts identified. This is largely due to the need to develop sites to the east of Minster in such a scenario.
- 3.97 It is reasonable to consider whether increased provision at Sittingbourne could reduce that required on Sheppey. This is clearly true, but (see SA and the Sittingbourne discussion) clearly indicates that provision cannot be increased there without breaching constraints (local landscape designation, heritage assets and BMV) of more significance than the sites recommended for allocation at Sheppey. Increasing allocations at Sittingbourne would therefore lead to difficulties in the compliance with paras. 110, 112 and 113 of the NPPF and the Council's Position Statement. It would also neglect Sheppey's position within the Thames Gateway and, in the absence of sites at

Sittingbourne, increase pressures on the Rural Local Service Centres at levels which would be difficult to justify.

- 3.98 Alternatively, if further allocations were to have been made at Sittingbourne, it may still have been necessary to allocate the recommended sites on Sheppey because of the objective of using lower quality agricultural land. Such a scenario would eliminate the need for allocations at the Rural Local Service Centres which would not address boosting provision in the rural areas as per the Inspector's interim findings.
- 3.99 Overall, it is considered that the right balance has been reached between the issues present on Sheppey and the relationships with issues affecting the mainland. The recommendations below are therefore commended to Members.

ISLE OF SHEPPEY SITES

Recommendation 5:

That the Panel agree that:

- a) sites in Table 7 on eastern Sheppey and in Table 8 at Minster and Halfway be discounted from further consideration;
- b) SW/128 at The Bunnybank and SW/197 to the north of Eastchurch not be allocated for housing;
- c) SW/133 to the east of Scocles Road, Minster not be allocated;
- d) SW/184 at Parsonage Chase, Minster, not be allocated, but incorporated within the allocation at SW/194;
- e) SW/721 (extended site) at Barton Hill Drive, Minster not be allocated;
- f) SW/321 at Southsea Avenue, Minster not be allocated SW/457 and SW/705 to the north-east and east of Minster be allocated for housing for 10 and 50 dwellings respectively; and
- g) SW/165 at Belgrave Road, Halfway and SW/194 at Barton Hill Drive, Minster be allocated for 620 and 140 dwellings respectively.

5) Considering the site options at Sittingbourne

- 3.100 As already outlined, it is necessary to ensure that Sittingbourne's position within the settlement strategy in Policy ST3 remains and as such the scale of growth there for the plan as a whole should be the greatest. Whilst this could be maintained without any further allocations being made, its position would be eroded and pressures placed on locations elsewhere. This is judged to be a reasonable alternative, as noted by the SA (but not part of the assessment), para. 5.3.4:

"There is a need to focus additional allocations at Sittingbourne, recognising the need to plan in-line with the established broad settlement strategy. However, at the same time there is a need to recognise certain strategic constraints, notably in relation to

landscape/ settlement-separation/ heritage sensitivities to the south (which is where site options are concentrated).”

- 3.101 Although there are constraints at the town that will limit directions of growth, these are not of sufficient scale and weight overall to preclude further development at the town altogether. That is not to say however that the allocation of sites will not be without environmental harm. As to the scale of any further growth, to avoid erosion of the town’s position within Policy ST3, the additional level of provision will involve a site or sites of some significance. However, with reference to the SA, the purpose of this section is to resolve whether there is an appropriate limit to the overall level of additional growth that can be considered.
- 3.102 Before considering the main site options, using the SA, SHLAA and ranking list, Table 9 provides a number of sites that can be discounted due to significant constraints. The location of the sites can be referenced from maps in Appendix 3.

Table 9 Sites discounted as not suitable at Sittingbourne

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
Land at Borden Lane	SW/028	85	0	G	The site would result in actual coalescence between settlements and would be significantly harmful and not outweighed by any benefits.
Land at Cryalls Lane	SW/126	70	1	B	The site would have only minor to moderate impact on the landscape and would represent a relatively modest incursion into the settlement separation between Sittingbourne and Borden. The site is though subject to an application to KCC for Village Green status. Until this issue is resolved the site cannot be regarded as available. The site also proposed for consideration as a Local Green Space (see later in report). Should both proposals fail,

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					the site would be included within the current settlement boundary of Sittingbourne by virtue of nearby proposed allocations. If these are accepted for allocation, then other uses could be considered against the policies of the plan.
Sittingbourne Adult Education College, College Road	SW/213	26	0	G	Heritage asset. It is unclear as to whether the conversion of this building for housing would be suitable. Located inside the settlement boundary, these issues are more appropriately addressed via a planning application which would be considered as a windfall site. Land adjacent the site is proposed for consideration as a Local Green Space.
Land at East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne	SW531	41	3	A	Land was previously identified as local centre for wider development. The lack of need for this centre has not been demonstrated. However, the site is located within the urban area and as such any potential for development here can be pursued outside of the Local Plan as a windfall site.
Land east of Bobbing Hill	SW/709	32	0	NA	Although considered as outside of the approved settlement strategy and already discounted in Table 2, the site is also considered here, for the avoidance of doubt. This is

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>because of its location on the Sittingbourne side of the A249 (although the site does not fully adjoin it's built up area boundary).</p> <p>Although having some self-containment, the site is not viewed as forming part of Sittingbourne; the town being largely hidden by woodland around Gore Court Park at this point (proposed for consideration as a Local Green Space). The site, despite the presence of the A249, appears as part of the open settlement gap with Bobbing and is viewed as relating to that settlement rather than as an extension to Sittingbourne.</p> <p>Despite its relative containment, the site would significantly erode the countryside gap and undermine its purpose at this point. This harm would outweigh any benefits of development.</p>

3.103 One site, SW/343 Land at the former Bell Centre, Bell Road (ranked Tier A, SHLAA sweep 1) has become available and could accommodate a considerable number of new apartments (up to 150), together with a possible medical centre (which will be required to meet local plan growth).

3.104 The site, shown as Figure 16, has been subject to past viability difficulties, but with some of the adverse development costs (i.e. demolition) potentially addressed by the previous owners; it is assumed that the prospects for a scheme being developable by the new owners have considerably improved. There remain a number of design challenges needing to be addressed and these will have a bearing on the final number of dwellings that could be realised. As a result, a more cautious estimate of dwelling numbers (120 units) is assumed for purposes of housing land supply.

3.105 As one of the few brownfield sites within a central location available to allocate, the Panel should view this site as a priority. The site has the added advantage that once commenced it will deliver significant numbers of dwellings over a short period, boosting the 5-year supply. It would also support some of the health needs arising from Local Plan growth. If allocated, the site would form part of the numbers assumed for the Sittingbourne town centre regeneration area (Policy Regen 1).



Figure 16 SW/343 Land at the former Bell Centre, Bell Road, Sittingbourne

3.106 Outside the urban area, three main locations for more major further growth at Sittingbourne can be considered:

- 1) South-west Sittingbourne: SW/703, 564 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 3);
- 2) South Sittingbourne: Comprising:
 - a. SW/422 Land at Ufton Court Farm, up to 761 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0);
 - b. SW/135 Land at Grove End Farm, Tunstall, up to 541 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0);
 - c. SW/211, 179 and 418 Land at Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall, up to 116 dwellings (ranked Tier D, F, B, SHLAA sweep 0).
- 3) South-east Sittingbourne: Comprising:
 - a. SW/050 Land at Chilton Manor Farm, Swanstree Avenue, up to 540 dwellings (ranked Tier F, SHLAA sweep 0);
 - b. SW/107 Land at Highsted Road, up to 218 dwellings (ranked Tier F, SHLAA sweep 0);
 - c. SW/204 Land at Muddy Lane, up to 123 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0).

3.107 In the case of the second and third options, it should be noted that within each there could be various configurations, i.e. not necessarily the case that all sites referenced would be brought forward.

3.108 The first option (SW/703), shown as Figure 17, is located to the south-west of the town and lies between it and Borden village stretching east and west of Wises Lane as far as Borden Lane in the east. Here the main issues are landscape sensitivities, the impacts on the settlement gap between Sittingbourne and Borden, archaeology and heritage, contamination and transportation. Members should note that the area of land in Cryalls Lane (SW/126) (formally allocated by the 2013 draft Local Plan), now currently subject to an application for 'village green' status, is not included within the site. SW/126 is considered suitable for development by the SHLAA, but not recommended for allocation in Table 8. This is because until the status of the land is resolved, it cannot be said to be available for development.

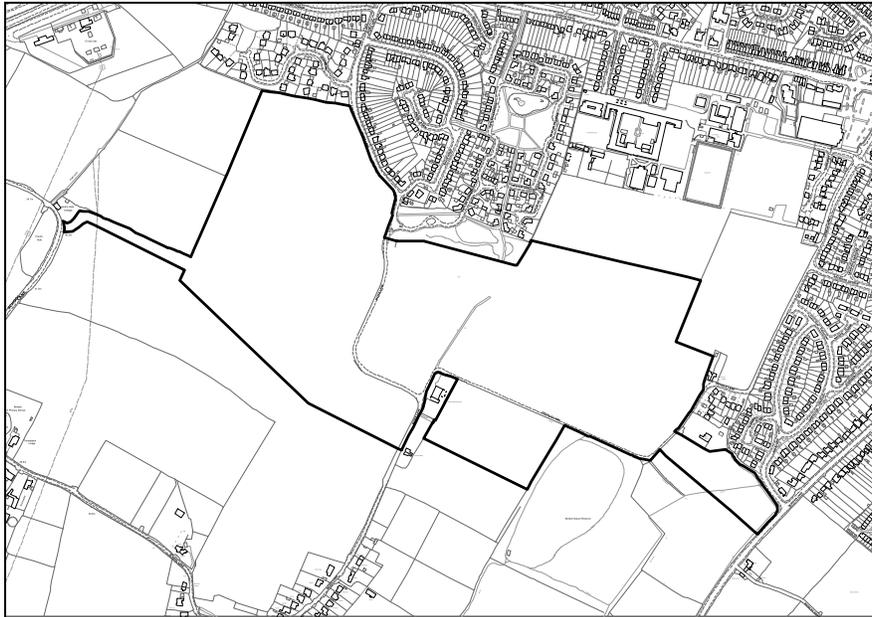


Figure 17 Option 1: SW/703 Land in south-west Sittingbourne

3.109 The second option, shown as Figure 18, comprises a series of sites in southern Sittingbourne, notably, large sites to the south of Riddles Road and to the west of Ruins Barn Road. Here the main issues are the landscape impacts and the reduction in settlement gaps between Sittingbourne and Borden and Tunstall, highway access and the setting of the historic settlement and conservation area at Tunstall and Borden. Sites to the east of Ruins Barn fall within the North Downs locally designated Area of High Landscape Value (Policy DM24).

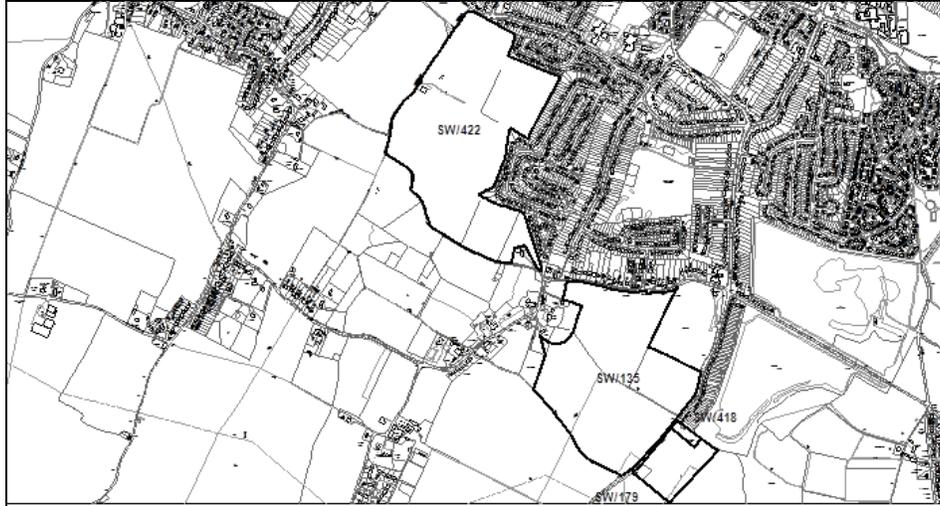


Figure 18 Option 2: SW/135, 179, 211, 418 and 422 Land in south Sittingbourne

3.110 The third option, to the south-east of the town and shown as Figure 19 comprises three sites located to the south of Swanstree Avenue and to the east of Highsted Road and Muddy Lane - all within the North Downs locally designated Area of High Landscape Value (Policy DM24). The largest of these sites (SW/050) has been subject to a refusal of planning permission, principally on the grounds of significant visual and landscape harm. It is currently subject to an amended application. The key issue affecting all three sites are landscape impacts and, to a lesser extent, the impacts on settlement separation.

3.111 All three options involve significant use of BMV agricultural land, although the south-east location has some Grade 3b.

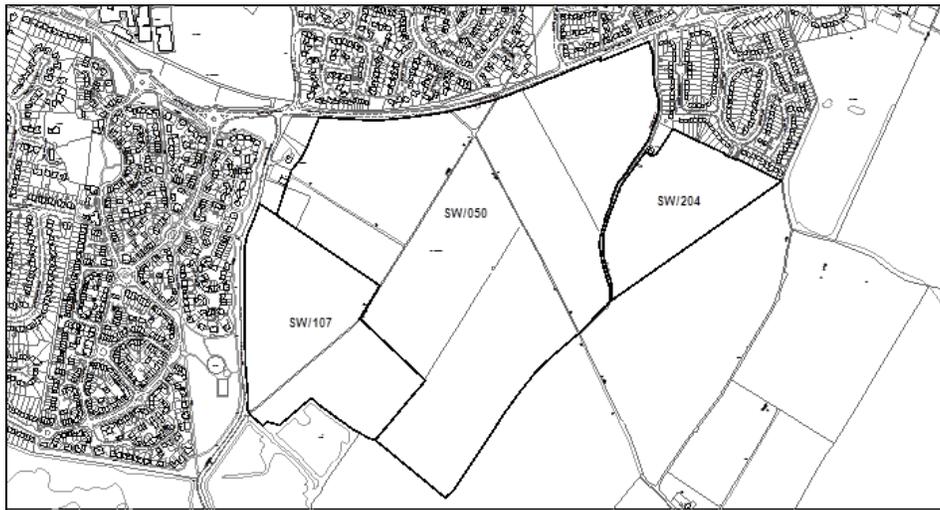


Figure 19 Option 3: SW/050, 107 and 204 Land at south-east Sittingbourne

3.112 Para. 2.22 and Table 1 of this report refers to the approach that should be taken to allocations and, in particular, para. 110 of the NPPF – namely those allocations should prefer land of lower environmental quality and amenity value where consistent with other policies in the Framework. Whilst this principle affects all three options, the south-

east option involves a significant area of designated land requiring weight to be considered in accordance with para.113 of the NPPF. This option is therefore taken as the starting point for considering further urban extensions at Sittingbourne. The key question here is whether the avoidance of development within the designation would be consistent with the framework (i.e. lead to a significantly poorer sustainable outcome).

- 3.113 It can be acknowledged, to some degree, that directing growth away from the south-east of the town would result in sites that perform more variably in terms of their access to services such as schools and the town centre. However, in terms of this and other matters needing to be considered, it is necessary to consider whether the performances of other site options are significantly poorer or more harmful as to be in conflict with the Framework and thus should lead to their discounting.
- 3.114 In the case of the southern sites, at Figure 18, there is significant landscape and visual harm associated within the largest sites which would be difficult to mitigate, although this harm does not involve a designated landscape. The largest site at SW/135 also involves major harm to the settlement separation of Sittingbourne with Borden and Tunstall at a scale which should be a strong influence on whether the sites should be allocated. There is also judged to be substantial harm to the setting of the Tunstall conservation area which cannot be mitigated to acceptable levels. In the case of SW/422 there would also be additional harm to the setting of the conservation area at Harman's Corner in Borden.
- 3.115 SW/179 and SW/418 are smaller, with SW/179 located in a local landscape designation. SW/179 is judged to have significant adverse landscape impacts and SW/418 is considered too small to allocate. SW/211, without development of SW/135 is an illogical and incongruous intrusion into the open countryside.
- 3.116 All the sites are relatively peripheral to services, although not fundamentally so if there were no other better choices (which there are). In the case of SW/422, highway access, whether from Riddles Road and/or Tunstall Road, would, on the face of it, be extremely restricted and problematic to the point of potentially producing severe outcomes.
- 3.117 Analysis within the current SA report - see the table within Appendix III that deals with Sittingbourne – states in relation to the sites forming the south Sittingbourne option:
“Sites to the south of Sittingbourne - SW/028, 422, 712, 135, 211, 179, 418 - stand-out as particularly constrained, with issues relating to heritage and/or landscape and/or remoteness from the town centre.
This leaves in contention the options of extending Sittingbourne to the southwest or southeast.”
- 3.118 Cumulatively, any other advantages of locating growth in this southern area are judged to be outweighed by environmental and transport impacts and as such it should not be seen as a viable alternative to those in the south-east and south-west. In conclusion, the southern sites should be rejected with the remainder of the discussion focusing on a comparison of the south-west and south east options.
- 3.119 Turning to the option of extension in the south-west of the town (Figure 17), its allocation would result in a not insignificant erosion of the openness and separation between Borden and Sittingbourne, whilst a new access from Borden Lane would also

impact negatively upon the sense of separation. This would necessitate the need for a main modification to reduce the size of the currently proposed area of Local Green Space at the junction of Auckland Drive with Borden Lane. Some landscape harm will also result because of the current exposed nature of the site in views, particularly from higher ground to the south at Borden village.

- 3.120 In terms of landscape quality, this is a less remarkable area of landscape when compared with the other locations, partly due to existing land management, topography and existing built development. To offset adverse impacts, landscape and open space benefits can be secured and the design of development used to create a more sensitive transition between town and country. Detailed site design could also effectively limit development pressures on land further to the south. Whilst the settlement gap will be eroded, a significant area of separating countryside to Borden will remain, whilst the safeguarding/management of some of the land, including a key area in Borden Lane (a proposed designated Local Green Space) could be secured. Mitigation of the impacts of the access road from Borden Lane should also limit the erosion of settlement separation there.
- 3.121 Also part of this mitigation would be a need to reduce the number of dwellings proposed from 650 dwellings to 564. This should also enable the potential outcomes of investigations into contamination and archaeology to be reflected. In total, the above mitigation measures are considered to reduce overall visual impacts to moderate levels.
- 3.122 There would also be adverse impacts on the setting of the listed Cryalls Farmhouse. This is caused by the proposed new access road and, potentially, the development area itself. However, subject to existing greenspace around the new road being retained and enhanced with new landscaping, alongside the provision of further open space to the west, this harm could be reduced to levels less than substantial.
- 3.123 The site is well located to the A249 and bus links and close to schools, although it is more peripheral to the town centre and would benefit from some localised shops being provided. The site is though no poorer located than other allocations already accepted.
- 3.124 There are some intricate transport issues needing to be addressed, such as the main accesses required and level of vehicles in surrounding rural lanes and residential streets. However, at this stage, the overall impacts are not considered severe as to represent a constraint in principle. These issues and the related opportunities for transport enhancement and management will still need to be further examined (see below). Some of these issues could translate into eventual benefits.
- 3.125 Of this option, the SA comments (page 40) that it:
"...is constrained in landscape and heritage terms in a similar way to sites to the south, but not to the same extent, and there is known to be good potential for mitigation. Traffic impacts may also be more manageable, given its relative proximity to M2 J5."
- 3.126 In the south-east location, these sites are, overall, the best located of the three options in terms of access to services in the town centre, although their position on the transport network and relative to the AQMA at East Street is less favourable, whilst some rural lane usage could also arise. It is also possible that the site could deliver dwellings

quicker, although this would depend upon the phasing of the other south-west option relative to planned transport improvements.

3.127 Of this option, the SA comments (page 40) that it:

“... are notably constrained in landscape terms, given impacts to a landscape identified as being important at the Kent-scale, and this may be an over-riding consideration. It is relatively close to the town centre, but distant from M2 J5.”

3.128 However, notwithstanding their benefits, these sites are judged to be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the significant harm to the local landscape designation (allied with some erosion of the settlement gap with Rodmersham Green) which cannot be mitigated. Additional weight to the landscape impact, in accordance with para. 113 of the NPPF, is also provided by its designated status.

3.129 With the southern option removed from consideration, conclusions can also be reached in respect of a comparison between the south-east and south-west options. The south-east option has merit in terms of access to services and impacts on heritage, whilst also being a less complex site to deliver. However, the south-west site also performs acceptably well in terms of accessibility, but is additionally more advantageous as far its position on the road network is concerned, whilst its heritage impacts only impact upon a relatively small part of the site and can be mitigated¹¹. The south-eastern area is however located within a locally designated landscape where significant landscape and visual harm can be demonstrated and cannot be mitigated, in contrast to the non-designated south-west where landscape and other environmental harm can be mitigated to less than significant, or in the case of heritage assets, less than substantial. There are also some clear benefits of developing in south-west Sittingbourne not present within the south-east option. These include its modest additional employment provision, proposed near the junction of Wises and Cryalls Lane, and delivery (if required) of a new primary school and other facilities.

3.130 Were both the southern and south-west options to have performed significantly worse than the south-eastern option, this might have presented sufficient grounds to consider the south-east location; however, for the reasons explained above, this is not the case. The south-west option is not without harm, but the evidence clearly indicates that the site should be allocated in the face of the housing target needing to be met. This conclusion is considered to be consistent with para. 110 and other policies of the NPPF, as well as strongly reflecting the findings of the SA.

3.131 Therefore, the south-eastern option is not recommended, leaving the south-west option recommended for allocation.

3.132 There are though matters needing further consideration in the run up to the Examination and at the planning application stage. Given the likely timing of improvements to J5 of the M2 with the A249, an assessment of the level of development able to come forward before completion of the improvement will need to be undertaken, although the assumption is made at this stage that the levels of development prior to 2024 will need to be limited. Allied to this, improvements to the A2 at Key Street with the A249 may

¹¹ Heritage impacts are the primary reason that the site is ranked lower than the SE alternative in the SA. This assessment does not consider the mitigation that is possible to reduce impacts to less than substantial.

also be necessary, whilst some of the roads serving the area are likely to require some localised improvements/traffic management or even closure. Subject to further assessment, these could include the junctions of Wises Lane with the A2, Adelaide Drive with the A2, Adelaide Drive with Borden Lane, Borden Lane with the A2 and Borden Lane with Homewood Avenue.

- 3.133 The primary accesses to the site are likely to be from Borden Lane and from the A2 at Wises Lane. This could take the form of a new road linking these two locations which might provide some benefit to the A2 between these points, as well as facilitating public transport access to the area. It would be important though to ensure that this does not increase the attractiveness of residential areas across southern and rural Sittingbourne as an alternative route to the A2 or A249. It would though enable consideration to be given other traffic management measures (including possible localised closures) on roads such as Cryalls Lane, Wises Lane and Riddles Road, especially where such a measure could limit the use of rural lanes and roads through existing residential areas such as Borden Lane, Homewood Avenue and beyond.
- 3.134 Whilst the constraints on the highway network are not considered to represent a critical barrier to the principle of an allocation here or the levels of development proposed, it is not yet possible to determine to what degree and extent of improvements and traffic management may be necessary at the detailed level. These will be matters to be determined more appropriately as the allocation and any development brief/planning application stage are progressed.
- 3.135 In conclusion, there are a number of unknowns at present – transport, contamination and archaeology, which present some risk to the allocation until such times as they are addressed by the site promoter ahead of the re-convened Examination. However, at this stage, they are not thought to represent insurmountable barriers.
- 3.136 The allocation and policy is shown on page 203 of the consultation document in Appendix 1.

Concluding remarks in respect of Sittingbourne

- 3.137 The additional recommended provision at Sittingbourne provides a balance that overwhelmingly maintains its role as the principle town, whilst recognising its constraints.
- 3.138 It is reasonable to challenge the report's assumption by questioning whether the sites in southern and south-eastern Sittingbourne should have both been allocated to reduce or remove site allocations on Sheppey. The SA considered whether higher provision should be made at Sittingbourne to include a second urban extension to the south-east of the town. It concluded (page 76) that the additional provision would be best in terms of biodiversity and housing (in common with all options) and worst in terms of air, landscape, soil and transport. Significant effects were noted in respect of landscape and soil.
- 3.139 As stated in the concluding remarks for Sheppey (paras. 3.94-99), allocation of these sites at Sittingbourne would have led to the allocation of sites with greater

environmental impact than those on Sheppey and as a result, a failure to follow para. 110 and 112 of the NPPF.

- 3.140 It is also reasonable to ask whether increased provision on Sheppey could have also potentially avoided the release of any further allocations at Sittingbourne. Whilst Sittingbourne's primary role could have theoretically been maintained and the release of further BMV land avoided, the role of the town in Policy ST3 would have been diminished, whilst, as already reported, less assessable and visually more harmful sites would have been allocated on Sheppey than that recommended at south-west Sittingbourne.
- 3.141 The following recommendation is therefore commended to Members.

SITTINGBOURNE SITES

Recommendation 6:

That the Panel agree that:

- a) the sites in Table 9 be discounted from further consideration;**
- b) SW/343 Land at the former Bell Centre, Bell Road be allocated within Policy Regen 1 for mixed use with a minimum of 120 dwellings;**
- c) SW/126 at Cryall's Lane not be allocated; and**
- d) SW/703 at SW Sittingbourne is allocated as an additional mixed use allocation including 564 dwellings.**

6) The site options at The Rural Local Service Centres

- 3.142 The draft Local Plan identifies Rural Local Service Centres (RLSC) as the tertiary focus for growth in the Borough after the urban centres. They represent the principle rural locations for growth: Boughton in the Faversham planning area; and Teynham, Iwade, Newington, Eastchurch and Leysdown in the Thames Gateway planning area.
- 3.143 As with Faversham, the Inspector's interim findings are relevant here in so far as that a proportionate boost within rural areas needs to be considered. Against the submission plan, 8.0% of the dwellings allocated were made at the RLSC. In considering such a boost, Members again should be mindful of the planning area dimension, with the emphasis needing to be on the Thames Gateway.
- 3.144 Assuming that the other recommendations in this report have been endorsed, the Rural Local Service Centres (RLSC) will need to be additionally considered, not primarily to achieve the overall dwelling target, but to address the Inspector's findings, whilst additionally supporting the five-year supply and other objectives.
- 3.145 It is reasonable to consider whether any single or combination of RLSC should be considered for further growth. Earlier in the report, the role of settlements at the eastern end of Sheppey was considered. It was recommended that no allocations should be

made, ruling out further consideration of Eastchurch and Leysdown. The remaining RLSC are therefore examined in turn:

6a) Boughton

3.146 Although Boughton are proposing a Neighbourhood Plan with nearby Dunkirk, for purposes of planning policy, Dunkirk is not a RLSC and is therefore considered later in the report.

3.147 Members may feel that the Council should not 'interfere' in sites within the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area. However, given the very early stage that the plan has reached, and the little weight that can be afforded to it at this point in time, the Council needs to ensure that it has considered all reasonable site options to meet the Borough's overall housing needs. It should be noted that both the sites below and those in Table 12 at Dunkirk are not recommended for allocation. Whilst this would preclude their allocation in the Local Plan, it would not necessarily prevent the Neighbourhood Planning Group from considering the sites in more detail having regard to the conclusions reached by this report. However, any Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in conformity with the Local Plan and this will be particularly relevant to the landscape, heritage and biodiversity issues highlighted.

3.148 One site, SW/714 (ranked Tier E, SHLAA sweep 0) to the north of The Street at Boughton has been submitted for some 148 dwellings. The site is shown at Figure 20.

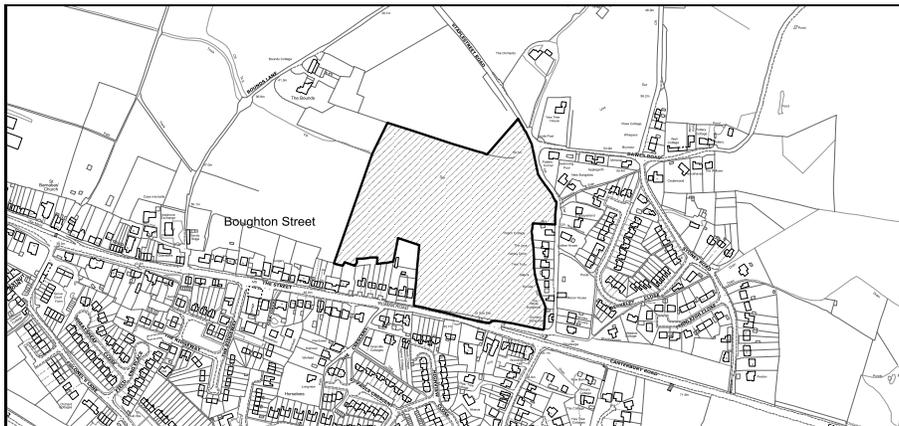


Figure 20 SW/714 Land to the north of The Street, Boughton.

3.149 The site falls within the locally designated Blean Area of High Landscape Value and its contribution to the overall setting of the village and its pleasing appearance within the wider designation would be significantly and majorly harmed by development at this scale, even allowing for potential mitigation. Notwithstanding this, at a more strategic level, in the absence of any specific local need for development at this particular location, there are other RLSC (and quite possibly other sites being considered by the Neighbourhood Plan) which should be considered first that would not require the use of a local landscape designation. Growth at this scale would also need to consider the potential for significant effects on the Blean SAC. The site is not recommended.

6b) Teynham

- 3.150 Within the Thames Gateway, this village has already been subject to allocations amounting to some 423 dwellings. The settlement has been the focus of a number of submissions for allocation.
- 3.151 Teynham has a good level of services and is one of only two RLSC (the other being Newington) with a range of public transport choices. However, with the range of suitable sites well related to the existing form of the settlement exhausted, further sites need to be very carefully considered.
- 3.152 However, Members may wish to consider Teynham’s additional contributions more strategically, given the level of development already proposed at the village. Despite its Thames Gateway location, the village’s overall relationship within the wider road network and role within the settlement strategy should be reflected upon to determine its continuing suitability as priority for further growth over and above other RLSC. The SA provides the following commentary (not part of the appraisal) in respect of considering reasonable alternatives (para. 5.3.22):
- “Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Teynham (a Rural Local Service Centre); and from a strategic perspective, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions in relation to Teynham. The situation at Teynham is similar to that at Newington (see discussion above), although Teynham is more constrained from a transport/AQMA perspective.”*
- 3.153 The village is between 6-8km in either direction of the strategic road network and whilst the physical transport capacity to accommodate development within the A2 corridor may not result in ‘severe’ impacts, the reduced prospects for the early delivery of the SNRR and the presence of 3 AQMAs, including one recently declared for Teynham itself, suggest that in the interests of environmental quality, Teynham should only be further considered if sites at other RLSC cannot play a sufficient role. Similar issues are noted by the SA (pages 55-57).
- 3.154 In taking this strategic view of the settlement, then at this point no further sites at Teynham are recommended for allocation. In the event that Members do resolve to consider sites there for other justifiable reasons, Table 10 considers the submitted sites and their appropriateness. The site locations can be referenced from the maps in Appendix 3.

Table 10 Sites discounted as not required at Teynham

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA ‘sweep’	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
Land at Claxfield Farm	SW/143	226	0	G	Mitigation of landscape impacts could potentially be secured to acceptable levels.

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					However, there is substantial harm to designated heritage assets arising from the western access and its allocation is not recommended.
Lynsted Lane	SW/704	120	2	D	<p>Mitigation of landscape impacts could potentially be achieved to acceptable levels. There would be localised traffic impacts at the A2 junction, but these may not be regarded as severe. AQMA impacts would also require mitigation.</p> <p>The village is characterised at this point by its 'one-dwelling deep' form and as such an allocation would not respond especially well to this character; likewise, there would be some harm to designated heritage assets, but this may be less than substantial.</p> <p>Its allocation could be considered in the event of an overriding need.</p>
Barrow Green Farm	SW/722	383	0	D	Significant extension to draft allocation. Significant to major adverse landscape

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					impacts with no regard to the valley and open character of the countryside. Impacts not capable of mitigation and harm would be far greater than any benefits. Its allocation is not recommended.
Land at Barrow Green Farm II	SW/373	67	0	D	Extends current draft allocation further eastward. Significant landscape impacts with no regard to the valley and open character of the countryside. Impacts not capable of mitigation and harm would be greater than any benefits. Its allocation is not recommended
Land at Barrow Green Farm III	SW/996	44	3	C	Adjoining the current submission plan allocation of the same name, the site would have moderate landscape and visual impacts. However, the conflicting aspirations of the landowner make it less clear as to the availability of this site. An allocation could be considered in the event of an overriding need.

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
Land at London Road/Cellar Hill	SW/723	42	0	G	The village is characterised at this point by its 'one-dwelling deep' form and as such an allocation would not respond especially well to this character. More so, there would be substantial harm to designated heritage assets, due to the presence of an old orchard (a UK BAP priority habitat) which also positively contributes to the setting of the village and conservation area at this point. The site should not be allocated.
Land at Lynsted Lane	SW/727	56	2	D	Mitigation of landscape impacts could potentially be achieved to acceptable levels. There would be localised traffic impacts at the A2 junction, but these may not be regarded as severe. Mitigation of impacts on the AQMA would be required. The village is characterised at this point by its 'one-dwelling deep' form and as such an allocation would not

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Ranking Tier	Commentary if appropriate
					<p>respond especially well to this character; likewise, there would be some harm to designated heritage assets, but this may be less than substantial.</p> <p>Its allocation could be considered in the event of an overriding need.</p>

3.155 Land subject to Policy MU3 (rank Tier A, SHLAA 'sweep' 0) is allocated at Frogmal Lane for mixed uses, including some 26,000 sq. m of employment. The Inspector has already considered the employment allocation here and found no issues. However, the landowner has offered to bring the employment land area forward as housing if this would be of benefit to the Council in terms of meeting its housing numbers. Whilst this could be achieved without harm to the wider locality, it is not recommended as the loss of the employment allocation would greatly diminish the Local Plan's overall approach toward employment and dilute Teynham's potential employment role as a RLSC.

6c) Iwade

3.156 Iwade has expanded considerably since it was first identified as a growth point in the 1990s. Its expansion aided by its A249 bypass in 1996 has led, as at 2014/15, to some 1,161 dwellings completed or under construction, bringing with them benefits in terms of new facilities, open space and traffic management. The adopted Local Plan referred to its latest phases as being the final period of development at the village, however, it remains a focus of attention for developers. It is acknowledged therefore that if further growth were to be located at the village, it would result in still further change and disruption for villagers.

3.157 It is reasonable to question why above all the other RLSCs, Iwade should be singled out for further significant levels of growth. The SA provides the following commentary (not part of the appraisal) in respect of considering reasonable alternatives (para. 5.3.16):

"Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Iwade (a Rural Local Service Centre). There are some strategic opportunities - e.g. related to its position on the strategic road network and proximity to employment opportunities at Sittingbourne, Ridham and Neatscourt - however, there are also constraints (e.g. landscape), and it is the case that Iwade has seen considerable growth over recent years."

3.158 Taking the above matters into account, the following reasons lead to the conclusion that of all the RLSCs, Iwade would be well placed to consider greater levels of growth:

- The strong links with the strategic road network and the highway improvements needed at Grovehurst, as opposed to the other RLSC which are less well connected;
- The stronger relationship to jobs and services at Sittingbourne, Ridham and Neatscourt compared to other RLSC;
- The likelihood of further benefits accruing to the village in terms of new facilities and environmental enhancement;
- Some limited levels of lower quality agricultural land available; and
- The proven track record of attractiveness to the market.

3.159 Despite these advantages, it is the capacity of the village to accommodate growth, via assessment of individual sites that should be the primary driver as to the levels of growth that could be proposed. In this respect, there are a number of issues for Iwade needing to be addressed:

- a. The settlement gap with Sittingbourne: This is most felt on its southern and eastern sides, especially given the planned and completed growth at Sittingbourne.
- b. The exposed character of much of the surrounding landscape: Although affecting growth in all directions, this is a particular issue at the northern, western and south-western sides of the village.
- c. Its relationship with adjacent environmental designations: The North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value and the Swale and Medway SPAs/Ramsar are close to the northern edge of the village. The Council's draft Habitats Regulations Assessment recommends that development would be required both to create natural green space on site and contribute with a tariff to off-site mitigation for recreational pressures on the SPA in accordance with the strategy for North Kent, agreed by Councils and included within the Local Plan. This presents both challenges and opportunities.
- d. The use of non-BMV land: Iwade is generally a mix of Grades 3a and 3b, with some Grade 2 to the south. Built development could use some Grade 3b land and whilst the built development of Grade 3a could largely be avoided through the use of open spaces, its loss could still be regarded as permanent as it would be unlikely to ever return to agricultural use. The land quality to the south-west of the village is unknown, but may be of higher quality.
- e. Its overall level of sustainability to accommodate additional growth: Development has brought new facilities for the village and whilst further growth would be required to meet the needs arising, these are unlikely to be of an order that will move Iwade to a greater level of self-reliance. In other words, the relationship with Sittingbourne for village residents for services and employment is likely to remain. Choices for public transport at the village, although available, are not as well developed as other centres, although it is reasonably close to Sittingbourne, local rail facilities and the

new primary and secondary school provision being planned at NW Sittingbourne. Steps to improve public transport provision are required.

- f. Flood risk issues: These are associated with the Iwade stream that runs through the centre of the village and impacts upon development options to the west of the village.
- g. The relationship with the transport network: The capacity of the Grovehurst Interchange and, further afield, J5 of the M2 will be impacted by growth at this location, although in the case of Grovehurst Interchange, the Council and Highway Authorities will be reliant upon the financial contributions toward the improvement that development will bring. The timing of the J5 improvements may also limit the amount of development able to come forward in advance of its completion and may need to be subject to further testing.

3.160 However, having regard to these issues and the SA (page 53), a number of sites promoted at Iwade can be discounted from further consideration. These are set out in Table 11, the locations for which can be referenced at Appendix 3.

Table 11 Sites discounted as not suitable at Iwade

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Rank 'Tier'	Commentary
Coleshall Farm	SW/199	6	0	G	The farm provides the bridging point where the village ends and the countryside begins. Development would be substantially harmful to a designated heritage asset. It may be possible to consider some development here, but it could well be at too small a scale and would more appropriately be considered as part of a detailed planning application.
Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane	SW/450	80	0	C	The submission was for just 3 dwellings, but showed the whole site as potentially available. Part of the site is affected by the presence of high voltage power lines; however, development would be moderately harmful to the countryside

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Rank 'Tier'	Commentary
					<p>gap with Sittingbourne by virtue of its more elevated position.</p> <p>Although part of the site may be brownfield land, its allocation would perform poorly as land adjoining it to the village edge would be maintained as open space (if accepted by Members).</p>
Land south-west of Iwade	SW/216	700	0	G	<p>The site could potentially address flood risk issues in the village (or not exacerbate them). It also would not impact upon settlement separation.</p> <p>However, due to the exposed and open landscape, the site would have significant to major adverse visual and landscape impacts which could not be mitigated. There would also be substantial harm to a designated heritage asset at Coleshall Farm, although this concern could be reduced if the developer were prepared to consider significant areas of green space buffering around the farmstead complex.</p> <p>Transport access would also be less desirable than alternatives; it needing to be via School Lane and/or via the old Sheppey Way. This would increase vehicle movements on rural roads and/or through the village to get to the A249. Whilst these impacts may not necessarily be described as</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA 'sweep'	Rank 'Tier'	Commentary
					<p>'severe', there are alternatives at the village with lesser transport implications.</p> <p>Agricultural land quality is unclear and would need to be established. In general terms land quality improves as sites move toward the A2. It cannot at this stage be relied upon as a source of lower quality land.</p>
Land at School Lane Farm	SW/717	330	0	D	<p>Due to the exposed and open landscape, the site would have significant adverse visual and landscape impacts which could not be mitigated.</p> <p>Transport access would also be less desirable than alternatives; it needing to be via School Lane and/or via the old Sheppey Way (if a road link were provided across an adjacent site). This would increase vehicle movements on rural roads and/or through the village to get to the A249. Whilst these impacts may not necessarily be described as 'severe', there are alternatives at the village with lesser transport implications.</p>

3.161 This leaves the consideration of three sites, the locations for which can be referenced at Appendix 3:

- 1) SW/117 Land north of Iwade village 62 dwellings (ranked Tier C, SHLAA sweep 2);
- 2) SW/183 Land at Pond Farm, south east of Iwade 70 dwellings (ranked Tier B, SHLAA sweep 1);

- 3) SW/123 (incorporating SW/116) Land to the east of Iwade 440 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 1);
- 3.162 SW/117, despite appearing awkward 'on the map' in terms of its relationship with the current built form of the village, the site provides an opportunity to improve the less than successful finished edge of the current village and whilst vehicle access to the A249 would be through the village, development numbers are small with an alternative route available to the north. In particular, construction traffic could use this route. It would appear to involve use of Grade 3b agricultural land.
- 3.163 SW/183, although eroding the settlement gap, does not do so to the point where there is substantial harm; indeed there is the likelihood of a proportion of the site being available to mitigate such impacts (see below). Some BMV land would be required to release this site.
- 3.164 SW/123, comprises two sites, the largest directly to the east of Cormorant and Widgeon Roads and Redwing Avenue, with its primary access from the Grovehurst Road. The second is a smaller site to the north-east of the village (incorporating SW/116) on sloping ground reasonably well contained by vegetation. Although currently visually prominent and reducing the settlement gap with Sittingbourne toward the south, there are opportunities to propose a major landscape and open space enhancements.
- 3.165 Before mitigation, the landscape impacts of SW/116, 117 and SW/123 are judged to be moderate to significant.
- 3.166 As already indicated, development at Iwade raises significant issues in terms of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which highlights (Appendix 5) a need for mitigation/precautionary measures which would need to be enshrined in any Local Plan policy or development brief for the area.
- 3.167 These sites (or any mitigation arising) lie close to or adjacent the Medway/Swale SPA/Ramsar sites. Therefore, similar precautions will be required as for other existing allocated sites located this close to the SPA (e.g. the Oare gravel workings). The site and the adjacent land that may also be required consist of a network of fields which could constitute supporting habitat to the SPA. Any allocations here will need to include a site-specific mitigation scheme to address recreational pressure impacts over and above that which other allocations would need to provide in line with the Local Plan's strategic mitigation strategy, as provided by Policy CP7 and endorsed as necessary by the Local Plan Inspector.
- 3.168 There are linkages between the HRA issue and the mitigation necessary to address landscape and visual impacts. Work has been undertaken to consider how the mitigation of visual impacts of the three sites might be combined to form a single local plan allocation to additionally propose a major new green space, in excess of 35 ha, for the village and wider area. This should be sufficient to provide major landscape and biodiversity enhancements which can also be tailored to address the concerns raised by the HRA. This open space, in the form of a country park, would probably not be able to be used for formal sports as it would need to be managed primarily for biodiversity and landscape improvement. Although there would need to be public access, some

limitations would be necessary in sensitive locations. These would all be matters for an eventual Masterplan/development brief and detailed management plan to resolve.

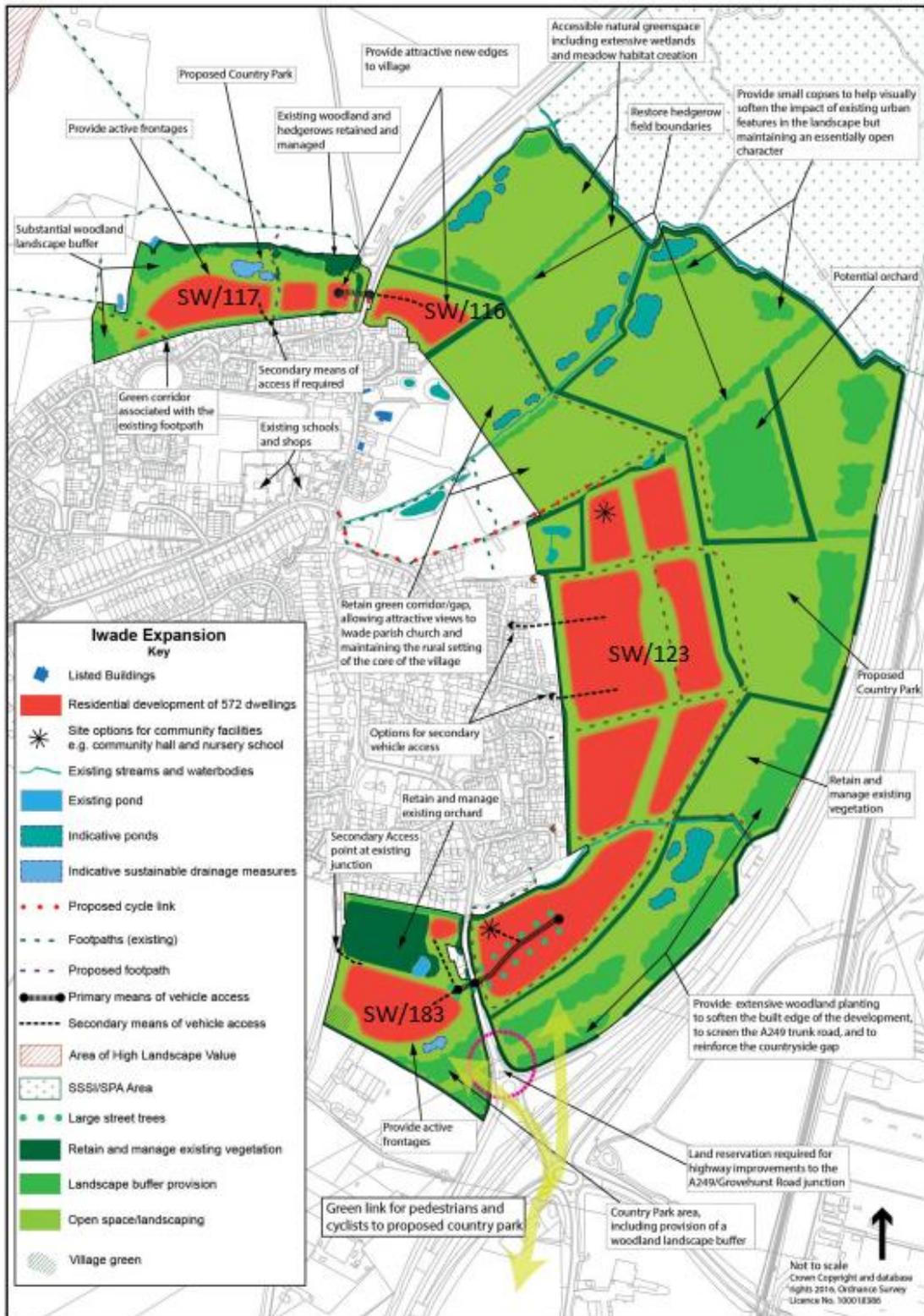


Figure 21 Draft concept diagram for sites at Iwade

- 3.169 Landscape architects have prepared a draft concept diagram for the three sites. This is shown conceptually at Figure 21 and illustrates the potential for a green 'half-ring' to the village with a link back into the village via the existing park. It also could provide the possibility for a larger and wider green infrastructure initiative to link with a further 22 ha of open space being provided as part of the NW Sittingbourne allocation. Together they could provide a major strategic open space corridor linking Quinton Road to the north of Iwade. The remainder of the Important Local Countryside Gap policy would then continue to be applied over most of the proposed open space area (shown as a Proposals Map change within Chapter 9 of Appendix 1). With this mitigation in place, the landscape and visual impacts of sites would be judged as minor to moderate.
- 3.170 The SA broadly recognises the preference for these sites, compared to other site options (page 53).
- 3.171 Whilst a total additional number of 572 dwellings would need to be allocated, it is considered that the community and other benefits offered by the proposals outweigh the visual and settlement separation impacts associated with development, enabling Iwade to make a major contribution both to green infrastructure in the Borough, as well as boosting provision in the rural area and reducing pressures on BMV land.
- 3.172 The HRA issues do need to be addressed and the draft policy wording on page 172 of Appendix 1 puts in place the necessary safeguards and the HRA has been able to screen out the site from likely significant effects as a result. Overall, it is considered that there are reasonable prospects for the issues being satisfactorily addressed.
- 3.173 The Panel is therefore recommended to proceed with an allocation for Iwade on the above basis.

6c) Newington

- 3.174 Like Teynham, growth at Newington needs to be considered in the context of impacts within the A2 corridor, however, unlike Teynham, the distance to the SRN is considerably less (2 km to Key Street A249) and would not impact upon traffic conditions in Sittingbourne (although impacts within Rainham should be acknowledged). As a result, it is considered that Newington should be the subject of further consideration. The presence of the AQMA has been an issue for Newington. Whilst it seems likely that no single site recommended for allocation would trigger significant issues, Members do need to consider the cumulative impact of decisions, particularly if seeking to extend growth beyond that recommended.
- 3.175 The SA provides the following commentary (not part of the appraisal) in respect of considering reasonable alternatives (para. 5.3.19):

“Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Newington (a Rural Local Service Centre); and from a strategic perspective, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions in relation to Newington. It is notable for having a train station, but equally there are transport constraints associated with Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) on the A2, and the village is surrounded by attractive countryside.”

3.176 Newington has been the focus of a large number of site submissions. However, a significant number can be discounted and these are set out in Table 12, the locations for which can be referenced at Appendix 3.

Table 12 Sites discounted as not suitable at Newington

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA position	Ranking (where given)	Commentary if appropriate
Land north of London Road	SW/217	1,008	0	G	<p>The site would have significant to major adverse visual and landscape impacts which could not be mitigated.</p> <p>The site has restricted access to the local road network.</p> <p>It also forms part of the setting of heritage assets and would result in substantial harm.</p> <p>Benefits of the site would not outweigh adverse impacts.</p>
Land off Church Rd, adj St Marys View	SW/041	160	0	G	<p>The site would have significant to major adverse visual and landscape impacts which could not be mitigated.</p> <p>The site has restricted access to the local road network.</p> <p>The site is an old orchard (a UK BAP priority habitat) which would be significantly harmed by its allocation. It also</p>

Location	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	SHLAA position	Ranking (where given)	Commentary if appropriate
					forms part of the setting of heritage assets, resulting in substantial harm. Benefits of the site would not outweigh adverse impacts.
Land west of Church Lane	SW/124	123	0	G	The site would have significant adverse visual and landscape impacts which could not be mitigated. The site has restricted access to the local road network. It also forms part of the setting of heritage assets and would result in substantial harm. Benefits of the site would not outweigh adverse impacts.

3.177 Discounting of these sites leaves five sites on the south side of the railway, the locations:

- 1) SW/010 The Tracies 5 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 3);
- 2) SW/407 Land to the north of the High Street 115 dwellings (ranked Tier C, SHLAA sweep 3);
- 3) SW/164 Pond Farm I 390 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 0);
- 4) SW/707 Pond Farm II 140 dwellings (ranked Tier G, SHLAA sweep 3); and
- 5) SW/732 Ellen's Place, High Street 65 dwellings (ranked Tier D, SHLAA sweep 0).

3.178 The development of SW/010 at The Tracies (Figure 22) would result in some harm from the loss of scrub and orchard trees on a site of pleasing appearance. Wider landscape impacts are minimal due to its containment from views in the wider landscape

3.181 At Pond Farm to the west of the village, both sites are subject to current appeals. The larger site (SW/164) is considered to have the more significant visual, landscape and settlement form impacts and should only be further examined if other site alternatives are judged more harmful. In this eventuality, the position on air quality impacts would also need to be confirmed. The smaller site (SW/707), shown as Figure 23, raises lesser issues of impact, but is not considered to be as favourable as the other recommended sites at the village which are better connected with lesser visual impact. Members could consider the site for allocation if they wished to further enhance provision at the rural settlements and/or increase the level of over-provision to improve the land supply position. However, at this stage, there is not an overwhelming case to pursue this.

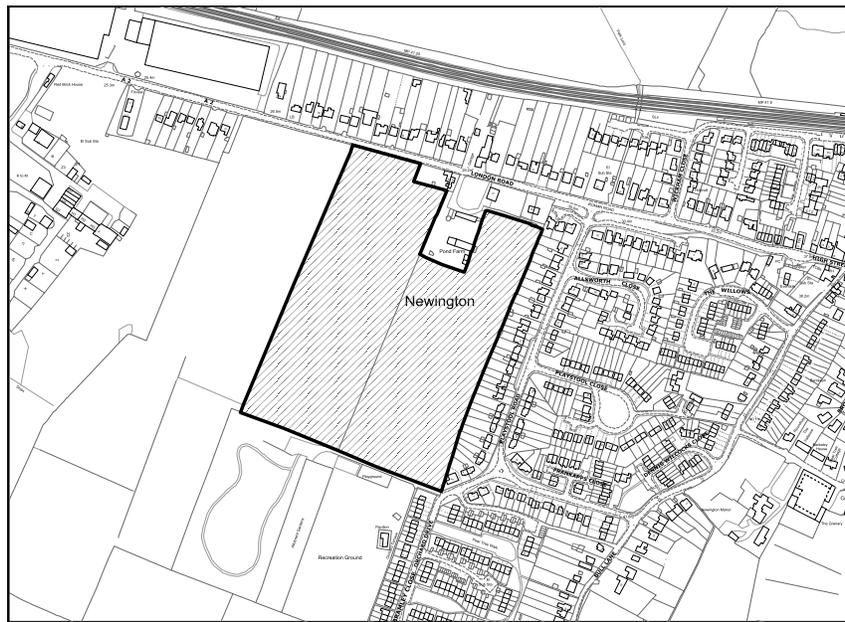


Figure 24 SW/707 Land at Pond Farm, Newington (the smaller site)

3.182 A site with less than substantial and significant impacts to those on the western side of the village is potentially available further to the east of the village at SW/407 (Figure 24).

3.187 The following recommendation is therefore commended to Members.

SITES AT RURAL LOCAL SERVICE CENTRES

Recommendation 6:

That the Panel agree that:

- a) SW/435 and SW/714 at Boughton not be allocated;
- b) Teynham not be a focus for further allocations and that sites in Table 9 at Teynham be discounted from further consideration;
- c) land, subject to Policy MU3, at Frogmal Lane, Teynham, be retained for employment use and not allocated for housing;
- d) sites in Table 11 at Iwade not be allocated;
- e) SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123 at Iwade be allocated for a total of 572 dwellings;
- f) sites in Table 12 at Newington not be allocated;
- g) Subject to Member's views on the significance of site constraints, SW/010 at The Tracies be allocated for a total of 5 dwellings;
- h) Land north of High Street, Newington be allocated for a total of 115 dwellings;
- i) SW/164 at Pond Farm, Newington and at SW/732 Ellen's Field not be allocated; and
- j) SW/707 (140 dwellings), at Pond Farm, Newington, is subject to further discussion and a decision at the meeting.

7) The site options at other villages within Policy ST3

3.188 Should Members accept the recommendations to date, there would be no real overriding need to consider allocations at villages or other locations below the level of Rural Local Service Centres in Policy ST3. The SA provides the following commentary (not part of the appraisal) in respect of considering reasonable alternatives (para. 5.3.26):

"Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is little in the way of strategic arguments for allocating additional sites at the villages."

3.189 They only justifications for pursuing sites in these locations would be a wish to further over-allocate housing provision as a contingency and a means to enhance the 5-year supply, further boost provision in the rural areas or if replacement sites for recommended sites were required. However, such an approach would need to be handled with considerable care given the prioritised approach toward higher order settlements. Such sites would have to have such overwhelming merit as to 'top-trump' sites at the higher order locations. This is not considered to be the case.

3.190 In the case of improving the 5-year supply, it is acknowledged that the availability of a pool of small to medium sized sites could have the merit in improving the supply without

inflating the total number of dwellings allocated. However, in broad terms, these settlements have more variable and often poorer accessibility to services and transport choices. Whilst individual sites may have some merit at the local level, in terms of allocating the most suitable sites with the closest fit to Policy ST3, sites at these settlements should not be a priority for allocation, especially if adequate site provision has already been achieved.

3.191 In the case of boosting rural provision, this would be unnecessary given the sites recommended at the RLSCs.

3.192 Table 13 provides additional commentary in respect of sites at the ‘other villages’. The location of these sites can be referenced from the maps in Appendix 3.

Table 13 Sites at lower order settlements not required to meet development targets

Location	SHLAA ref.	Rank 'Tier'	Commentary if appropriate
Sites at Selling	SW/784, 785, 786, 787		The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations.
Sites at Dunkirk	SW/757, 759, 790		The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. SW/757 and 759 are significantly harmful to a local landscape designation, whilst raising uncertainties as to the relationship of sites to the Blean SAC. The sites may be more appropriately considered in the context of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan for Boughton and Dunkirk where such matters as the impact upon international, national and local environmental designations can be considered in more detail. An HRA will need to address the issues associated with European designated sites.
Sites at Painter's Forstal	SW/702, 753		The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. It is additionally likely that these sites would fail to conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB and would not be in accordance with para. 110 of the NPPF. In particular, SW/753 is a very significant area of land likely to represent major harm to the AONB.
Sites at Lynsted	SW/458, 078	E, NA	The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. SW/078 is also likely to represent substantial harm to a designated heritage asset. SW/458 would require further assessment in respect of heritage issues as there is potential to both harm and enhance designated heritage

Location	SHLAA ref.	Rank 'Tier'	Commentary if appropriate
			assets.
Sites at Upchurch	SW/049, 085*, 086* ¹² , 718,	C, C, B, NA	The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. In the case of SW/718, the site is significantly harmful to the landscape character and setting of the village. The site was considered by the SHLAA and did not meet sweep 0, it having failed at step 2 of the assessment process. The benefits of such sites are not considered to outweigh the harm.
Sites at Bredgar	SW/193, 715, 724, 726	NA,	The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. It is unclear whether the sites would conserve and enhance the Kent Downs AONB, but the AONB would generally be avoided in terms of para. 110 of the NPPF. SW/193 would also substantially harm a designated heritage asset.
Sites at Bapchild	SW/101, 408, 410, 411, 453	B, B, B, D, C, B	<p>The location offers a lesser contribution to the Local Plan settlement strategy than other locations. SW/408 is no longer available. SW/410-411 would have the potential to significantly impact on landscape character, settlement separation and substantially harm a designated heritage asset.</p> <p>SW/101 (Land at Hempstead Farm), although having some moderate landscape impact (after mitigation), the site could be considered in the event of an overriding need – such as a lack of suitable sites at other settlements. Involves BMV land. The site is assessed by the SHLAA and achieves sweep 3.</p> <p>SW/453 (Land at School Lane), would only have minor to moderate landscape impact (after mitigation). It could be considered in the event of an overriding need – such as a lack of suitable sites at other settlements. Involves BMV land. The site is assessed by the SHLAA and achieves sweep 3.</p>

¹² Subject to a planning application under para. 49 of the NPPF.

SITES AT OTHER VILLAGES

Recommendation 7:

That the Panel agree that the sites in Table 13 be discounted from further consideration.

Section 7: Overall conclusions

1) Summary of preferred approach

- 3.193 Taking the totality of the above recommendations in this report and the findings of the SA and HRA, the preferred approach recommended to Members can be described broadly below (and referenced in the draft SA):

“Within the context of an increased housing target, the preferred approach is aimed at maintaining the settlement strategy of the Local Plan, via its two planning areas, and via the settlement tiers within Policy ST3.

Sittingbourne is intended to remain the overall focus for growth in the Borough, in recognition that it is the largest settlement with strong opportunities for urban regeneration, employment and new services with overall good transport links. The town’s position within the Thames Gateway reinforces the need for growth here. However, there are limitations to its overall growth, not least the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV) and landscape and heritage constraints to the south of the town. Thus the preferred approach represents a balance between safeguarding the town’s position within Policy ST3 and safeguarding its important environmental resources. There will though be development needed in locations where the need for growth will override local constraints; notably through the erosion of important local countryside gaps.

To achieve such a balance requires growth at other locations, principally the Isle of Sheppey where sites can be provided on lesser constrained sites, whilst maximising the use of sustainably located BMV in a way that too reflects Sheppey’s overall position within the Thames Gateway. Here though, there too are limits to this emphasis, given that sites toward the centre and eastern end of Sheppey are less well located and are judged to have more significant environmental impact. The focus therefore is on the better connected and less harmful sites on the western side of the Island.

Also important to securing this balance for Sittingbourne and Sheppey is the need to secure a proportionate boost at Faversham and the rural areas. In the case of Faversham, this can be achieved without significant/substantial harm to the strategy and vision for the town. In the rural areas, this can also be achieved with further growth and, amongst the Rural Local Service Centres, Iwade is considered to be the most appropriate main focus for additional growth because of its strong location close to Sittingbourne and the strategic road network. Here, a limited amount of lower quality agricultural land is also available, whilst large areas of land are able to provide

potentially significant environmental and green infrastructure benefits for the village and for the Swale Thames Gateway as a whole.

Within the framework of this overall preferred approach, there are risks, not least the achievement of a 5-year supply against the now proposed increased housing target. This is addressed through the allocations of sites able to increase the potential provision, notably at Faversham, the rural areas and south-west Sittingbourne. Whilst this represents an over-provision of sites, no insurmountable adverse consequences have been identified via the SA, HRA or other modelling work, although some further examination of transport impacts is required.

In totality, the preferred approach is judged to achieve sustainable development, as required by para. 14 of the NPPF. Against its three strands, socially, the plan can achieve a significant boost in the supply of housing as required by the NPPF, alongside the provision of new jobs, as well as providing for the infrastructure needs arising. Although it will need to be kept under close review, economically, the plan comfortably provides for sufficient land for economic development to match the planned housing need and to meet the identified economic needs for the Borough. Lastly, environmentally, whilst the plan has some adverse consequences for BMV (including economic loss), settlement separation and landscape character, it also provides for significant levels of green infrastructure involving landscape and biodiversity enhancements and safeguards via the choice of sites and the mitigation proposed for international, national and local designated sites.”

2) The Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.194 The SA considered a number of spatial strategy alternatives (Table X, page 13), each of which would involve making provision for c3,000 additional homes:
- Option 1: the preferred option
 - Option 2: West Sheppey in place of Iwade
 - Option 3: Sittingbourne in place of Iwade
- 3.195 Option 1 was judged to stand-out as performing best against a number of objectives, although it was noted that it performed relatively poorly in terms of biodiversity (see HRA) and soil.
- 3.196 In the case of biodiversity, this relates to HRA issues at Iwade, which are considered capable of being addressed by the measures outlined by the report and proposed policy in Appendix 1. In the case of soils, whilst the option of directing growth to West Sheppey (Option 2) performed better, it is not thought that this is an overriding reason for favouring Option 2. This option can be discounted for the reasons set out in this report, and this decision is also supported by analysis in the SA (notably, Option 3 performs poorly from a housing perspective, given poor development viability).
- 3.197 With regards to a direct comparison between Option 1 and Option 3, the SA indicates that option 3 performs relatively poorly in terms of air, landscape and transport. It is only in terms of biodiversity that Option 3 outperforms Option 1 (see discussion above).

3.198 Whilst the purpose of the SA is not to recommend a preferred option to the Council, it is considered that there is 'clear water' between option 1 and the other two.

3) The headlines

3.199 This section is drafted on the basis that Members are mindful to accept the recommended allocations in this report. If this has been the case, the additional allocations amount to 2,999 dwellings, which with the additional 325 dwellings secured from existing submission plan allocations, gives 3,324 overall as main modifications to the plan. The total land supply represents 10,104 dwellings allocated, 618 completions, 2,198 extant dwellings with planning permission and 1,210 expected windfall completions. This gives 14,130 dwellings against the 13,192 dwelling target, with 938 dwellings extra and an extra 3,469 dwellings from the submission Local Plan, as calculated in para. 3.10¹³. Deducting the number of completions already achieved (2014-15) would mean that this would assume an annualised rate of delivery of some 845 dwellings per annum over the 16 years to 2031. There are a number of reasons why a surplus of provision is recommended:

- 1) With forecast shortfalls in delivery in the next few years and the lead in time for sites to come forward, a surplus is necessary to achieve a 5-year supply;
- 2) It provides the Council will some contingencies during the plan period due to unforeseen circumstances which may mean delay or a site not proceeding; and
- 3) It makes it more difficult for promoters of unallocated sites to challenge the plan, or sustain appeals against refusal of planning permission.

3.200 The economic forecasts for the plan indicated that the number of forecast jobs could not be increased with dwelling numbers above the OAN. A theoretical consequence of over-allocation is that if this situation were to materialise unchecked, there could be an increase in unemployment and/or out-commuting. However, these forecasts change regularly and with the likelihood of a Local Plan review commencing shortly after its adoption, such surpluses need not necessarily be seen in this negative light. Any Local Plan review would commence with new housing and economic forecasts and a new, revised and extended plan period. Triggers in the plan will also ensure that the issue is monitored. During any Local Plan review, adopted sites would then be re-considered and any over-allocation could be viewed as either potentially contributing toward future housing targets or de-allocated if a new strategy was being proposed. In short, any concerns of a mismatch between jobs and homes would be a long term one which would be kept in check by the plan preparation, monitoring and review process. Perhaps a greater risk of further inflating the bottom line housing figures would be the triggering of new infrastructure needs that could not easily be provided.

4) The 5-year supply and overall supply

3.201 Work on the achievement of a 5-year supply is on-going because once the allocations are agreed by the Panel, it will be necessary to discuss with key developers their

¹³ There is a mathematical discrepancy between this figure and the 'to find' figure in para. 3.10. This appears to be due to the increased number of dwellings expected to be provided during the plan period as compared to that in the submission plan.

intended rates of delivery, whilst taking into account the housing monitoring data for 2015/16, which will be available late summer. However, the recommended allocations suggest an initial estimated potential for 4,053 dwellings in the 5-year supply, which when divided by the annualised rate of 825 dpa (using the Liverpool method) provides a 4.9-year supply. Nevertheless, the contingency of extra sites that is recommended to Members, together with the work that will be put in motion, should assist in the achievement of a 5-year supply by the time the Examination re-convenes. A note of caution is that until the actual levels of completions and extant planning permissions for 2015/16 are known, there will remain uncertainties.

- 3.202 Members will understandably be nervous of the over-allocation of sites, but will realise that the draft Local Plan is still potentially vulnerable to challenge and subject to many variables completely outside of the Council's control. It would take the removal of only a relatively small number of dwellings (e.g. urban regeneration sites) from a land supply only marginally above the necessary 5 years for the Council to no longer be able to demonstrate the supply. Likewise, in the case of the total supply, an increase in the number of expected completions falling outside of the plan period could reduce any oversupply. Having got so far, the Council's Local Plan could still be found unsound on this issue, or the Council could be instructed to find more sites in a further round of modifications. In the meantime, the vulnerabilities to the Council arising from unallocated sites coming forward would continue.
- 3.203 To address any misgivings, once the 5-year land supply position has been established, if the over-supply has produced a comfortable and defensible position, the Panel could reconvene to consider whether the Inspector should be advised that certain sites should no longer be allocated or should act as 'reserves'. In such an eventuality, the allocations most likely to be involved would be those at the Rural Local Service Centres and at Preston Fields, Faversham. However, given the variables in the land supply, as outlined, Members are strongly recommended to retain the over-supply and that this may need to stay in place for the Examination unless there are strong reasons to be more optimistic later this year.

5) The contributions made by specific locations

- 3.204 Tables 14 and 15 show the percentage split or share of development arising from the recommendations made by this report with comparisons between the submission and proposed to be modified plan. Members are again advised not to become over-occupied with the concept of housing provision as 'fair-shares' or the percentages themselves. Their purpose is to simply act as indicators as to whether the findings of the Local Plan Inspector are being followed.
- 3.205 Making these comparisons is complicated by the fact that there are variances in how to calculate and/or interpret the figures (see para. 2.19). However, the closest direct comparison between the submission plan as at 2014/15 and the proposed to be modified plan 2014/15 is to use the phasing information at [SBC/PS/014a](#) with the new base date applied. Table 13 first illustrates the change by 'planning area'.

Table 14 Development split by planning area (all dwellings)

SUBMISSION LOCAL PLAN 2014/15		POST SUBMISSION MODIFICATIONS 2014/15	
Thames Gateway Planning Area	Faversham and rest of Swale Planning Area	Thames Gateway Planning Area	Faversham and rest of Swale Planning Area
87.9% (9,374 dwellings)	12.1% (1,287) dwellings)	85.0% (12,009 dwellings)	15.0% (2,121 dwellings)

3.206 Table 14 shows that there is a change in the emphasis toward the Faversham and rest of Swale planning area¹⁴. The degree to whether this represents a ‘proportionate boost/sensitive nudge’ is open to judgement. However, a shift from 12.1% to 15.0% is not insignificant, given that Faversham is a small town and that to achieve this 2.9% ‘swing’ against the total overall dwelling numbers for the Borough as a whole is notable. Of the total number of **additional** dwellings provided by the recommendations in the report, the Faversham planning area will have received 24.0% (834) of them.

3.207 Members can therefore move forward with confidence that they have met the Inspector’s interim views in respect of the planning areas, without diminishing the overwhelming role of the Gateway.

3.208 Table 15 provides a further breakdown of data, both against Policy ST3 and individual settlements, indicating additionally where the weight of additional allocations has fallen. These figures are based on allocations only as the inclusion of the other components of land supply is difficult to disaggregate at this level and would, in any event, add little to the overall findings.

Table 15 Percentage of recommended allocated dwellings by settlement tier and settlement (may not add to 100% due to rounding)

Settlement tier in Policy ST3	% of total allocated dwellings with % change from submission plan	Total dwellings allocated with additional provision since submission plan	Individual settlement	% of total allocated dwellings with % dwelling change from submission plan	Total dwellings allocated with additional provision since submission plan	% share of additional allocations
Main Borough Urban Centre	43.6% (+24.9%)	4,417 (1,098)	Sittingbourne	43.6% (+24.9%)	4,417 (1,098)	31.7%
Other Borough	45.9% (+37.8%)	4,478 (1,692)	Faversham	17.2% (+47.9%)	1,739 (834)	24.0%

¹⁴ Table includes allocations, completions, extant planning permission and an approximate allowance made for windfalls.

Settlement tier in Policy ST3	% of total allocated dwellings with % change from submission plan	Total dwellings allocated with additional provision since submission plan	Individual settlement	% of total allocated dwellings with % dwelling change from submission plan	Total dwellings allocated with additional provision since submission plan	% share of additional allocations
Urban Centres			Sheerness	0% (-)	0 (0)	0%
			Queenborough-Rushenden	12.5% (-6.3%)	1,245 (0)	0%
			Minster and Halfway	15.0% (+57.4%)	1,494 (858)	24.7%
			<i>Total West Sheppey 'triangle'</i>	<i>27.4% (+33.6%)</i>	<i>2,739 (922)</i>	<i>24.7%</i>
Rural Local Service Centres	12.1% (+57.0%)	1,209 (689)	Boughton	0.4% (-0.19%)	37 (0)	0%
			Teynham	4.1% (-2.3%)	410 (-3)	0%
			Newington	1.3% (+1.1%)	134 (120)	3.5%
			Iwade	6.0% (+5.5%)	603 (572)	16.5%
			Eastchurch	0.2% (-0.08%)	15 (0)	0%
			Leysdown	0.1% (-0.05)	10 (0)	0%

3.209 Table 14 shows that:

- Sittingbourne overwhelmingly retains its position as the primary settlement for housing overall with the greatest percentage change from the submission plan.
- Minster and Halfway see the second highest percentage change in dwellings from the submission plan; this is largely due to the reinstatement of sites removed as allocations from the pre-submission stage.
- Faversham sees the second highest percentage change in dwellings from the submission plan and the highest number of dwellings of any settlement after Sittingbourne.

- The Rural Local Service Centres receive a boost in provision, higher in percentage terms than any other tier of settlement, but firmly remain the tertiary focus for growth in numerical terms. This would meet the Inspector’s expectations in so far as the rural areas are concerned.
- Iwade would receive both the highest percentage change and overall total number of dwellings of any RLSC, followed by, in percentage terms, Newington. The remaining RLSC all experience percentage falls on the submission plan as a result of their dwelling contributions remaining unchanged against the higher target.

6) Recommended and non-recommended allocations relative to the SHLAA and ranking assessment

3.210 Table 16 gives the Panel information on the relationship between the recommended allocations and other evidence; in particular, despite variances in their approaches, it seeks to show synergy of these recommendations with the findings of the SHLAA and ranking assessments. It also presents the opportunity to ‘explain’ the situations where sites are allocated with an apparent lower ranking of SHLAA sweep. The location of the sites is shown in Appendix 2.

Table 16 Recommended allocations with ranking Tier and SHLAA ‘sweep’

Recommended allocation	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	Rank ‘Tier’	SHLAA ‘sweep’
SW Sittingbourne	SW/703	564	G	3
Land at The Bell Centre, Bell Road, Sittingbourne	SW/343	120	A	1
Belgrave Road, Halfway	SW/165	140	B	2
Barton Hill Drive, Minster	SW/194	620	C	2
Land Jnc. of Scocles Road and Elm Lane, Minster	SW/705	50	B	2
Land at Chequers Road, Minster	SW/457	10	B	2
Land at Graveney Road	SW/334	90	A	2
Perry Court Farm, Faversham	SW/413	370	B	3
Phase II Lady Dane Farm, Faversham	SW/096	60	NA	1
West Brogdale Road, Faversham	SW/441	66	B	2
Preston Fields, Salters Lane, Faversham	SW/233	217	C	3

Recommended allocation	SHLAA ref.	Dwellings	Rank 'Tier'	SHLAA 'sweep'
The Tracies, Calloways Lane, Newington	SW/010	5	G	3
Land north of High Street, Newington	SW/407	115	C	3
Land at Pond Farm, south east of Iwade	SW/183	70	B	1
Land east of Iwade	SW/123	440	G	1
North of Iwade village	SW/117	62	C	3
TOTAL				2,999

3.211 In broad terms, the table shows a close association between sites recommended for allocation and better performing SHLAA and ranked sites. However, some sites within sweep 3 of the SHLAA are required. These are largely as a product of pursuing the higher housing target and where the report has demonstrated that their impacts are acceptable in that context. Some sites are also required from ranked sites below Tier C. Part of the reason for this is the simplistic approach to this exercise, but in detail, the reasoning for the variances are as follows:

- SW/123/117 Sites at Iwade. This is due to biodiversity and heritage issues. In the case of heritage issues, this only affects a small part of the site and is capable of mitigation. In the case of biodiversity, the HRA is satisfied that with the appropriate mitigation and policy text, there would be no significant likely effects on the SPA/Ramsar.
- SW/703 SW Sittingbourne. The ranking leads to a lower Tier position than sites in the south-east option. This is due to heritage concerns affecting just one small part of the site which pulls the overall ranking of the site down. However, the ranking does not consider potential mitigation which is believed, in this case, to be achievable.
- SW/010 The Tracies. It is the potential heritage impacts that lead to the lower ranking. As with SW/703, this does not consider the likely mitigation.

3.212 By way of a further 'sense-check' in respect of the preferred option, Table 17 considers the sites not recommended for allocation where they fell either in Tiers A-C of the ranking assessment or sweep 1-3 of the SHLAA.

Table 17 Non recommended allocations within ranking Tiers A-C and/or SHLAA 'sweeps' 1-3

Site	SHLAA ref.	SHLAA sweep	Tier	Commentary on reasons for non-allocation
Land at Hempstead Lane, Bapchild	SW/101	3	NA	Some landscape impacts, but there is no strategic need to consider sites at this settlement.
Land at School Lane, Bapchild	SW453	3	NA	Some landscape impacts, but there is no strategic need to consider sites at this settlement.
Land north of Eastchurch	SW/197	3	D	Landscape impacts, but there is no need to consider sites at this settlement as there are generally better located sites further to the west.
Land east of Ham Road, Faversham	SW/700	3	G	Other sites preferable, but site is not allocated primarily because of landscape and biodiversity issues.
Pond Farm, Newington (smaller site)	SW/707	3	G	Other sites preferable at Newington and at higher order centres.
Land at East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne	SW/531	3	A	Site needs to be considered in context of detailed issues in terms of continuing need for local centre. This is best undertaken via a planning application.
Land at Frognal Lane, Teynham (proposal to switch from MU to housing)	Policy MU3	0	A	Although well contained in landscape terms, the site results in the loss of an employment allocation.
179-183 Borden Lane, Sittingbourne	SW/796	0	B	Likely to be too small for allocation.
Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne	SW/418	0	B	Likely to be too small for allocation.
Land adj to Dantlings, Plough Road, Minster	SW/159	3	B	Whilst the site is relatively accessible and development might be accommodated without significant harm, its choice as a housing allocation is less favourable than alternatives elsewhere
Land R/O 111, The Street, Boughton	SW/434	0	B	Likely to be too small for allocation.

Site	SHLAA ref.	SHLAA sweep	Tier	Commentary on reasons for non-allocation
Land at Warden	SW/758	0	B	East Sheppey is not recommended as a focus for growth.
Land north of Graveney Road, East of Faversham	SW/783	0	C	The site results in the loss of an employment allocation. It is also likely to be a poor location for housing, with landscape impacts that would be difficult to mitigate.
Land rear of 33 Highfield Road, Minster	SW/158	0	C	Due to its visible location on a ridge, landscape impacts are judged as more significant than the ranking assessment has concluded.
Chequers Stables, Eastchurch Rd	SW/155		C	Sites to the east of Minster are concluded as of lesser preference to more accessible sites further to the west on Sheppey.
Barrow Green Farm, Barrow Green, Teynham	SW/996	0	C	Adjoining the current submission plan allocation of the same name, the site would have moderate landscape and visual impacts. However, the conflicting aspirations of the landowner make it less clear as to the availability of this site.
Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall	SW/211	0	D	The site could only be considered if developed as part of a much larger site already judged as inappropriate for allocation. Otherwise, it is an illogical and intrusive extension into open countryside.
Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane	SW/450	0	C	<p>The submission was for just 3 dwellings, but showed the whole site as potentially available. Part of the site is affected by the presence of high voltage power lines; however, development would be moderately harmful to the countryside gap with Sittingbourne by virtue of its more elevated position.</p> <p>Although part of the site may be brownfield land, its allocation would perform poorly as land adjoining it to the village edge would be maintained as open space (if accepted by Members).</p>

- 3.213 Some of the sites might be appropriately considered in the event of a need for alternatives to be considered (but see Part 4 of the report and conclusions of site options). However, Tables 16 and 17 provide strong reasons as to why sites have been allocated and other sites rejected. In overall terms, they provide a useful 'sense-check' as to the appropriateness of recommendations made, having regard to the various methodologies and approaches used by the SHLAA and ranking exercise.
- 3.214 Overall, it is considered that the recommended allocations are robust in terms of their consistency of approach and overall soundness.

Section 8: Other Main Modifications

3.215 The Inspector has given the Council a very clear steer in respect of the other remaining issues. As necessary, the modifications have been incorporated into the consultation document at Appendix 1.

3.216 A number of matters should be specifically highlighted.

a) The approach to Gypsy and Traveller provision

- 3.217 At paras 11-14 of the Part 3 Overall Interim Findings, the Inspector acknowledges the late change to the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, published in August 2015 after the plan had been submitted. The Inspector notes that the Council's approach to addressing this through re-evaluating the raw data from its GTAA is robust and the conclusions reached in respect of a new pitch target are reasonable. Consequently, a new pitch target of 61 was agreed for the plan period, of which 51 have already been completed or have planning permission. The remaining requirement for 10 pitches can therefore be met through windfall planning applications. In the absence of any other government guidance advocating a different approach (ahead of Local Plan adoption), the Inspector endorses the Council's proposals to revise the local plan policies to remove the requirement for larger mainstream housing allocations to include provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- 3.218 This recommendation also has the effect that there will no longer be a need for a Local Plan Part 2 to make additional site allocations to make good any shortfall. If further guidance were to be issued in the near future in respect of assessing need which indicated that a completely new GTAA needed to be undertaken, it would either slow down the Local Plan adoption to an unacceptable degree or it would have to be deferred to Local Plan review. Whilst there is potentially a degree of risk, the Inspector has endorsed proposals to revise Policies CP3, DM10, DM8 and DM9 and recommends revising the Local Development Scheme to delete Local Plan Part 2. The policy changes have been incorporated into the consultation document at Appendix 1 and the Local Development Scheme will be revised prior to the Examination recommencing.

GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS

Recommendation 8:

That the Panel:

- a) note the revisions made to the pitch need assessment for Gypsy and Travellers; and
- b) agree the modifications to Policies CP3, DM10, DM8 and DM9 to remove the requirement for larger housing allocations to include pitches for Gypsies and Travellers and to reflect up to date planning policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites.

b) Affordable housing

- 3.219 Modifications are proposed to Policy DM8 (Affordable Housing) following the updated viability testing presented to the Examination. The Inspector found this work to be robust and in keeping with the National Planning Practice Guidance, whilst the affordable housing rates to be sought reflect the balancing exercise which takes account of the need to deliver infrastructure, meet affordable housing need and maintain development viability. The following rates will be sought on all suitable sites as follows:
- 0% Sheppey
 - 10% Sittingbourne including urban extensions; also Iwade
 - 10% NW Sittingbourne (Policy MU1, subject to 0% CIL on this site)
 - 35% Faversham and urban extensions
 - 40% All rural areas
- 3.220 Where affordable housing is sought, the indicative tenure targets will be 90% affordable/social rented and 10% intermediate products, which best meets the profile of the local affordable need.
- 3.221 Members will no doubt be aware that the Housing and Finance Bill is currently proposing that a significant proportion (20%) of dwellings on sites of 10 or more dwellings be starter homes to be sold at a discount. It is unclear what the final details of this policy will be, but the indications are that this will be instead of a proportion of more 'traditional' affordable housing products. The Inspector, via the Programme Officer, has alerted the Council to the fact that if enacted in the near future, there may need to be further viability checks and modification to this policy. Officers' initial enquiries on viability issues suggest that as proposed, the new national policy would not have significant impact, but a likelihood of further modification to this policy to comply with national policy is nevertheless highlighted.

GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS

Recommendation 9:

That the Panel:

- a) note the modifications in respect of the percentage need and split of affordable housing products; and**
- b) note that the on-going national debate on starter homes may require further modifications to policy before the Local Plan is adopted.**

c) The approach to new area specific policies for Port of Sheerness and Kent Science Park

- 3.222 In the case of the Port of Sheerness, a new proposed policy (page 237 of Appendix 1) draws on and focuses on the Port's draft 20-year Port Masterplan. This recognises the regeneration potential for both Port uses and other uses. The policy also addresses the importance of heritage issues at the Port and biodiversity, coastal and infrastructure issues. An emphasis is made on increasing the potential for freight movement by rail. Potential longer term options, such as the potential for land reclamation, could be more far reaching and will still need to be considered in the context of Local Plan review.
- 3.223 In the case of the Kent Science Park, the new proposed policy (page 238 of Appendix 1) is intended to address the current and future needs of the site as a science park, both in terms of efficient use of existing land and buildings and any future expansion proposals. Environmental and transport constraints would nevertheless need to be satisfactorily addressed.

NEW REGENERATION AREA POLICIES

Recommendation 7:

That the Panel agree Policies New Regen 3 (Port of Sheerness) and New Regen 4 (Kent Science Park).

d) The approach to proposed Local Green Spaces designations

- 3.224 Paras. 76-77 of the NPPF states that local communities are able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities are able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances. The protection given is consistent with that of Green Belts. They should though not be used to prevent the achievement of sustainable development and their designation should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. The designation should only be used¹⁵:
- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;

¹⁵ [Further guidance](#) on designating Local Green Spaces is also contained within the NPPG.

- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

3.225 At para 26 of Part 3: Overall Interim Findings, the Inspector considers Local Green Spaces (LGS). No issue appears to have been taken with the criteria for designating the LGS themselves, or Policy DM18. However, as the Council proposed to include an additional site (at Minster) promoted through representations on the submission plan, this prompted a wider discussion at the Examination of the process that the Council had gone through to encourage sites to be submitted from the community. As a result, the Inspector recommends that the process for considering sites be reviewed to demonstrate that it has been consistent, transparent and inclusive, before this addition, or any other, is confirmed.

3.226 To this end an additional call for potential LGS site proposals has been undertaken and ran from 11 March to 22 April 2016. In excess of 100 sites have been received in addition to the 32 previously assessed. All the sites are being considered/re-assessed using consistent criteria as set out by the NPPF/NPPG and as set out in [CD/086 \(Technical Paper No 2: Local Green Spaces\)](#). This technical paper will be updated as a result of this assessment and any decisions reached by the Panel and will be published alongside the modifications to the Local Plan. A copy of the original technical paper has been placed in the Members' room.

3.227 This issue, coming so late in the process, has presented some difficulties in terms of timing for the Panel meeting and the assessment and mapping required. It is therefore intended to present the outcome of the assessment to Members at the meeting with the aid of maps to be displayed. However, it is likely that the Panel will be asked to agree that the final details of the modifications and technical paper should be delegated to the Head of Planning and the Chair and that these be incorporated into the consultation document at Appendix 1.

LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Recommendation 8:

That the Panel consider the presentation on Local Green Spaces at the meeting and agree the way forward by way of main modifications to the Local Plan.

e) The approach to strategic and other infrastructure requirements

3.228 At paras 19–20 of Part 3: Overall Interim Findings, the Inspector notes that main modifications to the Plan will be needed to reflect Highway England Delivery Plan 2015 – 20 in respect of M2 Junction 5. This has been incorporated into the modified document at Appendix 1. Further discussions with HE have indicated that some further work will be required to test the implications of higher levels of growth on the three A249 junctions to the west of Sittingbourne. This will be undertaken before the Examination

re-convenes, but it is anticipated that this will be to confirm the scale of any improvements at these junctions rather than the possibility of it revealing a major constraint on the delivery of housing at any given location.

- 3.229 Kent Highways had already confirmed to the Examination that 776 dpa could be accommodated on the local highway network and have been provided with the allocations recommended by this report. To date no 'showstopper' issues have been identified.
- 3.230 A revised draft Local Transport Strategy will also need to be prepared to support the modified Local Plan. This will need to be agreed by both KCC in accordance with their protocol and by SBC with formal consultation prior to it being placed before the Examination.
- 3.231 In respect of other infrastructure requirements, these are currently being tested through KCC's model and the outcomes will need to be reflected in relevant allocations. Further drafting of Chapter 8 of the modification consultation document (Appendix 1) will be required post Panel and a revised Implementation and Delivery Schedule (IDS) will need to be completed for the consultation.
- 3.232 The water companies have confirmed no issues in respect of the higher dwelling numbers.
- 3.233 Finally, the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups for Swale have confirmed their requirements for increased GP capacity, but they do not present difficulties for the Local Plan. These needs will also need to be reflected in Chapter 8 and a revised IDS.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 As a general point, it has been necessary to draft the modifications document (Appendix 1) based upon the recommendations made in the report. This is because of the timing constraints on the Council in terms of returning the plan to the Inspector for Examination. Whilst Members are clearly able to propose and agree alternative approaches, it should be noted that even relatively modest changes could lead to delays to both the consultation and re-submission because of the knock-on effects to supporting evidence, such as facilities modelling.
- 4.2 To a large extent, alternative options have been canvassed throughout report, but mainly in terms of testing the validity of the recommendations made. These are not repeated here. A number of the more fundamental alternatives are however discussed below.

1) The recommended housing target

- 4.3 The Panel have been recommended to accept the Inspector's interim findings in respect of the increased housing target. The Panel could reject the recommendation. However, this will lead to an unsound plan which cannot be adopted and leave the Council with no choice but to restart the process. This would take at least a further three years or so and would need to grapple with changes to national population projections, the review of the Greater London Plan and the local plans of neighbouring authorities, the effects of

Ebbsfleet, the Lower Thames Crossing and Paramount Park to name but a few. Fundamentally, the Council would find itself subject to special measures including the very real prospect that plan-making would be taken over by the Secretary of State. It would also reduce (possibly to zero) the amount of New Homes Bonus that can be received on new dwellings built locally. In the absence of an up-to-date Local Plan, the Council would, in effect, have no means of providing for the OAN in a planned way and unable to defend the refusal of many planning applications.

2) The recommended housing allocations

- 4.4 The parameters for any alternatives have largely been set out in the main report and changes need to be approached with a considerable degree of caution to ensure overall consistency and compliance with the Inspector's findings. However, Members will have noted the bottom line over-supply against the plan target and the strong recommendation that this be retained with an option for review once the 5-year supply is firmed up later in the summer. Members may wish to consider an alternative that reduces the overall provision closer to the housing target now or increase it. They may also wish to propose alternative sites to those recommended.
- 4.5 In the case of the first possibility, this is not advocated. A reduction would prematurely reduce significantly the Council's room to manoeuvre in these matters and could significantly hamper the Council's ability to demonstrate a 5-year supply, making the plan very vulnerable to challenge at the Examination. If this were to materialise, then the decisions taken could not be easily reversed without further significant delay, whereas an indication to the Examination (if shown to be an option) that certain sites were perhaps unnecessary, because a comfortable 5-year supply had been achieved, could potentially be dealt with at the Examination itself without the same delay. Increasing the over-supply is also not recommended for the reasons set out in para.3.200 and because too great an increase is likely to require further SA and HRA work in order to justify it.
- 4.6 In the case of proposing alternative sites (or if Members do resolve to seek reductions in site allocations now), Members should approach this having regard to the following:
- In the case of reductions in site allocations, Members should consider the process advocated by the main report in reverse. In other words, examine sites at the Rural Local Service Centres first, followed by the other urban centres, bearing in mind the Inspector's wish to see proportionate boosts at both the rural areas and at Faversham and the need not to increase the use of BMV without good reason.
 - In addition to the above, in the case of alternative replacement sites for those deemed unacceptable or if additional sites are advocated to boost the 5-year supply, this is not encouraged because of the likely serious difficulties that would arise in maintaining consistency and adherence to the Inspector's findings. However, if Members resolved to go down either route, the options below could be considered. These options are not clear cut or free-standing and should be approached with very considerable caution:
 - At Sittingbourne, option 3 to the south and/or south-east of the town;

- At Faversham, SW/700 (Land east of Ham Road, Faversham) in the context of the Preston Fields site (217 dwellings) and the ‘proportionate boost’ for the town;
- On Sheppey, sites to the east of Minster, including at Eastchurch (SW/155, 159 and 197), giving careful consideration to landscape impacts and accessibility;
- Sites at Teynham, as highlighted by Table 10, but only in the context of considerations at Rural Local Service Centres should other locations not be considered appropriate; and
- At Newington, SW/707 at Pond Farm, but only in the context of sites at the Rural Local Service Centres; and
- Sites at the ‘other villages’, with particular consideration given to both Upchurch and Bapchild, given their more accessible locations, but only in the context of sites considered more harmful at the Rural Local Service Centres, or a wish to further boost provision in rural areas or enhancement to the 5-year supply.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Public consultation will be undertaken on the Proposed Main Modifications to the Local Plan. Although the results of the consultation will be reported to Members for information, the Local Plan Examination in Public is still ‘live’ and the Local Plan Inspector will consider them, if necessary by reconvening the Examination hearings and reporting accordingly.
- 5.2 The main modifications will be subject to a 6-week formal consultation, anticipated late June/early August 2016. Any reconvened Examination is likely to be held toward the end of the year with the Plan hopefully adopted before spring of 2017.
- 5.3 It will be the Appendix 1 ‘tracked change’ version of the Local Plan which will form the consultation document. The proposed main modifications are highlighted and it is only these parts of the plan which are subject to the consultation and any reconvened examination hearing.
- 5.4 Given the likely extent of the proposed modifications, in particular, the additional housing sites, as well as the normal notification procedures, it is proposed that the centre part of the next edition of Inside Swale be devoted to the consultation which will ensure that as many residents in the Borough are informed as possible. A map will indicate the main locations for the additional development and direct people to where further information can be obtained and how to make representations.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Supports the Council’s corporate priorities for a borough and a community to be proud of.
Financial, Resource and	None anticipated at this time. Spreading the process over a longer time period has enabled the cost of additional work to be covered from the regular Local Plan budget and unspent reserves from

Property	previous years.
Legal and Statutory	None anticipated at this time. The Council has been assisted by a barrister throughout the Examination process.
Crime and Disorder	None anticipated at this time.
Sustainability	The proposed main Modifications to the Plan will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal, both in terms of their cumulative impact and in respect of any new site allocations. This is required to be published alongside the Modifications themselves, and will be a context for Members' consideration of the Modifications for consultation.
Health and Wellbeing	None anticipated at this time.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None anticipated at this time.
Equality and Diversity	The submitted Local Plan was subject to a Community Impact Assessment, but it has been advised that no further review or update will be necessary at this stage of the process.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- 1) Appendix 1: The draft 'tracked-change' version of the modified Local Plan which includes the Main Modifications.
- 2) Appendix 2: Maps showing the existing allocated and proposed to be allocated sites.
- 3) Appendix 3: Maps indicating the locations of all sites considered.
- 4) Appendix 4: Draft Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report Addendum.
- 5) Appendix 5: Draft Habitats Regulations Assessment.

8 Background Papers

8.1 The following background papers are provided:

- The Inspector's interim findings January and March 2016 (Parts 1 and 2) and March (Part 3).
- The draft SHLAA 2014/15 Addendum. Available before the meeting as 'work in progress' in the Members Room.
- Maps indicating sites submitted for Local Green Space designation, together with their initial assessment.

- CD/086 [Technical Paper No. 2: Local Green Spaces](#) (SBC, 2014). To be reviewed, but available in the Members Room.

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The Purpose of this Consultation

The Council originally submitted the publication version of its Local Plan (Bearing Fruits 2031) for Examination in April 2015. During November and December 2015, an Examination, held by a Government appointed independent Inspector, considered whether the Local Plan could be adopted in the form submitted.

In the run up to and during the Examination, the Council proposed a number of modifications that were intended to ensure the overall soundness of the plan, alongside those relating to matters of clarification and factual changes. Before the Examination, the Council also formally requested that the Inspector be able to make main modifications to the plan if it was seen fit to do so.

The Local Plan Examination remains formally 'open', however, two 'interim findings' have been issued by the Inspector. The first published in February 2016 determined that the plan should be modified to more fully address the Borough's future development needs. These findings have the effect of requiring the Council to make further land allocations in various locations as a result of the Council's housing target being increased from 540 dwellings per annum to 776.

The second set of 'interim findings' were published in March 2016. These findings were more wide ranging in terms of the topics covered and have given rise to the need to make a series of further modifications to the plan.

The Inspector's interim findings can be viewed [here](#).

This document presents the Council's proposed 'main modifications' to the submission Local Plan.

The modifications are accompanied by a number of supporting documents:

- **Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report Addendum:** SA is a mechanism for considering and communicating the likely effects of a draft plan and alternatives, with a view to avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and maximising positives. The SA also provides a simple high level assessment of all the sites now before the Council.
- **Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA):** HRA are required for the plan to be in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The objective of the assessment is to: identify any aspects of the Local Plan that would cause an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites, either in isolation or in combination with other plans and projects; and to advise on appropriate policy mechanisms for delivering mitigation where such effects are identified.
- **Ranked assessment of non-allocated site options:** Provides a ranked list of non-allocated site options in an indicative order of preference.
- **Addendum to Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2014/15 (SHLAA):** SHLAA are prepared to demonstrate a deliverable and developable supply of land for at least the next five years. An addendum to the 2014/15 assessment examines those sites not subject to the earlier assessment.

How to comment on the main modifications

The main modifications to the Local Plan are shown within 'modification boxes' within this document. Text that is shown for deletion is marked as ~~strike through~~, whilst proposed new text is shown underlined - these changes represent the modification. Where a graphic or figure is contained within the modification box, where this relates to a graphic or figure from the submission plan, the specific change is described in the caption. The reader will need to compare the graphic or figure to that in the original submission Local Plan.

Please note that paragraphs have been renumbered as a result of the modifications proposed and are therefore not comparable with those from the original submission plan.

Much of the Local Plan is not subject to any modification and this content has already been the subject of previous consultation and Examination. It is not proposed that these matters should be the subject of further representations and scrutiny. Only the main modifications proposed by this document are subject to this consultation.

The Purpose of this Consultation

Relevant documents can be viewed as follows:

- **Online** - on our [consultation website](http://swale-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/) (http://swale-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/)
- **Download** - all documents are available [on our website](http://www.swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale/) (www.swale.gov.uk/local-plan-for-swale/)
- **You can ask for a CD.**
- **Swale Borough Council Offices, including Faversham Alexander Centre and Sheppey Gateway** - reference copies are available for public inspection.
- **Libraries** - reference copies are available for public inspection at all libraries within the Borough.

If you need assistance:

- Call 01795 417118
- Email to planningpolicy@swale.gov.uk

Should you wish to make comments on the consultation document, you can do so in the following ways:

- **Online** - on our [consultation website](http://swale-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/) (http://swale-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/). This enables you to submit comments against specific modifications. If you have previously made comments on any of our consultations your contact details will already be in our system, making it easier to submit comments this time.
- **By email** - [Bearing Fruits](mailto:bearingfruits@swale.gov.uk) (bearingfruits@swale.gov.uk)
- **By letter** - Spatial Planning Manager, Swale Borough Council, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

Comments in respect of any supporting documents can be made either by email or letter.

The public consultation period will run for a period of six weeks from 24 June to 5 August 2016.

Please note, representations received after this date will not be accepted by the Council.

Copyright Restrictions

Please note that all maps in this document, together with our Proposals Map, are subject to Ordnance Survey copyright restrictions.

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Note also that maps have been captured at a scale of 1:2500 and should only be viewed online at this scale.

1 Setting the scene: the context for planning In Swale

Main Modification 1

What is the Development Plan?

1.0.1 Local plans are part of the development plan for an area. The development plan is the system of statutory planning documents against which planning applications will be determined. The Government believes that local plans are the key to delivering sustainable development that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. The Swale Borough Local Plan will be the most important planning document for Swale, setting out the vision and overall strategy for the area and how it will be achieved for the period from ~~2014~~ 2014 until 2031.^(1.1) It must have regard to national planning policy and guidance. Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As such, planning law gives great importance to up-to-date and adopted local plans.

1.0.2 For Swale, the development plan will (when adopted) comprise:

1. The Swale Borough Local Plan;
2. Neighbourhood Plans where they exist within Swale; and
3. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan, prepared by Kent County Council.

1.0.3 All the policies and proposals in the development plan should be read 'as a whole', that is, subject to all other relevant policies in the Local Plan and other material considerations.

The new Swale Borough Local Plan

1.0.4 The new Swale Borough Local Plan sets out:

- a description of the Borough, its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the vision and objectives for the future (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3);
- the strategy for the Borough, including the achievement of sustainable development (Chapter 4). The chapter also includes a key diagram which indicates broad locations for growth, protection and enhancement;
- a series of core policies that take important issues for Swale and create the necessary linkages with the policy themes, set out in national planning policy and other local plan policies (Chapter 5);
- details of allocations, an Area of Search and the identification of regeneration areas (Chapter 6);
- a framework of development management policies to guide the determination of planning applications by setting out criteria for development proposals (Chapter 7); and
- a framework for implementation and monitoring of the Local Plan. Chapter 8 sets out the issues affecting the delivery of the Local Plan, whilst a separately published [Implementation Delivery Schedule](#) details the infrastructure necessary to support the Local Plan.

1.0.5 For all local plans, specific boundaries within which particular policies and land-use designations apply, are shown on a Proposals Map.

1.0.6 The Local Plan is supported by existing and proposed supplementary planning documents which set out the details for implementing local plan policies.

1.0.7 There is a range of research to guide the development of options and underpin the Local Plan. Most of this research is available on the Council's website at <http://www.swale.gov.uk/planning-policy/>. Elsewhere endnotes are provided to show evidence sources.

1 Setting the scene: the context for planning In Swale

1.0.8 The Council has a [Local Development Scheme](#). This sets out its programme of future Local Plan document production and is subject to review as needs emerge from the Local Plan process and the changing national planning policy context.

1.0.9 The Council also has an adopted [Statement of Community Involvement](#) (SCI). The SCI is a statement about our policy on the involvement of people who have an interest in matters relating to development in their area.

Realising our ambitions for Swale

1.0.10 Updated in 2012, the Council's [Sustainable Community Strategy](#) has an overarching vision for the Borough to transform its economic, social and environmental prospects, making it one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work, learn and invest. Its priorities relate to children and young people, economy and regeneration, environment and liveability, safer and stronger communities and health and housing. The Local Plan has been prepared to expressly support these priorities.

Main Modification 2

~~The Swale Borough Local Plan 2008~~

1.0.11 ~~The current Swale Borough Local Plan, adopted in 2008, will remain an important part of the planning framework for the Borough until adoption of the new Local Plan. In February 2011, the Secretary of State allowed the Council to 'save' policies from the 2008 Local Plan still relevant to the planning of the Borough and this can be viewed on the website. These saved policies will be superseded when the new Local Plan is adopted.~~

The wider planning system

1.0.12 The preparation of this local plan is undertaken within the wider national planning system. The [Localism Act](#) aims to give local communities more say over the amount of development that should be steered to their areas, within the context of local plans and their own supporting evidence. The main elements of the Localism Act include:

- preparation of neighbourhood plans where communities can decide what their area should look like; and
- incentives, such as the New Homes Bonus, are intended to financially reward those Councils and communities that deliver new homes and businesses.

1.0.13 In March 2012, the Government published the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF). It calls for Local Plans to be aspirational but realistic and address the implications of future change, requiring them to set out the strategic priorities for their areas with policies to deliver homes and jobs, commercial development, infrastructure, healthy communities and for addressing the impacts of climate change and for the protection and enhancement of the environment. The NPPF provides for a presumption in favour of sustainable development by which proposals judged to comply should proceed unless the harm caused is demonstrated to be significant and outweighing of the benefits, or specific policies in the NPPF specifically indicate that development should be restricted.

1.0.14 This Local Plan has been developed in line with the NPPF and seeks to give the NPPF a local interpretation in response to Swale's particular needs and characteristics.

1.0.15 In March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) launched the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (NPPG). This is a web-based resource which links the National Planning Policy Framework with planning practice guidance, as well as legislation and other guidance.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

1.0.16 CIL is a way of enabling local councils to pay for the infrastructure needed to accommodate growth in their areas. It represents a common rate charge which, once adopted, applies to all development proposals over specified size limits. Councils wanting to use CIL will have to prepare a charging schedule which is then examined by the Government prior to its adoption by the Council. Developers will continue to make payments called Section 106 agreements, but councils will be no longer able to pool the contributions of more than five agreements to fund a single project. Swale is currently preparing its CIL schedule which will reflect the Local Plan implementation and delivery schedule and affordable housing policy. The future adoption of a CIL schedule in Swale will render references to Section 106 in this document subject to change.

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs)

1.0.17 LEPs have been established by the Government for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area and promoting cross-border working. They are particularly responsible for promoting and allocating public funds to road transport schemes. Swale sits within the [East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Thurrock and Southend LEP](#).

Local Nature Partnerships (LNP)

1.0.18 LNPs have also been established by the Government in order to drive positive change in the local natural environment, taking a strategic view for the benefit of nature, people and the environment. The [Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership](#) lies partially within Swale whilst The [The Kent Local Nature Partnership](#) covers the whole of the county.

The Duty to Co-operate

1.0.19 The Localism Act calls on public bodies to have a duty to co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross administrative boundaries. We have worked collaboratively with Kent County Council, our neighbouring local authorities and other public bodies such as Highways England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, the LEP and LNPs as well as the private sector including utility and infrastructure providers.

1.0.20 A [separate statement](#) has been published on the Council's action to demonstrate compliance with this duty.

Steps in preparing the Local Plan

What we have done so far

1.0.21 Our evidence: The production of the Local Plan is based on a comprehensive research and evidence base, which includes land availability, transport and other community infrastructure capacity, flood risk assessment and environmental assets. The data and guidance covers a wide range of sources, including bespoke work undertaken for Swale, work done in partnership with other agencies and references to Government and other public bodies' research and good practice guidance. The list is set out in our [evidence base](#).

1.0.22 Engagement: From 2008 we undertook a number of workshops to explore important questions facing the Borough and carried out two consultations on our draft Local Plan vision and objectives. We also undertook a community roadshow where those who took part were asked about the importance we should be attaching to the amount of new housing and jobs we needed to provide, together with the conservation of the Borough's environment. The following documents were then published for consultation.

[Swale Core Strategy Pick Your Own: Issues and Strategic Spatial Options](#) (January 2011) Explored alternative options for the number of new homes, jobs and associated infrastructure and where they should be located. It set

1 Setting the scene: the context for planning In Swale

- the agreed vision for the Borough and the objectives that assist with delivering this vision;
- a broad development strategy for the Borough;
- four strategic spatial development options; and
- a proposed framework of core policies and development management policies.

Bearing Fruits: Swale Borough Draft Core Strategy (March 2012): The draft plan was at this time a Core Strategy and did not contain all the development allocations needed. It considered both the technical evidence and the views from *Pick your own* and arrived at our preferred strategic option that included the overall amount and location of development and allocations for key sites and infrastructure. It also fleshed out the suite of policies to help achieve the vision and objectives.

Bearing Fruits 2031: The consultation draft Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1 (August 2013). This took into account previous consultation responses as well as the considerable changes brought about by the NPPF. A significant change was its expansion to include all the allocations necessary and a complete suite of up to date development management policies. At this point, the document changed from a Core Strategy to a Local Plan.

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Publication version (December 2014) was the publication version of the Local Plan which underwent consultation on whether the plan was properly prepared and sound. The Local Plan was subsequently submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination, along with representations received during this consultation phase and the Council's draft responses to points raised.

1.0.23 Examination: The Secretary of State appointed a Planning Inspector to determine the issues to be heard at an Examination in Public (EIP). Hearings took place in November and December 2015 and were a chance for the Inspector to scrutinise the Local Plan with input from public agencies, developers, conservation bodies and the public in a series of round-table discussions.

What is happening now?

Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan, Proposed Main Modifications, June 2016

1.0.24 The Planning Inspector published her Interim Findings on the Swale Borough Local Plan in early 2016. These are a summary of her findings to date and include a broad overview of significant changes that are needed to make the plan sound. In response to the Inspector's Interim Findings, the Council has prepared a number of main modifications to the Local Plan (this document) for a 6 week consultation. The main modifications are intended to action the Inspector's recommendations, which in turn reflect her conclusions in the light of the discussions at the Local Plan Hearings and also bring the Local Plan up to date. This consultation is limited to those parts of the plan which are affected by main modifications only and any responses should be based on whether the modifications are regarded as legally compliant and sound.

1.0.25 Additional modifications (which include factual updates, consequential change to ensure compatibility with main modifications and typographical corrections) are not highlighted for the reader and are not the subject of consultation.

What happens next?

1.0.26 The Examination in Public of the Swale Borough Local Plan is technically still open. Once this consultation on the Main Modifications is concluded, all responses will be forwarded to the Planning Inspector for consideration. It is likely that the Hearings will be reconvened. Once they are concluded, the Inspector will issue a Final Report on all of the issues considered at the EIP. The Final Report will determine whether the Local Plan is sound and include any recommendations made by the Inspector to make it sound. These will need to be incorporated into the Plan before it can be adopted, as the Inspector's report and recommendations on soundness are binding. Once this has been done, Swale Borough Council will adopt the Local Plan.

Assessing the Local Plan

1.0.27 The Council has used a number of assessments at various stages to ensure that the potential impacts of the Local Plan are properly examined:

- **Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment):** This assesses the environmental, social and economic performance of the plan against a set of sustainability objectives. Appraisals were undertaken for the options, draft Core Strategy and draft Local Plan stages, including publication and submission versions of the Local Plan, and their recommendations have been considered and, where appropriate, acted upon. The [Sustainability Appraisal](#) (SA) also informed the EIP with regard to alternative housing scenarios. It has been updated to accompany the main modifications.
- **Habitats Regulations Assessment process:** Ensures sites that are important in a European context are protected. A [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) accompanied the publication and submission versions of the Local Plan and has been updated to accompany the main modifications.
- **Health Impact Assessment:** Ensures that the potential impact of decisions on health and health inequalities are considered. The NHS undertook a [Rapid Health Impact Assessment](#) on the *Pick Your Own* Strategic Spatial Options.
- **Community Impact Assessment (CIA):** Ensures that any policies and proposals ensure that the diversity of the community is respected and the positive and negative impacts highlighted. [Community Impact Assessments](#) were prepared and published alongside the August 2013 and December 2014 Local Plans.
- **Viability Assessment:** The sites and scale of development in the Plan should not be subject to a scale of obligations and policy burdens which renders them non-viable to develop and therefore undeliverable. [Assessments](#) have been undertaken and a number of changes made to the policies of the Local Plan as a result.
- **Infrastructure assessments:** Infrastructure providers, including transport, have assessed the growth proposals of the Local Plan that have informed the preparation of its infrastructure delivery schedule. These form part of the [evidence base](#) of the Local Plan.

1 Setting the scene: the context for planning In Swale

End Notes

- 1.1 The starting date for the Local Plan is 1st April 2014. This reflects the most up-to-date population and economic forecasts that have been undertaken since the Publication version of the Local Plan.

2 Taking a journey through Swale

2.1 Shaped by location, people, products and environment

Introduction

2.1.1 Economic, social and environmental changes are part of everyday life. The Local Plan considers how, when and where change will happen and is based on a knowledge and understanding of Swale's current state and distinctiveness.

2.1.2 Those familiar with Swale know it as a highly diverse and distinctive place of towns and villages set in downland, farmland and coast. These characteristics are reflected in its strengths and weaknesses that do not always fit the outside perceptions of a relatively prosperous part of south east England. Nevertheless, Swale possesses great assets which have yet to be realised.

2.1.3 Swale's local distinctiveness can be found in its buildings and landscapes, people, products, nature, and customs, but also in less tangible qualities like literature, history, celebrations, names, recipes, myths, legends and symbols. Striving for local distinctiveness is about demanding the best of the new so that quality and authenticity adds richness to our surroundings. In order to identify this at a strategic level, the Council asked for suggestions for creating a Swale ABC as a way of recording the things that make an area locally distinct, listing them alphabetically and producing them in an attractive and visual way. These are reflected in The Swale ABC.



Picture 2.1.1 The Swale ABC

What's in a Crest?

Hidden in the Borough Crest are elements of what makes Swale distinct. Dissecting it tells us much about Swale:

- Colour gold to signify wealth - historical, industrial, agricultural.
- Waves to signify ports, boat building and ancillary trades and, of course, The Swale.
- Red lion/blue ship shows Faversham's link to the Cinque Ports.
- Five cherries as the centre of the Kentish fruit growing activities.
- The Ram as a reference to agriculture and to the Isle of Sheppey.
- The White Horse of Kent.
- Heraldic sea lions as a reference to historic Kings and Queens.
- The crozier a reference to monastic and religious establishments at Minster and Faversham.
- Pilgrim's staff and pouch a reference that the area is on the pilgrims' route from London to Canterbury.



Unlocking the Secrets of Swale's Armorial Bearings (Leaflet, 1999)

2 Taking a journey through Swale

Shaped by our location

2.1.4 Swale is the bridging point between north and east Kent, named after the narrow channel of tidal water between mainland Kent and the Isle of Sheppey. It is a Borough of some 140,800 people who primarily live in its three main towns, Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness.^(2.1)

2.1.5 Swale has strong communication links. It is close both to London and mainland Europe and well connected to the national motorway network. The M2 runs east-west across the Borough, providing access to destinations between the Channel Ports and London. Via the A249 there is alternative access along the M20. London is accessible in a little under an hour by high speed rail services. As a coastal Borough, the Port of Sheerness gives access, via its deep water



Picture 2.1.2 The Swale

berths, to the largest ships in the world; its imports distributed to all corners of the UK. Swale is also within easy reach of other major Kent centres - Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone and the Medway Towns.

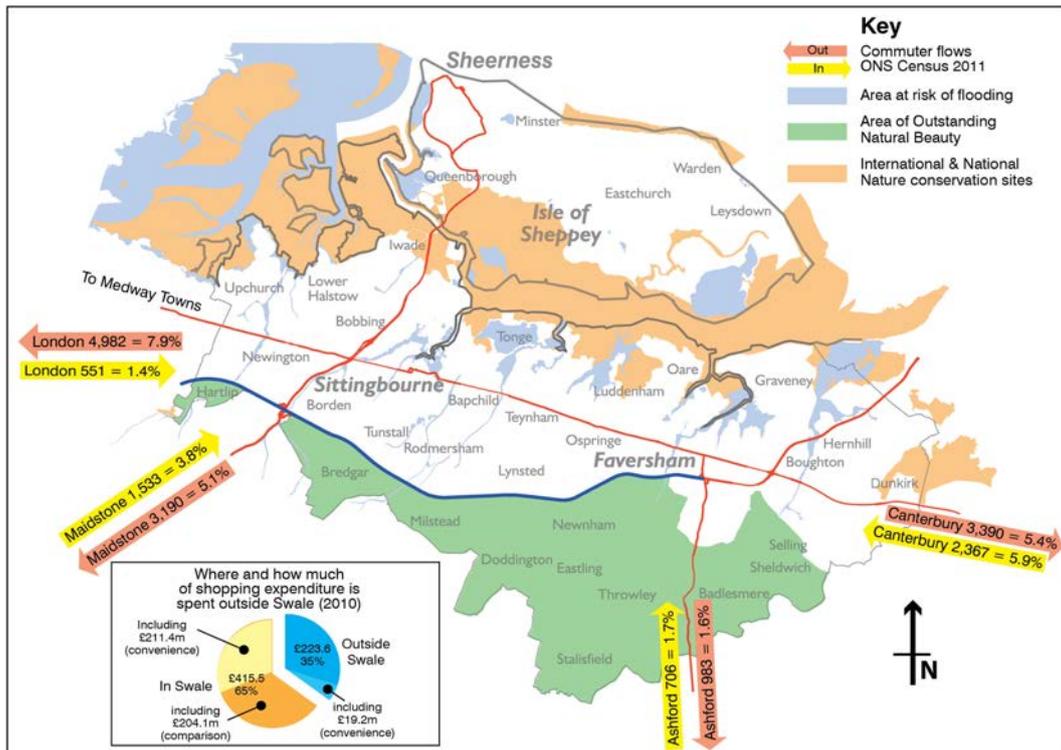
2.1.6 Sittingbourne (population 49,300)^(2.2) is the main town, acting as a population, employment and service centre for the Borough. These functions and the town's present day character have their roots in past travellers and pilgrims and the industries that settled there. It is a product of its location on the London-Dover road and at the head of an inlet of the Swale, Milton Creek.

2.1.7 A unique feature within Kent is the Isle of Sheppey, separated from the mainland by the Swale. Its main town is Sheerness (population 12,500)^(2.3). It owes much of its distinctiveness to its role as a traditional seaside town and the past and present industries that established there, particularly the former naval dockyard and the current Port facility. The town centre functions as the main shopping and service centre for the Island's residents and visitors.

2.1.8 Faversham (population 19,600)^(2.4) is an attractive and historic small market town at the centre of a rich farming hinterland. Faversham and Oare are located at the head of two creeks and surrounded by attractive countryside. The town is best known for its continued links with brewing and food. This and the town's industrial and maritime heritage produce its present day character - an outstanding range of historic buildings, streets and waterways and a town centre with strong independent retail and service sector.

2.1.9 Outside the towns, from Hartlip in the west to Dunkirk in the east, Sheldwich in the south to Shellness in the north, are the Borough's extensive rural areas. There is a great diversity of settlements and landscapes, many of great charm and character. Larger villages along the main transport routes like Newington, Teynham and Boughton have a range of local facilities and services. Away from the main routes are smaller, more isolated settlements and hamlets like Conyer, Warden and Throwley Forstal.

2.1.10 Over the last 20 years most of the villages and towns in Swale have experienced growth, with growth in the towns the most rapid. Over the last 60 years, population growth has been amongst the most rapid in Kent. Now, Swale has the third largest district population in Kent and built development has similarly physically grown - in the last 10 years more employment floorspace has been built than anywhere else in the county and Swale has the fourth highest level of dwelling completions over the 10 years to 2014.^(2.5)



Picture 2.1.3 External factors shaping Swale.

Shaped by our people

2.1.11 The diversity of its communities - ages, ethnicity, skills and trades - has been Swale's strength for centuries. The area has been a draw to many people throughout history, from Iron Age settlers, Roman and Saxon invaders and Flemish refugees, through to 20th Century arrivals from London and today's communities from eastern Europe and Africa along with others who seek the area's cheaper housing and good transport links. All bring their own cultures and skills which further enrich and diversify the Borough.

2.1.12 Population growth in Swale has, and continues to be, largely fuelled by those who move here, but its indigenous population is ageing and the death rate is higher than both the Kent and the South East average.^(2.6) The expanding urban populations are largely as a result of migration into the area by younger people and families. This younger population brings with it a rising birth rate which partly offsets the older age groups and the impacts of an ageing population, as well as helping to maintain the population of working age.^(2.7) Some 58% of the population are urban based, leaving a significant proportion (42%) living in the rural areas of the Borough.^(2.8)

2.1.13 Ethnic minorities are still a small proportion of the population, although Swale is becoming more ethnically diverse, mostly to those from Black African, Black British, Asian or British Asian backgrounds. Although a very small proportion of the population, Swale also has one of the larger Gypsies and Traveller communities in Kent, both on their own sites and in permanent housing.

2.1.14 Almost 63% of the population of Swale regard themselves as Christian. Other religious communities such as Hindu, Muslim and Jewish, although not well represented, are likely to rise in line with the increase in the ethnicity of the Borough.

2 Taking a journey through Swale

2.1.15 Swale has a wide mix of household types - married couples, families, lone parents and single older persons. The proportion of older people and those co-habiting has increased while the number of married and one person households is relatively stable. The most common types of housing within Swale are semi-detached houses/bungalows and terraced properties and this is reflected across private, rented and registered social landlord properties. Swale has a higher proportion than the South East average of those owning their own homes (68%) and this has increased in the last 10 years by 2%.^(2.9)



Picture 2.1.4 Crowds at Faversham

2.1.16 There are wide contrasts between neighbourhoods in the Borough, from the most prosperous parts of Faversham and rural areas in the south of the Borough, to some of England's most deprived neighbourhoods in Sheerness, Bluetown, Queenborough, Rushenden, Leysdown and Warden, Davington, Murston and Milton Regis. This deprivation displays itself particularly in the poorer levels of educational attainments, ability to access jobs and health of these communities.

2.1.17 Surrounding us in adjacent districts are some 707,400 people. Notably, around the A2 corridor at the western end of the Borough, the Medway Towns, with its population of over 274,000 exerts urban and leisure influences on the character of this part of the Borough.^(2.10)

Shaped by our products

2.1.18 Many present day Swale industries - paper, brick, brewing, cement, steel and maritime - have roots in the past. Swale makes things, grows things, imports things and moves them around but there are relatively fewer offices, financial and high-tech businesses than most other parts of the South East.^(2.11)

The town centres and industrial estates at Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness and Queenborough are our main centres of economic activity. The largest of these is at Eurolink, Sittingbourne, whilst Sheerness is a deep water port with rail freight connections and one of the UK's largest import points for fruit, timber, paper products and vehicles.



Picture 2.1.5 Home of science based industries

2.1.19 The largest private sector employers in Swale are in the industrial and transportation sectors including DS Smith Paper Ltd, Aesica (pharmaceuticals), Medway Ports and Shepherd Neame (brewers). There are more recent additions to employment in the Borough including major distribution and logistics firms (such as Morrisons) as well as growth in environmental, renewable resources and science-based industries such as those at the Kent Science Park, near Sittingbourne. Less well-known, but a significant employer, is the public sector, including from the prisons on the Isle of Sheppey.

2.1.20 Within the rural area there are many, mostly small, businesses which significantly contribute towards employment in the Borough. Whilst this aspect of the local economy is sometimes overlooked, Swale has the second largest agricultural workforce in Kent and makes a significant contribution to UK food supplies, particularly in fruit and cereals. Another understated and undervalued employment

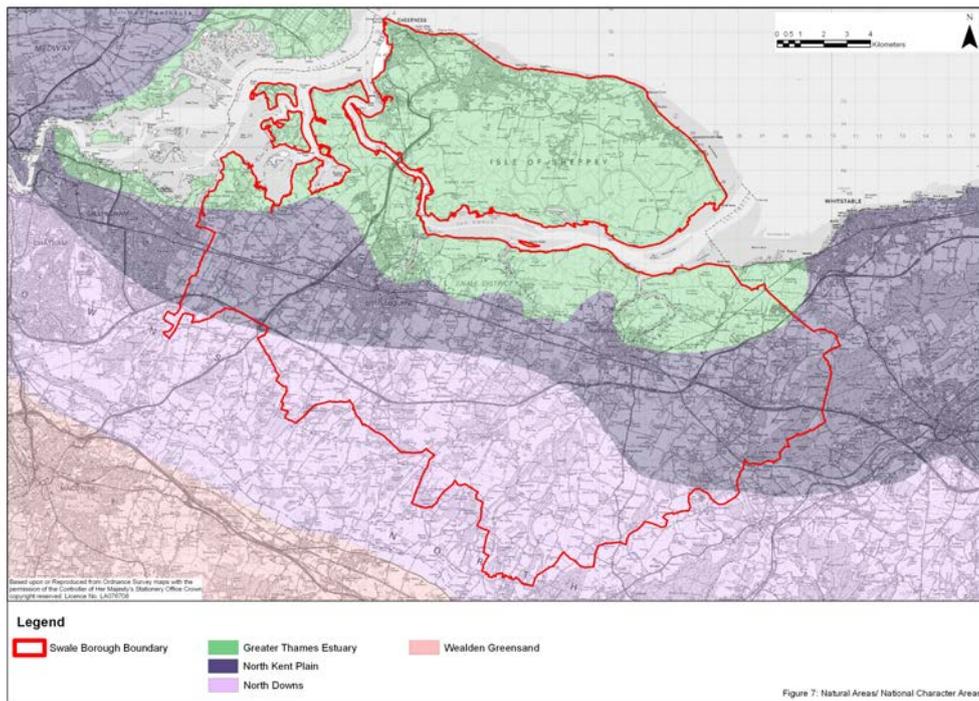
resource is tourism. Swale has an inviting built and natural environment which attracts visitors who explore Swale itself and further afield. During 2009, it was estimated that the expenditure of day and overnight visitors brought over £200m into Swale.^(2.13)

2.1.21 Some 44% of Swale's working residents are employed in the Borough, whilst the remaining 56% commute to areas outside. Of these around 26% work in the main towns of Kent with 18% within Medway, Canterbury and Maidstone, a further 8% travel to London. Some 70% of the journeys to Canterbury are generated from Faversham alone.^(2.14) The main reason for working outside Swale is the lack of availability of certain types of jobs within the Borough and the higher salaries available elsewhere.

2.1.22 Swale has the third highest number of international migrant workers of all Kent local authorities and has seen significant growth in economic migration from within the EU (particularly Lithuania, Poland, and Bulgaria) not only for agricultural work but for an increasing number of other work opportunities.^(2.15)

Shaped by our environment

2.1.23 The Borough's outstanding environment is influenced by its geology, soils, topography, history, people and biodiversity. There are three broad landscape types (Map 2.1.1) - the chalk of the Downs, the central agricultural plain and the clay marshes of the Thames Estuary.



Map 2.1.1 Natural England's national landscape character areas

2.1.24 The chalk grassland, fields, valleys and woodlands of the North Downs, comprising part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, dominates the southern reaches of the Borough. Its slopes and valleys fall coastward, criss-crossed by narrow and sometimes sunken lanes. Places such as Milstead, Newnham and Badlesmere create picture-book Kentish villages, their typical character influenced by their surroundings.

2.1.25 Beyond the chalk are the rich agricultural soils on the plains around the Roman road (the A2 Watling Street). Here are some of the most productive soils in the country. Our settlements developed at the heads of creeks that ran from the Swale and later around Watling Street and the railway. The growth of these settlements - Sittingbourne (subsuming the earlier established Milton Regis), Faversham, Newington and Teynham - were fuelled by trade and populations brought by sea, road and rail. The gunpowder, brewery, paper, defence, maritime, brick and barge making industries all thrived in these areas and their

2 Taking a journey through Swale

legacy remains in today's businesses, buildings, archaeology and landscapes. Agriculture, including fruit and hop growing, remains synonymous with the Borough motto: *Known by their fruits*; the area having been the cradle of cultivated fruit since the 16th Century.



Picture 2.1.6 A surviving example of Swale's traditional fruit heritage

2.1.26 London clay underlies the northern and coastal boundaries of the Borough. At 111 kilometres, the coast has a major influence on settlements, landscape, wildlife and industry. Around the Swale and Medway, extending inland to the edges of the three main towns, a continuous belt of marsh is prone to tidal flooding; its mudflats, grazing and salt marshes cut by ditches, dykes, inlets and creeks, are presided over by the sweeping arc of the Sheppey Bridge. With distant views and large skies overhead, the mood and character of these places change with tide, weather and season. Quiet and remote waters meander into creeks at places such as Oare, Conyer and Lower Halstow, influencing their character and activities. Along with Faversham and Milton Creek, these watercourses and marshes provide important ecological habitats, in particular for wintering and passage birds.

2.1.27 The Isle of Sheppey is a unique combination of landscapes and communities. Its north coast faces the Thames Estuary, with views of Essex, huge container ships and wind farms on the horizon. The historic naval dockyard of Sheerness is now surrounded by a major commercial port. Queenborough retains its harbour of fishing boats, alongside industrial landscapes and seas of imported cars. North and eastwards, the Island is peppered by thousands of holiday chalets that swell the summer population. An increasing sense of remoteness prevails further east towards the shingle spit at Shellness, its community positioned precariously at the entrance to the Swale. The Island's spine of hills is topped by the settlements of Minster and Eastchurch, whose communities overlook marshes, the Swale and mainland to the south and whose landscapes slope down northwards to crumbling clay cliffs and the estuary.

2.1.28 On the mainland, the same clay soils affect the eastern and western fringes, with outcrops providing extensive and impressive views of the estuary and beyond. In the east, the woods, hills and pastures at the Blean extend to Canterbury and Herne Bay, sloping down to the agricultural plain and marshes; its hillsides and tops are thick with a canopy of trees, a home to rare birds and butterflies in one of the largest continuous woodlands in England. To the west and on a smaller scale, the ridge and woodland similarly rise up from the marshes between Iwade and Newington.

2.1.29 In 2012, the largest proportions of land cover in Swale were arable (31%) and grassland (26%), followed by other (including sediment and cliff) (16%), development (14%), woodland (7%) and orchards and hops (6%).^(2.16)

Thinking about the wider view

2.1.30 The Local Plan looks at guiding growth at the local level, but it is significantly affected by a variety of global, European and national factors, in particular wider economic change and uncertainties. European influences also include directives and laws which directly influence our national planning legislation.

Main Modification 3

2.1.31 Whilst the economic recovery has begun it is likely to be slow and with an unequal distribution. Areas such as Kent are envisaged as growing in line with the rest of the South East, although structural weaknesses within local economies such as Swale may vary short term employment growth. Economic forecasts for Swale suggest that predicted jobs numbers will be below pre-recession levels for some time. The demographics of the Borough, the skills of the workforce and investors' attitudes to locations peripheral to London may subdue inward investment. Like anywhere else, fluctuations in the global economy may cause sudden and dramatic changes in Swale.

2.1.32 In the current climate, future funding for major infrastructure projects will be more limited than in the past as efforts are made to reduce the UK budget deficit. This may place limitations on providing certainty over the timing and pace of development.

2.1.33 Despite uncertainties, Swale is positively influenced by its location within 50 miles of central London. The Greater London region is a key driver of the UK economy, with an emphasis on growth, investment and connectivity. Swale forms the eastern edge to the Thames Gateway growth corridor. This area continues to be the focus of growth that has for the last 20 years been a key location for the delivery of new homes and sustainable communities.

2.2 Facing the future - our strengths, weaknesses and opportunities

2.2.1 Below is a digest of the main challenges and opportunities facing the Borough as determined by our [evidence base](#).

Building a strong, competitive economy

- Only 50 miles from Central London, with good transport links, including the High Speed Rail Link, and easy road access to the motorway network (M2/A2/A249/M20), international rail services and ports.
- Some population growth among economically active age groups, a strong tradition of entrepreneurship and relatively high rates of business formation.
- Poor performance in education and skills limits both the ability of local residents to access higher-value jobs and the attractiveness of the Borough to employers demanding higher skills.^(2.17)
- A net exporter of labour, with relatively high unemployment levels and not generally known as a business location further afield.^(2.18)

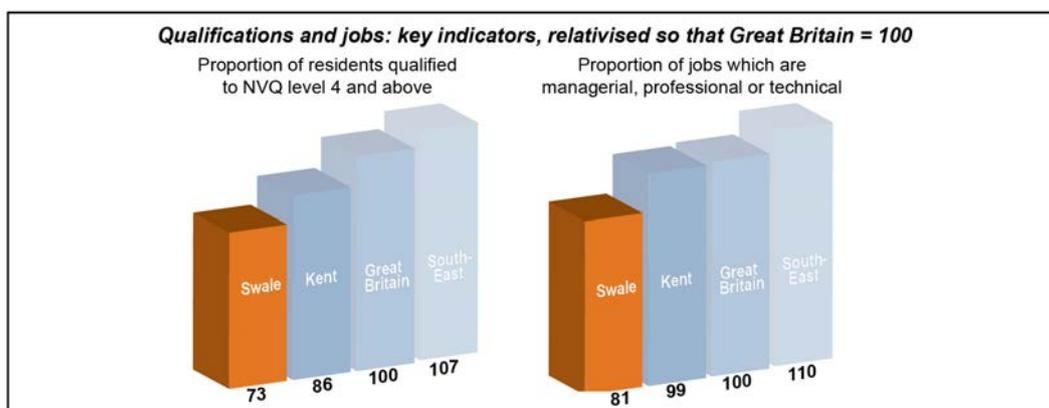


Figure 2.2.1 Qualifications and jobs - key indicators for Swale (IMD)

- Narrow economy with above average proportion of lower paid jobs. Strong representation by manufacturing and transport and under-representation by communications, health, banking and insurance,

2 Taking a journey through Swale

media activities and agriculture. However, whilst some rebalancing of the economy is occurring, further diversification is required. ^(2.19)

- Increasing opportunities for the Borough in the developing knowledge economy sectors, such as technology-based businesses and environmental based industries, including at Kent Science Park.
- Agriculture and tourism need to modernise and diversify. Although there is renewed optimism, there has been a significant decline in orchard and hop land cover from 12.3% in 1990 to 6.3% in 2008. ^(2.20)
- Retail, pharmaceutical, agriculture and manufacturing are growth sectors for the future. Cultural activity has a relatively low profile. There is a numerical surplus of industrial requirements and a shortfall of office requirement. ^(2.21)

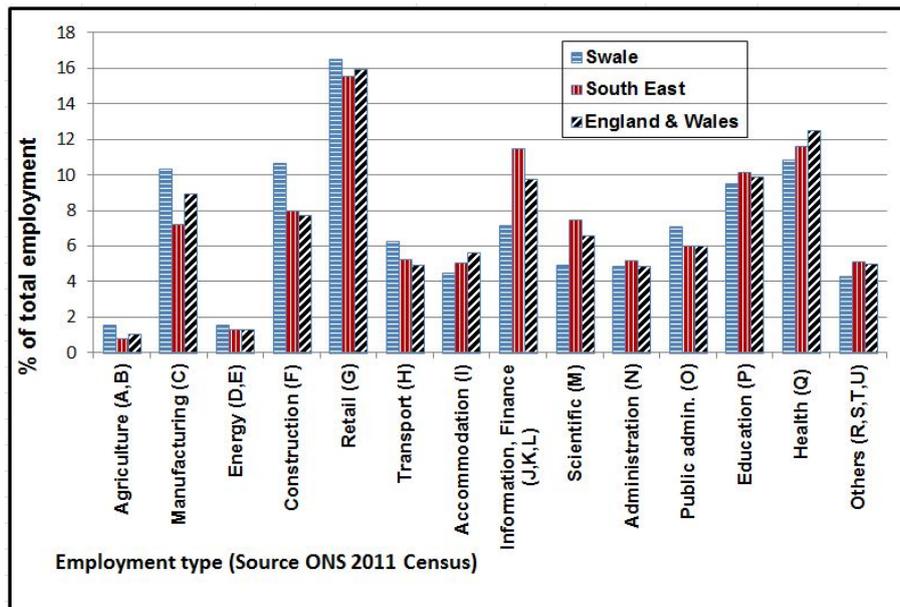


Figure 2.2.2 Swale employment sectors (Source: ONS Census, 2011)

Promoting sustainable transport

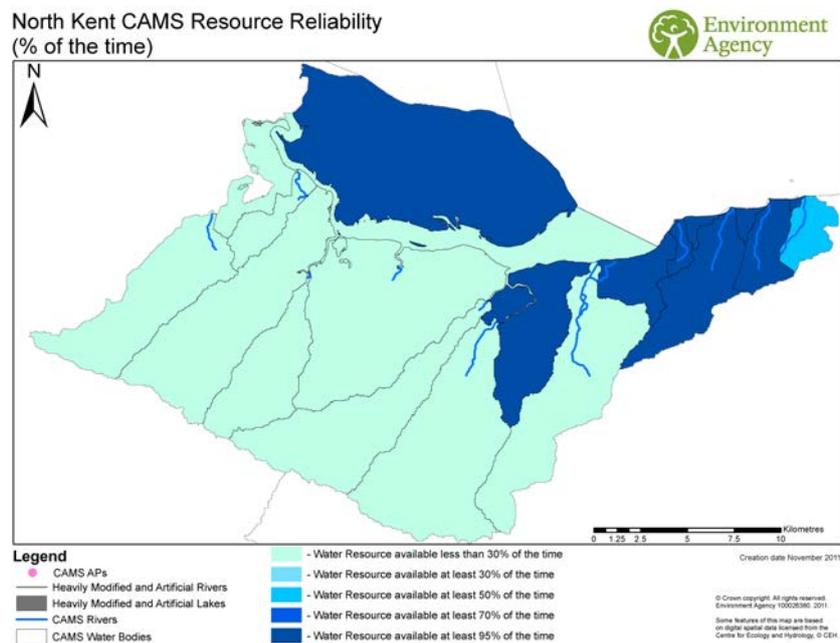
- Junction 5 of the M2 has a poor safety record and lacks capacity. It is the single greatest transport constraint in the Borough.
- High levels of road and fuel use, below UK average use of public transport, an underdeveloped public transport network and higher than average proportion with no access to a car. Although the increase is modest (1.5% given the increase in workforce between these years), an extra 3,900 persons were added to out-commuting between 2001 and 2011, mostly to the nearest larger towns beyond Swale. ^(2.22)

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

- Population growth due to in-migration. Indigenous natural changes toward a greater proportion of older persons leads to the need for a labour force of working age people to support them and realise other economic aspirations. ^(2.23)
- The number of elderly households (up to 50% of forecast household growth), family households with children (up to 25% of forecast household growth) and other specific groupings, all have specific, and in some cases, specialist housing needs. ^(2.24)
- Relative lack of affordability in the private housing market and significant shortfall in provision against overall affordable housing need. ^(2.25)
- Housing needs include: smaller housing units; greater numbers of larger family homes; homes to meet demographic changes; and pitches for Gypsy and Traveller site provision. ^(2.26)
- Improvements required to the fitness of total housing stock. ^(2.27)

Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environments

- 60% of the Borough is designated for international, national and local biodiversity and landscape value reflecting an increasing recognition of the quality of Swale’s environment as an asset. ^(2.28)
- To date, there are few examples of progression toward more sustainable design and construction.
- Communities, landscapes and biodiversity vulnerable to climate change through changes to water resources, flood risk, erosion and habitat fragmentation.
- Homes, transport and, unusually for Kent, industry, are the biggest carbon emitters. There are major opportunities for the low carbon sectors of the economy, especially at the Port of Sheerness and the Isle of Sheppey prisons.
- Water resources in Swale will become more stretched as the population continues to grow.



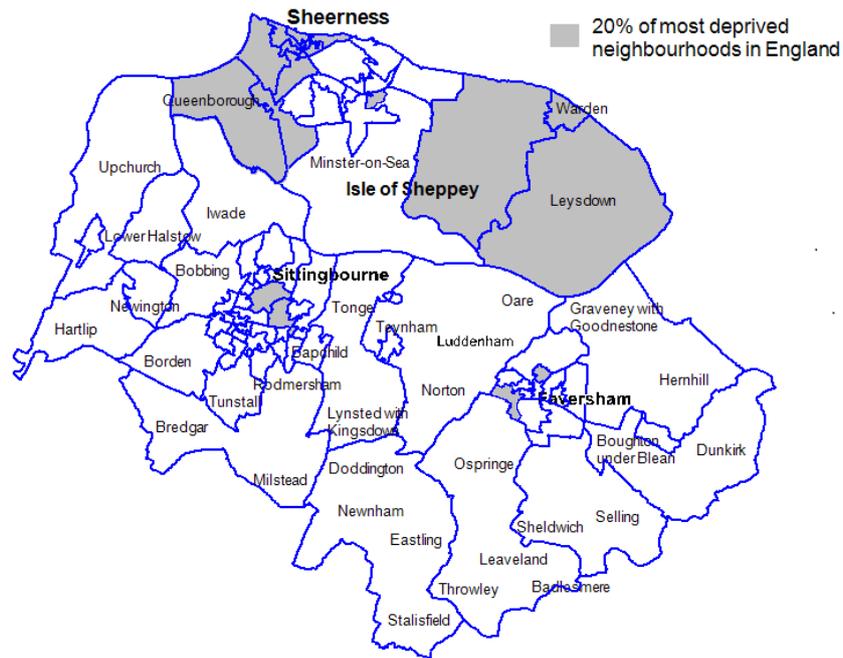
Map 2.2.1 Environment Agency, North Kent and Swale Catchment Abstraction Strategy 2013, Water resource reliability as percentage of time available

- Biodiversity continues to decline as does landscape condition in some locations.
- The vast range of the Borough's heritage assets has potential to be a wealth creator and catalyst for change, but some historic buildings are at risk from neglect, most significantly the historic dockyard at Sheerness.
- There is a significant quantity of high quality agricultural land and more optimism for the future in the food sector.
- Poor air quality in Ospringe, Newington and parts of Sittingbourne, Teynham and Sheerness.

Promoting healthy communities

- Significant social, economic and environmental disparities, notably concentrations of deprivation on Sheppey and in Sittingbourne, particularly in the areas of health, income, benefits, employment and skills. Some of these are among the worst in England.
- Infrastructure and new employment has not always been provided at the right time. Future needs are for education, social care, health, transport and digital infrastructure.

2 Taking a journey through Swale



Map 2.2.2 Neighbourhoods in Swale forming part of the 20% most deprived in England (Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010, CLG)

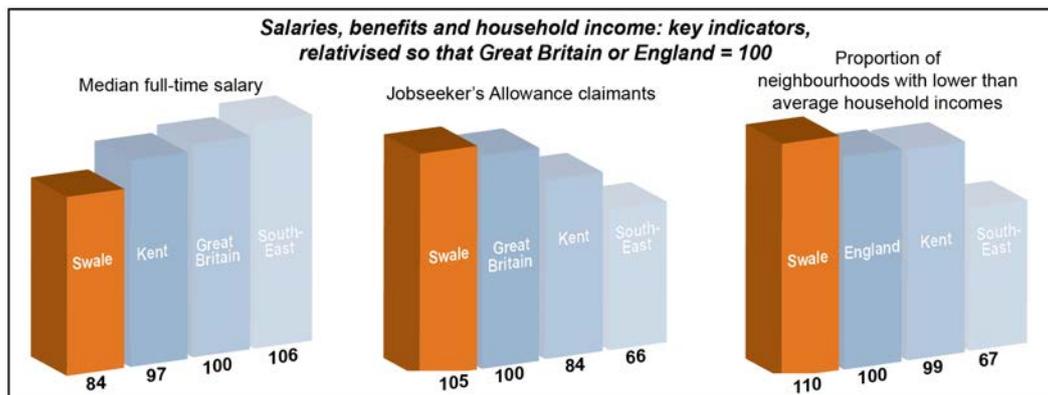


Figure 2.2.3 Salaries, benefit and household income levels relative to other locations (IMD)

Sittingbourne

- Fails to provide the range and quality of public, cultural and commercial services expected for its size and growth area status with insufficient spending retained within the Borough.^(2.29) The largest town in Kent without a dedicated further education facility.
- Poor transport conditions and public transport facilities in central areas of the town.
- Has an indistinct cultural and architectural identity and a poor quality green urban environment in the centre and north of the town, including notable deficiencies in parks and gardens, street trees, natural and semi-natural green space, amenity green space, provision for children and young people and allotments.
- Pockets of deprivation, particularly in the north of the town in Murston, Milton Regis and Kemsley.
- Out-commuting from Sittingbourne (49% of resident workforce).^(2.30)
- Has a potential under supply of employment sites for industrial if remaining land bank is used by land-hungry uses.^(2.31)

Isle of Sheppey

- Sheerness struggles to maintain its role as the main commercial and service centre for the Island. The health of the town centre needs to be improved, but there are limited opportunities available within its confines or at its edges, although there are regeneration and enhancement opportunities at its centre.^(2.32)
- Pockets of deprivation at Sheerness, Queenborough and western communities.
- Queenborough/Rushenden has major regeneration opportunities.
- Undeveloped transport network. Unmade roads and cul-de-sacs to eastern end of island and deprived communities increase isolation and promote unsustainable travel patterns. Significant off-Island commuting (59% of resident workforce).^(2.33)
- The Island's tourism offer is unique to Kent, but under-exploited, whilst the traditional 'bucket and spade' product faces challenges to meet modern demands and expectations. Sustainable rural tourism, the Island's historic assets and links with aviation pioneers are potential growth areas.
- Deficiencies in natural and semi-natural green space, formal outdoor sport facilities and allotments.

Faversham

- A typically Kentish market town, rich in built heritage and unique for its morphology north of the A2 Watling Street.
- Despite town's prosperous image, Davington is amongst the most deprived neighbourhoods in England.
- The town centre is healthy, but needs to further consolidate its character and role as the primary service centre for eastern Swale and further widen its development as a local tourism and cultural centre.
- Existing employment allocations need to be developed or replaced, but needs improved quality of employment sites commensurate to its scale and location.^(2.34)
- Faversham Creek is under used and silting up, but has regeneration opportunities.
- Out-commuting (46% of resident workforce), mostly short distance to Canterbury.^(2.35)
- Deficiencies in parks and gardens, formal outdoor sport facilities and amenity green space.

2 Taking a journey through Swale

End Notes

- 2.1 Office of National Statistics, mid-year estimate, 2014
- 2.2 Office of National Statistics, mid-year estimate, 2014
- 2.3 Office of National Statistics, mid-year estimate, 2014
- 2.4 Office of National Statistics, mid-year estimate, 2014
- 2.5 Kent County Council Commercial and Housing Information Audits
- 2.6 Office for National Statistics, Birth and Death Rates 2012
- 2.7 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment. NLP for SBC 2013. Paras. 3.4-8
- 2.8 2011 Census
- 2.9 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment. NLP for SBC 2013. Para. 3.16
- 2.10 2014 mid year population estimates
- 2.11 Swale employment sectors ONS Census 2011
- 2.12 Defra Agricultural Statistics 2010
- 2.13 The Economic Impact of Tourism on the Borough of Swale 2009
- 2.14 2011 Census
- 2.15 2011 Census. Office for National Statistics
- 2.16 Arch Kent Habitats Survey 2012: The Kent Land Cover Change Analysis 1961-2008
- 2.17 Swale Employment Land Review 2010. NLP for SBC. Para. 2.39
- 2.18 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Paras. 2.7 and 2.16
- 2.19 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Paras. 2.4-6
- 2.20 Arch Kent Habitats Survey 2012: The Kent Land Cover Change Analysis 1961-2008
- 2.21 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.33
- 2.22 Comparison between 2001 and 2011 Census
- 2.23 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 5.35
- 2.24 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 7.19
- 2.25 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 3.36
- 2.26 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 7.19 and Table 11.1
Swale Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment July 2013
- 2.27 Housing Condition Survey. SBC 2009
- 2.28 Percentage of Borough covered by either landscape or biodiversity designation determined by SBC
Geographical Information System
- 2.29 Swale Retail Assessment 2010
- 2.30 2011 Census
- 2.31 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.33
- 2.32 Swale Retail Assessment 2010
- 2.33 2011 Census
- 2.34 Swale Employment Land Review 2010. NLP for SBC. Para. 11.24
- 2.35 2011 Census

3 Our vision, objectives and key diagram

Introduction

3.0.1 One of the NPPF's twelve core principles is that planning should be plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with local and neighbourhood plans which set out a positive vision for the future of the area. Our vision needs to respond to our challenges, strengths and opportunities in a way that is right and distinctive for us, yet is robust and realistic about the future and in the best interests of local people, businesses and the environment. This chapter sets out our 2031 Local Plan vision for the Borough with the objectives we must try and achieve along the way to make it happen.

What's driving Swale's vision?

3.0.2 The description of Swale in Chapter 2 showed it to be a collection of diverse communities and environments. The Borough crest and its motto *Known by their fruits* is a reflection of the Borough's past, present and future, but also a metaphor for what can be achieved to make Swale better known further afield for what it is and what it has achieved. The vision for Swale expresses what the fruits of those endeavours will be by 2031, namely that it will have used its key and unique assets of location, communities and environment to drive a stronger economy and the continuation of an outstanding environment for all our communities. Underpinning this is the challenge of achieving sustainable growth within the context of economic and global uncertainties and climate change - the significant challenges for communities everywhere in the 21st century.

3.0.3 As Swale is not a single place, its vision cannot hope to embrace every place within it. Four distinct parts of the Borough - Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey, Faversham and the rural areas - are well understood and recognised. The vision distinguishes and responds to their uppermost challenges: a Sittingbourne that residents will be proud to use; Sheppey coastal communities not at the end of the line, but celebrating their rejuvenation; a market town at Faversham that retains its character whilst thriving as a centre for services and tourism; and rural communities that continue to remain relevant to 21st century needs. The future is uncertain, so the detail behind the vision will be flexible whilst setting the bar as high as we can.

3.0.4 The vision has been developed in broad consultation with a wide variety of people and parties including the [Swale Public Services Board](#). The result is a vision for a successful Borough made up of diverse communities who have extended their opportunities.

Statement 1

The Vision for Swale

It is 2031 and Swale is known by the fruits of its endeavours.

We have harnessed our assets – a strategic location, diverse communities and an outstanding natural environment – and are a sustainable, flourishing place in which to enjoy life and do business, with:

- Sittingbourne transformed into an attractive, competitive and prosperous town, with a thriving centre that residents across the Borough are proud to use;
- Sheerness and Queenborough as beacons of coastal rejuvenation leading the way to success for all communities on the Isle of Sheppey;
- Faversham, a thriving market town and heritage destination that has grown organically; and
- Successful rural communities across the downs, farmed plains and coast as places of innovation; nurturing enterprise, local produce and greater self-reliance.

3 Our vision, objectives and key diagram

Our core objectives:

1. Adapt to climate change with innovation, reduced use of resources, managed risk to our communities and opportunities for biodiversity to thrive.
2. Use our coastal assets to support a strong economy and a sustainably managed environment.
3. Support economic success and improve community wellbeing with a network of maintained, protected and improved natural assets in town and country.
4. Conserve and enhance our historic and natural assets as the means to drive regeneration, tourism, and environmental quality and to reverse declines in their condition.
5. Strive for high quality design to bring a better quality of life, opportunities for healthy living and self-confidence to our communities.
6. Be flexible, provide choice and support sectors that can build on our strengths, diversify our economy, promote investment in skills, and develop our distinct opportunities in pursuit of greener and pioneering technologies.
7. Bring economic growth, regeneration and community development, especially to our most deprived communities.
8. Support our farming and food sectors so that they are at the forefront of increasing food security, reducing food miles and increasing local food consumption.
9. Provide the right housing to support demographic change and housing needs to regenerate and build stronger, greener communities.
10. Develop tourism and culture to support regeneration, employment growth, communities and environmental management.
11. Improve prosperity and environmental quality with efficient and sustainable transport networks.
12. Ensure timely delivery of the services and infrastructure to support strong communities.

Our place based objectives:

1. Re-establish Sittingbourne as the principal town with investment in retail, leisure, culture and community services and further education, within new and improved green spaces and streets.
2. Reinforce Sheppey's uniqueness by ensuring change: supports Sheerness as its commercial and service focus; strengthens and integrates communities at Rushenden and Queenborough and Minster and Halfway; manages coastal and heritage assets; modernises leisure and tourism industries; and supports isolated communities.
3. Sustain Faversham's role and character as an historic market town serving residents, visitors and a wider area with a range of businesses and services that increase diversity and interest.
4. Address identified needs in our rural communities so that they are sustained in ways that also respect their scale and character.

Main Modification 4

3.0.5 To be known by the fruits of its endeavours by 2031 is a significant challenge for Swale. Where we stand now, at the end of a period of huge economic uncertainties, bearing these fruits will require a sustained recovery in the viability of development. Therefore, whilst laying the foundations for our future, caution and realism must also play their part. Economically though we are ambitious with a longer-term view within which things will change for the better. Our existing and future strengths need to be mobilised and our challenges addressed ~~and we are committed to the creation of over 7,000 jobs over the plan period~~ if we are to achieve the jobs needed to support our economy and housing growth.

Main Modification 5

3.0.6 To achieve this job target, new housing must play its part. However, caution is needed in setting targets for new housing based on levels that cannot presently be realistically achieved. In the short term, we believe our housing target to 2031 should be close to our long term average levels of delivery in Swale - 10,800 new homes. A higher target committed to prematurely would result in goals which are not attainable, and ultimately expose communities to uncertainties and demands for infrastructure that have little prospect of being provided. We will need a level of new homes both able to meet objectively assessed future housing need and provide the workforce needed to support our economic ambitions. Our target of 13,192 new homes for the plan period to 2031 is able to achieve this, although we acknowledge that this will be challenging given slow economic and housing growth at the start of the plan period.

Main Modification 6

3.0.7 Our housing target will be above the needs arising from the indigenous local population, but because our vision is led by the need for jobs, if it is to succeed and be sustainable, we know it will ultimately require higher levels of housing to support it. As our own population increasingly becomes older, the proportion of younger people coming into the Borough will need to be increased with more housing available both for them and so that our own younger people are not pushed out and priced out because of local housing shortages. As a result, this local plan should be viewed as a short term basis for the strategic planning of the area. Whilst we are laying down the longer term foundations for economic growth, given real difficulties in the delivery of new housing, our housing target will be relatively short term in its outlook and we have built into our policies, the strong likelihood of an early review of the Local Plan once we have clear and consistent signals of improved delivery in the housing market, the wider economy as a whole and the funding of crucial infrastructure.

3.0.8 Our vision and objectives require a tailored and strategic distribution of growth set by two planning areas intended to highlight the variances in their respective strategic approaches, notably the greater share of development within the Swale part of the Thames Gateway growth area (Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey) and areas beyond it. Our vision also requires a settlement strategy that will direct the greatest scales of growth to the most sustainable locations as represented by the main urban areas and most accessible villages with a range of local services.

Main Modification 7

3.0.9 Despite the timing and shape of our future growth not being clear some uncertainties, we are supporting the national growth agenda and bringing forward a flexible supply of land to support our existing and potential future economic strengths on a choice of sites, whilst also creating a framework to meet unexpected opportunities that may arise. We will also provide regeneration policies for set down markers for the future of key areas like the Port of Sheerness and the Kent Science Park. together with longer term infrastructure needs, where the detail for the way forward to achieve them is not yet sufficiently clear for them to be central to our current vision.

Main Modification 8

3.0.10 We will look to protect and enhance the nation's (and our own), most important environmental assets – coastal habitats, downland, dry valleys, ancient woodlands, agricultural land and historic

3 Our vision, objectives and key diagram

resources. As well as providing custodianship, we will take all opportunities to expand the range of biodiversity and habitats and take responsibility for ensuring that wider growth does not place unsustainable pressures on our resources of European protected wildlife habitats around the coast. In so far as it is compatible with our settlement strategy and other sustainability objectives, we will also allocate sites for development on land of the lowest environmental value, in so doing encouraging the effective use of previously developed (brownfield) land and minimising the significant loss of high quality agricultural land.

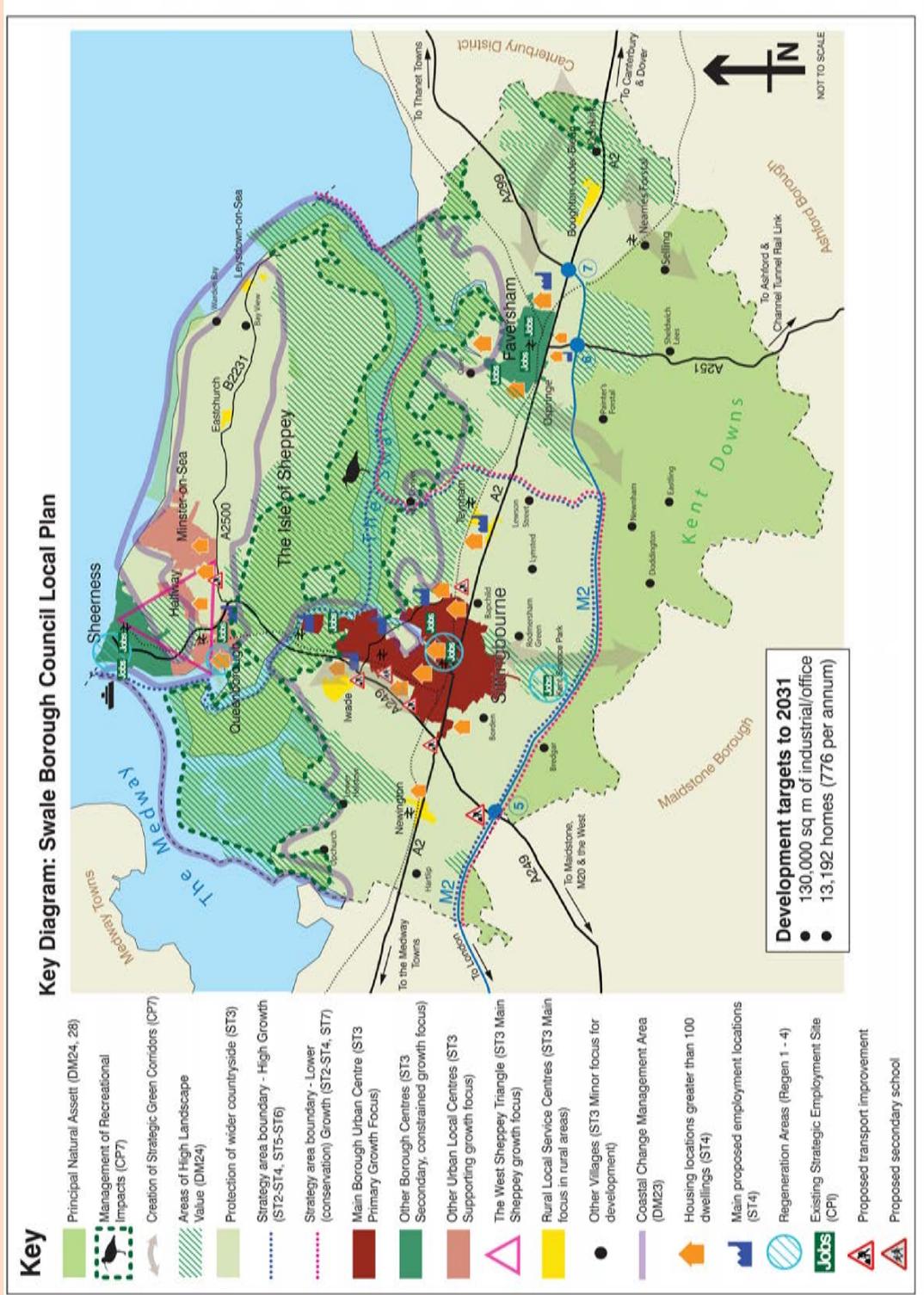
Main Modification 9

3.0.11 Given economic challenges, we will not be able to achieve all we want when we want it. We rely on developers to fund much of the supporting infrastructure that we need. This, alongside limited public funding, may mean compromises, at least in the short term ~~and especially when trying to raise green building standards or meet affordable housing needs~~. Compromises will be balanced with the consequences of not meeting those local needs generated by growth in terms of whether a development achieves sustainable development. What we mean by this is provided in Chapter 4 which presents the Local Plan strategy.

3.1 The Key Diagram

3.1.1 Our Key Diagram represents the spatial representation of our vision and the Local Plan strategy in Chapter 4. It shows the priority areas for development, conservation and enhancement and infrastructure.

Main Modification 10



Picture 3.1.1 The Key Diagram (modification includes additional main housing and employment locations, together with new strategic green infrastructure notation for western Sittingbourne)

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4.0.1 This chapter sets out our Local Plan strategy. It does this by setting out in:

- section 4.1, the broad strategy across a series of themes aimed at achieving sustainable development in Swale and thereby meeting the national planning policy for the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It includes one of the primary Local Plan policies - Policy ST 1;
- section 4.2, the basis for the setting of development targets for the Local Plan; and
- section 4.3, a settlement strategy for the direction and distribution of development across the Borough, amplified by a series of area based strategies for Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey and Faversham.

4.1 Achieving sustainable development in Swale

Our strategy for sustainable development in Swale

4.1.1 Through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Government intends to ensure that all developments judged to be sustainable should be able to proceed. When considering development proposals, we will take a positive approach which reflects the national presumption in favour of sustainable development. We will always work pro-actively with developers to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved as sustainable development and thereby secure improvements to the economic, social and environmental conditions in our area.

4.1.2 Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Local Plan (and, where relevant, policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application, or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, we will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

- any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole; or
- specific policies in the Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

4.1.3 Achieving sustainable development means being positive, but it also requires flexibility over time as proposals for development come forward, with the scale and pace of growth reviewed and adjusted if necessary. These matters may only become apparent when a planning application is submitted or where they may be significant enough as to require a review of the Local Plan.

4.1.4 The relationships between the supply of housing and the economy affect the achievement of sustainable development. Housing without local jobs means that the local workforce has to commute elsewhere for work, whilst a lack of housing may stifle economic development, attract commuting into the Borough or result in a lack of homes for local people if they are out priced by new-comers. The Council will closely monitor these situations and act accordingly, such as through a review of the Local Plan. The review mechanisms are contained within certain key policies and our strategy for managing risks are explained in Chapter 8.

4.1.5 Delivering the sustainable development agenda is based on the core planning principles within the NPPF. These are reflected across 12 themes summarised as:

- building a strong, competitive economy;
- ensuring the vitality of town centres;
- supporting a prosperous rural economy;
- promoting sustainable transport;
- supporting high quality communications infrastructure;
- delivering a wide choice of high quality homes;
- requiring good design;

- promoting healthy communities;
- meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
- conserving and enhancing the historic environment; and
- facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and waste (primarily addressed by the [Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#)).

4.1.6 Following these themes is a series of sub-strategies which in turn leads into Delivering sustainable development in Swale - our Swale Sustainable Development Policy (Policy ST 1). This translates the national presumption in favour of sustainable development to the local level. This policy, together with the other policies in Chapter 4, represent the heart of our Local Plan strategy.

Building a strong, competitive economy

4.1.7 Our strategy focuses on creating a strong supply of employment land and improving the quality of our economic offer to create a better business image. It will enable the Borough to branch out into under-represented sectors, increase the number of higher growth/value businesses and ensure that it retains and develops existing strengths and foster indigenous growth. In order to meet new floorspace needs, we will provide a range and choice of sites to both serve different locations and the needs of differing sectors. We will be flexible, accommodating unexpected opportunities and allowing for the upgrading and renewal of existing older sites.

4.1.8 Our strategy has already seen some growth in the retail sector and we remain confident over the delivery of emerging schemes in central Sittingbourne and Queenborough. This growth, together with those in the pharmaceutical sector, is expected to help stabilise or offset forecast losses in other sectors. Manufacturing has declined, but relative to Kent and the UK, the sector is strong and our strategy will seek to stabilise the sector and support the emergence of more niche and advanced manufacturing activities.^(4.1)



Picture 4.1.1 New modern start up units

4.1.9 We will continue our strengths in industrial employment, helped by maintaining and enhancing a supply of well-located land and buildings, including those suitable for larger scale distribution. We will be focusing on continued growth from our indigenous (B use class) base and have identified sites to capitalise on this potential and offset forecasts of more limited forecast growth in this sector. Overall, our land bank will be flexible and sufficiently generous to grasp unexpected opportunities, such as those that reinforce the Borough's role as a recognised distribution hub.

Main Modification 11

4.1.10 The needs of the office sector (B1a use class) cannot be met easily within the existing land supply. ~~While~~ Our strategy is supportive of its expansion, especially for central Sittingbourne, around the A249 and at Faversham, ~~with limited current market interest, no bespoke allocations are made.~~^(4.2)

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

With some 56% of the Borough's workforce working outside Swale, we will also encourage the development of sectors able to attract those commuting sections of the workforce, including those in retail, office, finance and science.^(4.3)

4.1.11 Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy and we will capitalise on reduced travel and spending abroad to bring in greater local spending. There will be an emphasis on proposals that successfully integrate land based industries with the Borough's heritage offers and the landscapes of the North Kent marshes, the Blean, the Kent Downs and the horticultural belt. Specifically, given its location and proximity to other tourist centres at Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay, Faversham has strong potential to diversify its economy around tourism, especially its food based offer. On Sheppey we need to address declines in its traditional seaside tourism offer through modernisation and improvements in quality.

4.1.12 Although the number of jobs in agriculture and horticulture is relatively small, our strategy anticipates forecast growth in this sector.^(4.4) For this and the wider rural economy, we will respond positively to the new opportunities for diversification and improved resilience for food production, as well as activities in other rural sectors, including growth in community based jobs and services, where they can be successfully integrated within their locality.

4.1.13 Improving school performance will bring improved skills into the local workforce, but this more mobile workforce will need to be able to work and/or set up businesses locally by providing flexible planning policies that support a greater choice of opportunity in such areas as the 'sharing economy'. It also remains important to tackle entrenched skill deficiencies so that all can benefit from growth. We will support a better range of opportunities for local people to improve their education and skills, endeavour to secure a further education facility within Sittingbourne town centre, and promote closer links between learning and employment opportunities, including the use of local labour and learning opportunities.

Main Modification 12

4.1.14 How will this strategy be visible in terms of physical development? We will be largely maintaining our current portfolio of sites, with new additions to increase choice around Sittingbourne, in particular, the growth of its key economic product – the Eurolink business parks. Close to the urban areas, the A249 is also likely to remain the focus for meeting any potential for larger scale distribution or industrial uses. On the Isle of Sheppey, the existing large pool of employment sites will be developed for industrial purposes so that the economic benefits of infrastructure investment already made can be accomplished. At Faversham, the approach is to improve the quality and availability of sites on account of the town's good location and the loss of existing sites to other uses. Securing a new sites that sits comfortably with the town and its surroundings is a key objective.

Main Modification 13

4.1.15 Longer term, there are opportunities that cannot form part of our strategy because their way forward is not clear. The Port of Sheerness has planning permission for the creation of a wind turbine manufacturing hub, but with no specific manufacturer committed and uncertainty over wider economic policy for this sector, the prize is by no means won. Port master planning work may reveal longer term potential for expansion and regeneration, if technical and environmental challenges can be tackled. At the Kent Science Park, to the south east of Sittingbourne, there may be scope for expansion of the science and biotechnology sectors, if direct access to the motorway network can be achieved as part of a wider strategic transport package. We signal both these locations as longer term opportunities to be considered if major changes in their prospects for delivery crystallise as part of a future Local Plan review. Regeneration policies are also provided for two of the Borough's major

strategic employment locations - the Port of Sheerness and the Kent Science Park. These will guide both their immediate needs for growth, whilst, in the case the Port, indicating the possibility of longer term aspirations via a review of the Local Plan.

Ensuring the vitality of town centres

4.1.16 Our strategy comes at a time when our centres face the most challenging of economic conditions, but also because of the changing dynamics of the retail sector. Alongside achieving what is already planned, our main aim is to improve the health and wellbeing of our existing town centres. Our strategy is to create town centres that give an improved and diverse offer, both commercially and environmentally, so they function as centres of commercial and community activity. We are focusing on bringing forward major schemes for both central Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey, particularly for comparison shopping, whilst further large scale food shopping schemes are not envisaged.^(4.5)

4.1.17 At Sittingbourne, the quality of shopping relative to other centres must be improved and the introduction of more comparison shopping will ensure that more spending is retained within the local economy. Despite the economic downturn necessitating a scaling back of ambitions, for it to be the main town of choice for shopping, our strategy requires the completion of retail projects at the heart and periphery of its centre. Through partnership with other public and private sector organisations, we will establish new shops, housing, leisure, civic and cultural facilities, better public transport facilities and an enhancement in environmental quality. North of the railway, regeneration will be led by new housing to form a new quarter for the town and a further step in the renaissance of Milton Creek.

4.1.18 At Faversham, the town continues to perform well in the face of economic challenges. We will ensure that what underpins the town's success - its uniqueness and sense of place – continues in the face of future demands.

4.1.19 At Sheerness, we must address the signs of a declining trading environment and build on the substantial potential and character of its streets, spaces and buildings. Our strategy will balance a need to safeguard its range of local services, whilst recognising that limited opportunities to bring in new investment may mean new services being provided elsewhere on the Island in accessible locations that will not harm the existing centre. Within the town, we will assemble public and private land to release sites for development that can reinforce its heart and exploit the character of the place. In the longer term, the town centre and its future seaside, maritime and historic prosperity may be more closely tied to the success of its Port where its longer term rejuvenation may act as a catalyst for wider benefits.

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

4.1.20 Our rural areas support a wide range of businesses and the strategy is to support their expansion. However, this will not be by micro-management through the allocation of sites, as innovation comes from locations and sectors that we cannot hope to identify and write into the plan. Flexible planning policies will therefore be supportive of the right business at the right scale and in the right place. Our strategy will also maintain and enhance vibrant and viable rural services, particularly when we are shown innovative new ways of delivering them. A factor affecting the development of the rural economy is the limited availability of land and buildings and we will look to their use for employment before considering other uses such as housing.

4.1.21 We intend to further encourage tourism and other businesses that are linked by and harmonised with our landscapes and communities. Across the rural area, business proposals, tourism related or otherwise, able to support the active and sustainable management of the countryside will be supported.

4.1.22 The strategy does not overlook the importance of the agricultural sector and there are likely to be changes in the way land is used which will present challenges. We will harness the confidence that has

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

re-emerged within fruit production and will encourage sustainable initiatives that respond to global challenges, including climate change and the decline in pollinators, whilst encouraging more local food production and sales.

Promoting sustainable transport

4.1.23 Transportation plays an important role in the success of our strategy by supporting economic growth, promoting independence, tackling greenhouse gas emissions, contributing to safety, security and health and improving the quality of life.

4.1.24 Our Local Plan transport strategy:

- encourages sustainable travel by the use of alternatives to the private car;
- improves transport infrastructure by the removal of pinch points which are barriers to development and growth;
- promotes alternative access to services by reducing the need to travel and supporting independence; and
- helps improve road safety by reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured.



Picture 4.1.2 Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249

4.1.25 This strategy is supported by a separate [Swale Local Transport Strategy](#), which provides the basis to tackle the transport issues facing the Borough and to act as the means by which funding and delivery can be secured.

4.1.26 Meeting additional demands will be achieved by improvements to the existing highway network in the vicinity of the A249 and by providing relief to, and support for, regeneration projects within central Sittingbourne and to the east of the town. We also remain committed to the longer term completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. Relief from problems of congestion and safety at Junction 5 of the M2 and A249 will need to be addressed by the national roads programme if further long term growth is to be contemplated. Other long term options may also need to be considered by expanding the capacity of the road network itself, such as a road linking the M2 to the A2 in the vicinity of Sittingbourne. The implications of such a project will be for a future review of the Local Plan to consider.

4.1.27 Our rural areas are generally remote from the main centres and their public transport network less comprehensive. Whilst we will continue to work on improving its frequency and network coverage, our strategy will recognise that car use for many communities will be necessary.

4.1.28 A quality bus partnership for Swale will endeavour to reduce the poor take up of public transport and give better access for the mobility impaired, improved passenger information and better quality transport Interchanges between cycle routes, bus services, and train services. A priority for the partnership will be Sittingbourne, where a town centre parking strategy will also be implemented.

4.1.29 Our levels of growth will avoid severe impacts on the transport network and any impacts remaining after mitigation will be no worse than those experienced at other successful towns in Kent. Working with partners, we will limit the effects of new development through:

- minimising the number and length of journeys people need to make for everyday needs with a balance of land uses and sites at settlements which are or can be made sustainable;
- encouraging economic development in sectors that will encourage a reduction in out-commuting, increasing the degree of self-containment for the Borough's workforce;
- directing growth to locations able to make use of sustainable transport modes and reducing the need for major transport infrastructure. Our settlement strategy will direct the largest scales of growth to the urban areas that are the most accessible, with reducing scales of growth at rural local service centres; and
- encouraging journeys by public transport, cycling and walking and onto those parts of the network where most capacity exists.

Supporting high quality communications infrastructure

4.1.30 Our strategy will support the national policy for high quality communications as essential for sustainable economic growth. In particular, we will support the expansion of electronic communications networks, particularly for our rural areas, which may also help reduce the need to travel for some requirements. We will ensure that developers provide the necessary digital communications infrastructure to service their developments.

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

4.1.31 Our strategy is intended to support the objectives of the Council's [Housing Strategy](#) (2010) by:

- increasing housing supply, including affordable housing and rural affordable housing;
- improving housing condition and local neighbourhoods;
- supporting vulnerable people; and
- tackling disadvantage and improving quality of life.

Main Modification 14

4.1.32 ~~We will maintain and develop prosperous communities through the adoption of a cautious and realistic housing target, reflecting past and current market signals, alongside the current viability of development and its ability to support essential infrastructure. When we are able to secure levels of housing completions at consistently higher rates, we will re-examine our target by a review of the Local Plan. We are committed to this because there are economic, demographic and housing need based reasons to do so.~~^(4.6)

Main Modification 15

4.1.33 ~~Current levels of housing delivery and viability presents us with challenges to the delivery of our Local Plan housing target. We will maintain and develop prosperous communities through the adoption of an ambitious housing target, reflecting demographic forecasts and taking into account market and other signals.~~ A housing implementation strategy will provide flexibility to ensure that the supply of housing is not unnecessarily suppressed, but we will not deviate from ensuring that our proposed growth is both realistic and sustainable. Our challenges extend to the supply of affordable homes and we expect to be using creative and partnership based means to limit these difficulties, such as by diverting resources to less viable areas like Sittingbourne and Sheppey.

4.1.34 We will remain ambitious in the areas of good design, decent homes and sustainable construction. However, where it is evident that some requirements would hamper the deliverability of housing, we will accept lower national standards to ensure an increased housing supply.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Main Modification 16

4.1.35 Our strategy seeks a close match both with the future household characteristics of our population and the composition of our housing waiting list. As a result we are seeking a mix of accommodation with a focus on 2/3 bed family housing ~~smaller accommodation and larger family housing~~, balanced by the current housing mix and the viability of development. We will do more to respond to the needs of an ageing population and try to deliver more homes suitable for lifetime living, as well as permitting development that meet specific and specialist housing needs, such as assisted living, care homes and sheltered complexes. We will also meet the need for additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by setting a target that meets their assessed needs in full, ~~both with bespoke allocations, but also integrally and creatively on our larger housing developments.~~

4.1.36 We will look to improve the supply of affordable and general market homes in rural communities by allowing cross-subsidy on sites where permission would not normally be given as well as by supporting the development by local communities of neighbourhood plans.

Main Modification 17

4.1.37 Our actions will manifest themselves in the allocation of sites for housing at the main urban and rural centres. We will also seek to change market perceptions of locations considered to be less attractive places to live. This will be evident in the rejuvenation of brownfield sites and the creation of new integrated communities at places like Queenborough and Rushenden and central Sittingbourne.

4.1.38 The actions of the Council and partners will support the strategy of providing housing opportunity, choice and independence. These actions will help people with particular housing and/or support needs and those less able to access housing services. We will continue to work to improve home condition and neighbourhoods, tackling anti-social behaviour and income poverty for the most vulnerable households and disadvantaged communities.

Requiring good design

4.1.39 We continue to attach great importance to the design of the built environment and intend to carry on our work to raise design standards in the Borough. The starting point for the planning of new development is an understanding and evaluation of the defining characteristics of a site and its context and these will be the basis for achieving locally distinct, high quality and inclusive design and the design standards we adopt.

4.1.40 Our site allocation and development management policies will highlight the important design questions that need to be addressed and integrated. Our policies highlight the importance of the natural and built assets present and their relevance to the location, design of development and land use, setting out how they should contribute to local identity



Picture 4.1.3 Good quality design and landscaping

and distinctiveness. Masterplans, design briefs, conservation area appraisals and supplementary planning guidance and documents will support our strategy and inform day-to-day decisions. Design review, notably our Design Review Panel, will continue to be an important delivery vehicle for securing higher standards of design and will be the means for developers to show how they are seriously considering good design.

Promoting healthy communities

4.1.41 Our strategy is to make sure that growth is able to meet the needs of residents by creating healthy, safe and inclusive communities both in the creation of living and work environments and by putting in place the necessary essential supporting infrastructure.

4.1.42 When planning for larger developments, allocations will achieve a mix of uses so that jobs, open spaces and the facilities needed to support communities can be conveniently provided. Development at villages will also support existing services or enable the provision of new ones which can benefit the entire community.

4.1.43 Actions contained in the Local Plan and the Council's Housing Strategy will aim to work together to integrate communities from diverse social, economic, age and ethnic backgrounds. This will range from providing the right mix of housing to meet future needs and demands to embracing the opportunities and positive changes that integration of newer and established cultures may bring. We will use Health Impact Assessments to drive this forward on major developments, whilst focusing on three priorities:

1. Deprivation and health.
2. Education and other services.
3. Sport, open space and a green environment.

4.1.44 Improving the prospects of those living in our most deprived wards involves targeting significant development projects toward them, whilst expecting new investment to look to these communities first to bring forward benefits to them. We anticipate these projects as supporting housing market changes, as well as improving environmental quality and, where we can, bringing jobs. In particular, the poor health in many of these areas – some of the worst in England - needs actions to make for more healthy living, whilst ensuring that growth is supported by new health and other facilities.

4.1.45 Growth will be supported by new facilities, but with poor development viability and substantial demands for new services forecast, we will look creatively, through such measures as deferred and commuted payments, at how we can ensure that these needs are met.

4.1.46 We will support the co-location and use of services and activities - for example, health and social services and through the dual use of schools, sports and playing pitches or at rural buildings. Where there are services demonstrated as potentially viable, we will resist proposals for alternative uses and support proposals for community led and run services.

4.1.47 We will maintain open space/sports provision at least at the same level per head of population as now. We will also tackle deficiencies in provision, whilst protecting existing assets. An expansion in access to natural green space is a particular deficiency. Our public rights of way and accessible land will be protected and through development proposals, we will establish better facilities for users.

4.1.48 Wider networks of green spaces are central to our health and wellbeing, but also as a means of creating an environment within which people will want to invest. Our green infrastructure strategy will act as the means by which action can take place, whilst local green space and important local countryside gap designations will protect the spaces identified by communities as important.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

4.1.49 Our strategy for climate change is adaptation and mitigation - resilient to future challenges and supportive of new opportunities. Businesses able to increase jobs in low carbon sectors will be encouraged and those making sustainable changes to adapt will be supported. We will also encourage existing homes and businesses to improve their energy and waste efficiencies.

4.1.50 Swale's coast is vulnerable to flood risk and erosion – a place in the front line of climate change. We will apply national policies to reduce the risk to vulnerable development and provide local policy. A coastal change management area will set out what can take place and ensure that decisions taken now do not prejudice what measures may need to be taken to mitigate the effects of climate change in future. Across Swale, sustainable drainage systems should become the norm in developments.

4.1.51 We also need to move beyond adaptation to the impacts of climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions where we can. Here, the strategy has three strands:

1.

Main Modification 18

Encouraging Sustainable Design and Construction in all developments, and applying ~~at the very least, the national BREEAM and Technical Housing Standards and Code for Sustainable Homes standards~~ in line with policies DM19 and DM21.
2. Siting development primarily at our main urban areas and larger villages for a more convenient location of jobs, homes and services, alongside more sustainable transport choices.
3. Encouraging the use of renewables and energy efficiency improvements (inc. micro-renewable energy and free-standing projects), identifying the potential for decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supplies and for co-locating heat customers and suppliers.

4.1.52 Implementing this strategy will be challenging in times of economic difficulty where additional costs may lead to development not being viable. In all situations, we will try and achieve provision where we can.



Picture 4.1.4 Wind turbines at Standford Hill, Eastchurch

national resource of the highest quality soils – both as a means to increase food security and reduce food miles.

4.1.53 Our energy opportunities map will guide actions by helping identify locations where renewable energy can be further investigated. Where schemes are appropriate to their location and without cumulative impacts, a favourable response can be expected. We will also support community-led initiatives for renewable and low carbon energy.

4.1.54 Our strategy aims to both promote local food production and local sales and help these sectors sustainably adapt to the challenges of climate change. We have a wider responsibility for ensuring that our agriculture and food based economies continue to put food on the nation's plate. This means supporting these sectors as they grow and change and safeguarding the

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

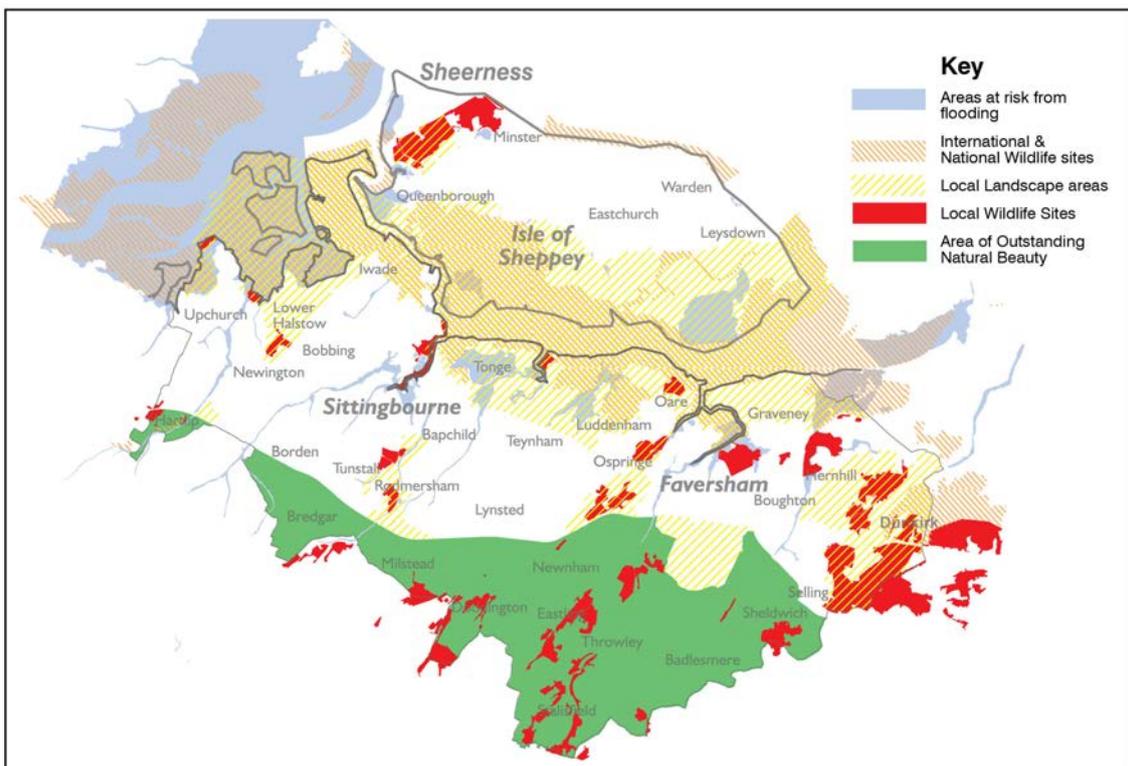
4.1.55 Conserving and enhancing our outstanding natural environment is at the heart of our strategy as our Borough is recognised for the quality of its estuaries, woodlands, valleys and downlands. To achieve enhancements overall, this means protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geology and soils and co-ordinated working to secure coherent ecological networks and a reversal in declines in the quality and diversity of the environment. On a wider level, our strategy also recognises the value of ecosystems for the support they give to society, such as for food, water, flood, disease control, recreation and health and well-being.

4.1.56 To guide our approach and to create more robust ecological and landscape structures, we will set out a natural assets and green infrastructure strategy. It will identify gaps in our network and where strategic scale enhancements for biodiversity or landscape could take place, alongside where communities and biodiversity could adapt to the effects of climate change.

4.1.57 We will apply national planning policy toward natural environmental assets, whilst local planning policies and management initiatives will support agencies charged with maintaining them in favourable condition. Our designations will ensure, as far as possible, that people and ecosystems are not put at unacceptable risk, such as within transport corridors where air quality needs to be managed.

4.1.58 We need to manage recreational pressures on internationally important habitats and are working with North Kent districts to ensure that indirect impacts upon estuarine habitats can be compensated through habitat creation/management and/or the implementation of the [Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy](#) (2014) that will enable developer contributions to be levied to implement it.

4.1.59 We will safeguard the network of national and local landscape designations and will be advocates of landscape character assessment to ensure the whole countryside can maintain its tranquillity and achieve enhancements. Within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we will ensure its protection and enhancement and work with its Joint Advisory Committee, management plan and guidance to ensure that its qualities and distinctive features remain valued, secure and strengthened.



Map 4.1.1 Natural designated environmental assets and constraints in Swale.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Main Modification 19

4.1.60 As far as possible, we will allocate land for development which has the least environmental and amenity value, including using previously developed land where we can. Whilst our development strategy can protect our most important international, national and local landscape and biodiversity designations, because we have insufficient previously developed land, tough choices will occur in non-designated areas. We believe that the high quality agricultural land around the A2 corridor and the character of settlements and their separation should be influences upon where growth should be located. However, we cannot prevent some loss and erosion as not to do so would create dispersed patterns of development that cannot easily be supported by services or sustainable modes of transport. Overall, we have tried to strike a balance at a level where the adverse impacts of the locations of our allocations are minimised and do not outweigh the benefits of development, or prevent the achievement of sustainable development.

4.1.61 Achieving a net-gain in biodiversity and development will play a crucial part of our strategy, from avoiding important habitats to integrating and enhancing biodiversity in landscaping and open spaces, through to the design of the streets and buildings themselves. Where sustainable development is not compromised, the most spectacular and innovative examples will be permitted. In places where adverse impacts on biodiversity can no longer be avoided or mitigated, compensation will be a key part of achieving net-gains for biodiversity. We will use existing and develop new mechanisms to steer such compensation to identified biodiversity opportunity areas. Our strategy will allow for the compensation of our own



Picture 4.1.5 South Sheppey Marshes

adverse impacts, but possibly also for those further afield. We see our cross boundary work with the North Kent Environmental Planning Group, the Local Nature Partnerships and within the [Greater Thames Nature Improvement Area](#) as fundamental to implementing both these initiatives.

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

4.1.62 Our strategy for the historic environment is for its conservation and enjoyment so that it can help deliver wider economic, social and environmental objectives. This will be supported by preparation of a detailed strategy, setting out our priorities and approach to achieving a sustainable future for our heritage assets.

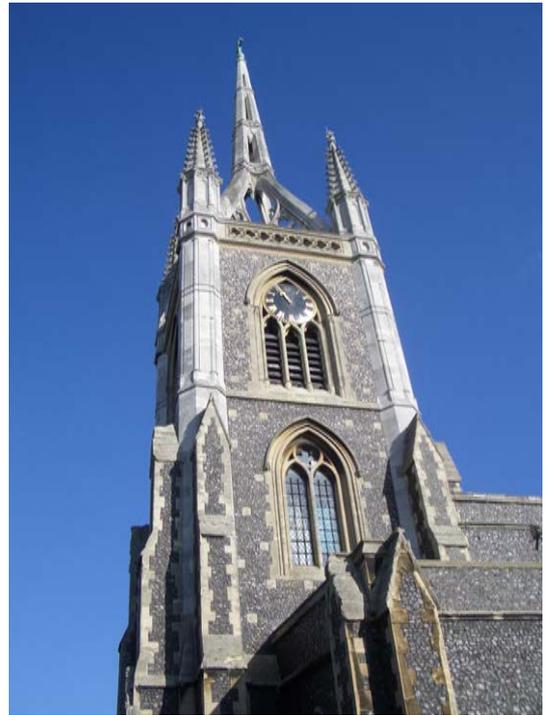
4.1.63 The breadth of Swale's historic environment reflects prehistoric, Roman, early medieval and medieval legacies, our naval and maritime history and our industrial and agricultural past. These assets help deliver our Local Plan Vision and contribute to our strong sense of place and uniqueness because:

- Sittingbourne exists because of its strategic location on Roman Watling Street and by Milton Creek, playing an important role as a staging post on the pilgrim and coaching routes. Conservation and regeneration are needed to maintain its vitality and character;
- on Sheppey, its naval, defensive, maritime and industrial heritage will be catalysts for wider rejuvenation;

- at Faversham, heritage led decision making is central to its future as a 21st Century small and compact historic market town and port, adjacent to the roman road;
- in the rural areas, supporting successful communities through the sensitive reuse of traditional/historic buildings and through tourism to help retain and develop locally important services and facilities; and
- our landscapes reflect the span of history, with our policies recognising the central North Downs, the Northern Horticultural Belt, the Forest of Blean (and former areas), the Northern Coast and Marshland and the reclaimed marshes, post-medieval field systems and urban and industrial development of the Isle of Sheppey.^(4.7)

4.1.64 Our policies will ensure the historic environment is central within decision-making at all levels by:

1. Identifying the interrelationship between heritage assets across all policy areas.
2. Identifying a broad strategic overview of heritage assets as most representing the character and distinctiveness of Swale.
3. At the strategic planning level, recognising that heritage, including the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes have a proper influence upon the distribution of development and the identification of sites.
4. Highlighting the significance of any heritage assets and their settings on development allocations and the response needed from development, supported, where needed, by Masterplans and other supplementary documents.
5. Setting out clear expectations for development within development management policies.
6. Addressing where heritage assets are at risk and taking action to bring them back to viable and appropriate use, especially where they can contribute to regeneration.
7. Considering, when resources allow, preparation of local lists to identify non-designated heritage assets.
8. Using appraisals, management plans, assessments of unknown sites and the evaluation of the character of parks and gardens and landscapes to encourage sensitive regeneration in historic towns and villages and to identify the opportunities for improving them and their settings and landscapes.



Picture 4.1.6 St. Mary of Charity, parish church of Faversham

Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and waste

4.1.65 We recognise that minerals are a finite natural resource essential to support sustainable economic growth and our quality of life. The Council will work with Kent County Council – the minerals and waste planning authority – to identify and safeguard mineral reserves and the rail heads and wharves necessary to ensure the transport, import and export of minerals.

4.1.66 In the event that reserves are identified on sites allocated for development by this Local Plan, we will ensure that the developer works with the Minerals Planning Authority to ensure the timely working of the site, provided that there is a sustainable and viable outlet for the resource which allows extraction without an unreasonable impact on development coming forward in line with the safeguarding minerals and prior extraction policies contained in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (see Chapter 6 and changes to the Proposals Map in Chapter 9).

4.1.67 In meeting our future waste disposal needs, we will work with Kent County Council in its role as waste planning authority. Swale's strength in the recycling business sectors will be recognised by supporting appropriate opportunities in the right locations, as well as ensuring that all developments play their part in minimising their own construction waste.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Delivering sustainable development in Swale

4.1.68 We are pursuing net gains across each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Through these themed strategies we have expressed the broad sweep of the Local Plan strategy and how we see our actions and those of others as achieving sustainable development. The strategy avoids significant adverse impacts and we have explored reasonable alternatives. Through our policies we have measures in place to mitigate adverse impacts and compensatory measures when this cannot be achieved. The overall gains for sustainable development are anticipated to be a:

- stronger, responsive and competitive economy, with available land of the right type and in the right place with the infrastructure identified;
- stronger, vibrant and healthier communities, with a realistic supply of housing, with policies creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well being; and
- continued protection and enhancement to our natural, built and historic environments, with our policies helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change.

4.1.69 Policy ST1 embraces our themed strategy for sustainable development, providing the basis for action and the means to locally determine whether development proposals merit the national presumption in favour of sustainable development. It emphasises the importance of joint working, placing the requirement on all to demonstrate their commitment through specific actions. Any presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the [Habitats and Wild Birds Directives](#) is being considered, planned or determined.

Main Modification 20

Policy ST 1

Delivering sustainable development in Swale

To deliver sustainable development in Swale, all development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Build a strong competitive economy by meeting identified needs for inward investment and indigenous growth on allocated and suitable sites, including meeting the needs of under-represented sectors;
2. Ensure the vitality of town centres by: strengthening the principal centre role of Sittingbourne; improving the role of Sheerness as the Island's main centre; or consolidating, proportionate to its scale and character, Faversham's role as a centre for the town itself and its local catchment;
3. Support a prosperous rural economy, especially for sustainable farming and tourism, or where enabling communities to meet local needs or benefiting countryside management;
4. Accord with the Local Plan settlement strategy;
5. Offer the potential to reduce levels of out-commuting and support the aims of the Swale transport strategy;
6. Support high quality communications infrastructure;
7. Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes by:
 - a. ~~balancing levels of forecast housing needs with that which is deliverable~~ meeting the full, objectively assessed need for housing in the housing market area;

- b. providing housing opportunity, choice and independence with types of housing for local needs; and
 - c. keeping vitality within rural communities with identified housing needs, proportionate to their character, scale and role.
8. Achieve good design through reflecting the best of an area's defining characteristics;
9. Promote healthy communities through:
- a. location of development to achieve safe, mixed uses and shared spaces;
 - b. rejuvenation of deprived communities;
 - c. the Local Plan implementation and delivery plan and schedule;
 - d. safeguarding services and facilities that do or could support communities;
 - e. maintaining the individual character, integrity, identities and settings of settlements;
 - f. protecting, managing, providing and enhancing open spaces and facilities for sport and recreation; and
 - g. implementing the Swale natural assets green infrastructure strategy.
10. Meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change through:
- a. ~~the application of the national building standards~~, promotion of sustainable design and construction, the expansion of `renewable energy, the efficient use of natural resources and management of emissions;
 - b. the management and expansion of green infrastructure; and
 - c. applying planning policies to manage flood risk and coastal change.
11. Conserve and enhance the natural environment by:
- a. applying international, national and local planning policy for: (a) areas designated for their biodiversity (inc. Nature Improvement Areas), geological or landscape importance; and/or (b) priority habitats and populations of protected and notable species;
 - b. landscape character assessments to protect, and where possible, enhance, the intrinsic character, beauty and tranquillity of the countryside, with emphasis on the estuarine, woodland, dry valley, down-land and horticultural landscapes that define the landscape character of Swale;
 - c. integrating the benefits of ecosystems to society across all policy areas;
 - d. achieving plentiful native landscaping of local provenance in and around developments;
 - e. net gains in biodiversity within and around developments by use of such measures as natural/semi-natural greenspace and the creation of coherent ecological networks;
 - f. avoiding significant harm to biodiversity or, when not possible, adequately mitigating it, or, as a last resort, compensating for it with off-site action at identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas or other appropriate locations;
 - g. using areas of lower quality agricultural land for significant levels of development (singly or cumulatively) where compatible with other criteria; and
 - h. applying national planning policy in respect of pollution, despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated, unstable and previously developed land; and
12. Conserve and enhance the historic environment by national and local planning policy by the identification, assessment and integration of development with the importance, form and character of heritage assets (inc. historic landscapes).

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4.2 Assessing the need for new development

Main Modification 21

4.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires all councils to use evidence to define the full, objectively assessed needs, for both business and housing in their areas, and then seek to ensure that their Local Plans meet the needs identified.^(4.8) Our assessment of development needs is presented within a document entitled [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Development Needs Assessment](#) (Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners 2013). This work developed a number of housing and economic based scenarios to assess the level of new jobs and homes that could be provided. Further background material can be found in the Council's [Topic Paper](#) on its Development Targets the following documents:

- [The Swale Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\) September 2015;](#)
- [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013 \(note that this assessment was superseded by the October 2015 document and should only be referred to in terms of the qualitative analysis of employment land provision\);](#)
- [Swale Employment Land Review 2010 \(site assessments only\); and](#)
- [Employment Land Needs in Swale 2014-31 October 2015.](#)

Main Modification 22

~~Economic needs assessment~~

4.2.2 ~~We examined how the Swale economy would grow and change over the Plan period to 2031. A baseline economic growth scenario provided by forecasters indicated potential growth at a level significantly lower than that delivered in Swale over the 1997-2011 period. A higher economic growth scenario was also considered that assessed the potential for higher growth in some sectors for some 353 jobs per year. Whilst still below the levels of growth prior to the last recession, this scenario indicated scope for higher growth in the following sectors:~~

- ~~manufacturing, as a result of stabilising the recent trend of losses;~~
- ~~retail, taking account of committed retail schemes;~~
- ~~the visitor economy, given its general uplift; and~~
- ~~occupier expansion proposals by pharmaceutical businesses.~~

~~Housing needs assessment~~

4.2.3 ~~The overall level of objectively assessed housing need and demand for the period 2011 to 2031 varies, depending on which demographic and economic scenario is adopted. Together they indicate variations in the need and demand ranging from 329 dwellings per annum (a baseline figure where no net migration is assumed) up to 1,186 per annum (to meet affordable housing need). This evidence indicated that the objectively assessed need for housing fell within a range of between 604 and 890 dwellings per annum (12,080 to 17,800 dwellings for the plan period), but that the upper end of the range would be entirely untested in terms of delivery over a sustained period. If the higher economic scenario were pursued, a housing target of some 740-750 dwellings per annum would be needed to ensure a sufficient local labour supply, whilst being more achievable.~~

4.2.4 ~~The objectively assessed range was updated in October 2014 using the latest ONS 2012-based Sub National Population Projection for Swale. This has the effect of modestly narrowing the range to between 612 and 828 dwellings per annum, with the SHMA recommendation falling to 734 per annum, representing a housing target of 14,680 for the plan period.~~

4.2.5 The 2012/13 [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) identified a potential capacity of sites capable of delivering some 12,573 dwellings (629 per annum). In the light of forthcoming guidance from the Planning Advisory Service, it will be the Council's intention to prepare a further land assessment for 2013/14 as part of its submitted package of evidence for the Local Plan examination.

Main Modification 23

4.2.6 To determine the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing, Planning Guidance requires the Housing Market Area to be defined. Having regard to a range of indicators and other contextual data, analysis confirmed that, in isolation, Swale did not form a perfect housing market area. However, analysis also showed that alternatives that included Swale within a housing market area to cover Medway or Canterbury were equally problematic. For the purposes of setting its OAN, the Council pragmatically moved forward on the basis that Swale can be treated as a distinct housing market, with the close links with immediate neighbours reflected in its Duty to Co-operate discussions.

4.2.7 Via its Swale Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) September 2015, the Council tested a wide range of demographic data to identify the demographic starting point for its OAN. This testing cast doubt on the use of the 2012 CLG household projections for a number of reasons. Planning Guidance allows Councils to consider alternatives specific to local circumstances and evidence clearly indicated and favoured use of an alternative 10 year projection as a starting point for Swale. This alternative projection showed a need for 776 dwelling per annum (dpa) in Swale from 2014 onwards (13,192 for the plan period).

4.2.8 Planning Guidance also requires employment trends to be examined to ensure that the supply of working age population that is economically active (the labour force supply) is not less than the projected job growth as this could result in unsustainable commuting patterns and/or reduce the resilience of local businesses. These judgements were informed by two independent economic forecasts. The forecast by Experian, aligned to the alternative demographic projection, showed that 10,900 new jobs were likely to be created over the plan period. It also found that the labour market was broadly balanced so by providing 776 dpa in Swale this would not result in undesirable outcomes. However, because of structural weakness in the local economy, the local labour market was at risk of being oversupplied should too many new homes be provided.

4.2.9 Finally, our assessment considered market signals and past rates of housebuilding to determine whether these indicated a need to revise upwards the 776 dpa projection. These indicators did not point to the need for any upward revision.

4.2.10 In conclusion, the evidence demonstrates that the preferred demographic scenario of 776 dpa is justified and that the figure of 13,192 dwellings represents the full objectively assessed housing needs figure for Swale for the plan period (2014–31).

Assessment of affordable housing need

4.2.11 Planning Guidance requires a separate calculation from the OAN of the housing needs for certain groups of people. Although not a direct part of the OAN assessment, in some cases it can be used to evidence an upward policy adjustment to any housing target.

4.2.12 The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment September 2015 indicated that 190 affordable dwellings per annum were needed - well within the annualised rate indicated by the OAN, indicating theoretically a likelihood of the affordable housing provision being met. Nevertheless, the Council considered whether a policy adjustment was needed to increase the number of homes above 776 dpa because of uncertainties caused by poor viability and other factors. The Council has made no such adjustment as it was considered to be both unnecessary and would, in any event, undermine the settlement strategy by requiring an increase in the OAN in Faversham and the rural areas.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Main Modification 24

Gypsies and Travellers (including Travelling Show People)

4.2.13 Meeting housing need includes those for Gypsy and Travellers. To identify them, a [Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment](#) (GTAA) was prepared in July 2013. This concluded that 85 pitches would be needed to 2031, with no additional need for plots for Travelling Show People. ~~The allocation of sites is being pursued separately in the Swale Borough Local Plan Part 2: Gypsy and Traveller Site Allocations. In 2015 the Government re-defined the definition of a traveller site and in response the Council undertook a reanalysis of the evidence within the GTAA to ensure that it more closely reflected the changed position. This produced a revised need for 61 pitches during the plan period. This figure is, in effect, included within the OAN for the Borough.~~

Assessing the capacity for growth

4.2.14 We also considered how other factors might influence economic and housing assessments and suggest a basis upon which to adjust the levels of growth recommended.

Main Modification 25

Environmental capacity

4.2.15 We have significant environmental constraints across 63% of the Borough which affect the potential to accommodate growth. However, due to the amount of land not affected, ~~it is difficult to show that housing growth within the lower and middle bands of the 600-900 per annum range, at the level of the objectively assessed need, would not significantly adversely affect the Borough's principal environmental assets,~~^(4.9) including its local landscape and biodiversity designations. However, with ~~an increase in housing target, this level of growth,~~ other constraints come under pressure, notably high quality agricultural land, locally designated landscapes and those with low capacities to accommodate change, alongside the spaces between towns and villages and the heritage value of certain settlements. Some constraints would come under greater pressure if development were to be steered to the most economically viable areas to build.

4.2.16 Special attention is needed for our internationally protected biodiversity designations. Through the former regional plan for the south east, concerns were raised about the potential impact of recreational disturbance on bird populations across the north Kent coastline in the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and wetlands cited by the Ramsar Convention. In response, a grouping of local authorities and environmental agencies, including Natural England, formed the North Kent Environmental Planning Group (NKEPG) and commissioned studies to assess current and future levels of recreational activity in North Kent and its impacts.^(4.10)

Main Modification 26

4.2.17 Evidence confirmed the association between bird decline caused by disturbance at locations with the highest levels of access, with access levels linked to local housing, particularly within 6km of access points. It has been concluded that it would not be possible to demonstrate no adverse effect on the integrity of the European sites. As a result, mitigation measures would need to be considered to support any chosen housing target and a Habitats Regulations Assessment would need to determine an appropriate level of growth within the range of objectively assessed need and the degree of mitigation

that would be required. However, the 2013 SHMA update, together with the Habitat Regulation Assessments prepared to support the Local Plan, considered that with mitigation, these designations would not be a barrier to additional development.^(4.11)

Main Modification 27

4.2.18 The 2012/13 2014/15 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, identified sites for 12,589 14,828 dwellings that could potentially be built. However, some 2,750 of these included sites with potentially moderate/major impacts in terms of access to services, landscape/visual issues and air quality issues. However, this did not take into account the potential cumulative impacts of sites arising from such matters as settlement separation, the setting of settlements and the loss of high quality agricultural land. These matters were taken into account by the Council as it considered draft Local Plan allocations and they resulted in a reduction in the potential number of dwellings to 11,314 dwellings (565 per annum). A further 2016 SHLAA addendum has also considered housing sites received since the 2014/15 work.

MEMBERS SHOULD NOTE THAT WORK ON THE FOLLOWING SECTION IS ONGOING

Main Modification 28

Transport capacity

4.2.19 From transport modelling, there is no indication that the capacity of the strategic or local road network would be compromised by growth levels indicated by the objectively assessed need. up to at least 740 dwellings per annum. At Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249 a major junction improvement programmed to open in 2024 will facilitate growth, although other junctions on the A249 with western Sittingbourne will require improvement. At Junction 7 of the M2 with the A2(T), there are limitations in capacity with no improvements currently planned. This would have a bearing on the amount of growth that could be accommodated at Faversham. The situation on the national road network the M2, A2(T) and A249(T) is less clear, but increases in development are likely to increase difficulties at junction 5 of the M2 at Stockbury, with only a minor short term measure possible (already planned) before a major improvement will be required. The scale and costs of a major scheme will be a matter for the national roads programme, with no other deliverable alternatives exist in the short term.

Main Modification 29

Community services

4.2.20 Both the County Council and NHS England have identified what additional services and facilities would be needed to support development targets up to 740 dwellings per annum the growth proposed by the Local Plan. Substantial new investment, notably in education, social care and GP surgeries, is required.

Open space and sports provision

4.2.21 The Council has identified notable deficiencies in open space and sports provision in parts of the Borough in a variety of evidence.^(4.12) Growth at 540 dwellings per annum will require an additional 19.5 ha of parks and gardens, 7.9 ha of amenity greenspace, 0.5 ha of space for children and young people,

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

0.4 ha of allotments and some 76.5 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace. For sport, in addition to a new swimming pool and indoor sports provision, the focus should be upon enhancing existing provision.^(4.13) A Playing Pitch Strategy has also been adopted.

Water capacity

4.2.22 Water resources are likely to become more stretched as the population grows.^(4.14) The two water companies supplying water to Swale produce Water Resource Management Plans (WRMP) which set out their long-term approaches to achieving a balance between demand and supply. This will involve reducing demand (leakage reduction, metering policies and water efficiency), the development of new sources, asset improvements (e.g. the Broad Oak reservoir near Canterbury, a desalination plant at Reculver), and water transfers.^(4.15)

Main Modification 30

4.2.23 Both companies WRMPs demonstrate have confirmed sufficient supplies to balance demand for the period 2015-2040 for up to 740 circa 14,000 dwellings per annum to 2031. Flexibility is required so that unforeseen development needs are able to maintain and enhance the supply of water and its network.

Deliverability

4.2.24 The viability of development in Swale and the capacity of the development market to deliver growth at a sustained rate year on year over the whole plan period is an important consideration and has been assessed by the Council's evidence [Economic Viability Assessment](#) (PBA August 2014). In terms of viability, assessment work has shown that:

- rural areas and, to a lesser extent, Faversham enjoy higher values and can thus accommodate greater levels of affordable housing and other development costs;
- Sittingbourne needs careful treatment and is sensitive to small changes in policy costs. Only limited development costs can be applied so as not to put development at risk; and
- Sheppey has the lowest values and is not able to accommodate affordable housing or any other policy costs.

Main Modification 31

4.2.25 The Council has made adjustments to its policy requirements to improve viability, but although viability is slowly improving, there will remain difficulties for Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey at least in the short term. Combined with the poor national economic conditions that have already affected the rates of delivery achieved, the rate of future delivery needed to ensure that a five-year supply of housing land for the Local Plan is maintained will be escalated. ~~the higher the target, the greater the challenge. As a result:~~

1. ~~Performance since 2001 does not conclusively support a 740 dwellings per annum target as completion levels above this occurred just three times out of 14 years, whilst past averages have fallen below that assessed for the SHMA 2013 update which anticipated reasonable levels of market recovery.~~
2. ~~Since 1981, growth above 740 dwellings per annum has only been achieved in six years. Of the 600-900 dwelling per annum range, only in 11 years has performance above 600 dwellings per annum achieved, whilst completions at levels greater than 800 per annum was only achieved in six years.~~

3. Average performance as of 2013/14 was: 451 per annum (over 5 years); 558 per annum (over 10 years); 537 per annum (over 20 years); and 524 pa (over 33 years).
4. Against the development plan targets applied in Swale since 1981, poor levels of completions in some years are generally compensated by better performance in other years. An average of these development targets indicates that a housing target of 550 dwellings per annum will achieve a balance across economic cycles.

Identifying specific development needs

4.2.26 Meeting specific future needs also have a bearing on potential development targets that should be adopted.

Main Modification 32

Economic

4.2.27 The Council's Employment Land Needs in Swale 2014-31 October 2015 estimated the net change in land and floorspace needed to accommodate the forecast level of employment growth. It found that Swale needed some 130,000 sq.m of net additional 'B class' floorspace to meet the projected number of jobs and that this would require some 60 ha of land. Swale already has a generous supply of industrial employment floorspace and land. Our current supply of industrial employment land is greater than that predicted for the future, but there is a shortfall to meet future needs for office space: however, we need to also address qualitative needs, alongside requirements for certain parts of the Borough. Evidence from the SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013 indicated that the total amount of land allocated should be higher than the quantitative need so as to:^(4.16)

- produce a sufficient range and choice of sites to meet different sector and occupier needs;
- give a balance of supply across locations addressing under-provision at Sittingbourne, as the Borough's most established industrial market and a likely growth area for office space;
- allow for the renewal and upgrading of existing sites at Faversham and an upgrading in the overall supply with new land;
- on the Isle of Sheppey, capitalise on the legacy of infrastructure investment to bring forward its considerable land commitments. A small business centre for business startups in eastern Sheppey is also a long term opportunity to encourage local business formation and diversify local employment; and
- secure the Borough's economic development strategy, including that associated with the higher economic growth scenario.

4.2.28 The approach to retail and leisure provision is informed by our [Retail and Town Centre Study \(2010\)](#). Swale retains high levels of local spending for everyday supermarket shopping (convenience shopping) and needs in this sector have now largely been met. For comparison (non-food) floorspace, based on achieving 60% of market share, a further 29,227 sq m by 2025 is needed to claw back expenditure lost to centres that have better choice. Sittingbourne is indicated as providing for the vast majority of this growth.

4.2.29 For tourism, total expenditure increased by 8% from 2006 to £207 million, supporting 4,252 actual jobs. There is potential for budget hotel accommodation at Sittingbourne, Faversham and Queenborough that should be met as part of employment allocations.^(4.17)

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Main Modification 33

Housing

4.2.30 Our SHMA 2013 confirms that employment growth and in-migration influence the operation of the housing market in Swale. For many local people, house prices are too expensive relative to earnings, with the number of people on housing waiting lists increasing by nearly 70% between 1997/98 and the end of 2012. These factors point to a need for a housing target to help meet these needs. There are strong structural demographic drivers within the local housing market leading to a growing population and relatively poor levels of affordability. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2015) indicated that the largest growth would come from single person and lone parent households and that new owner-occupied accommodation should principally be two and three bedroom homes and that new private rented housing should ideally be three and four bedroom homes.

Commuting

4.2.31 Swale remains a net exporter of labour via out-commuting, mostly to neighbouring towns and to London.^(4.18) This commuting is mostly within sections of the workforce whose jobs sectors are not well represented locally. Improving this match locally is a challenge as the market for jobs in these sectors is not strong. In addition to out-commuting, an under-supply of housing may also encourage in-commuting or exacerbate the affordability of local property for local people.

Main Modification 34

Arriving at our Local Plan development targets

4.2.32 An objectively assessed need of 776 dwellings per annum (13,192 dwellings 2014-31) would represent a significant boost in the supply of housing in the Borough in accordance with National Planning Policy. Although this cannot be achieved without adverse impacts on local environmental resources in some locations, significant adverse impacts upon important international, national and local environmental designations can be avoided, whilst impacts upon the strategic and local road networks either avoided or minimised to acceptable levels. Actual and forecast low levels of housing completions in the early years of the plan period, alongside pressures on the viability of development, may stretch the ability of housing market to consistently achieve the levels of development necessary in the short to medium terms. However, despite these challenges, the Council believes that meeting the objectively assessed need in full with a housing target of 13,192 is a necessary objective that should be pursued in the interests of meeting the future housing and economic needs of the Borough. Within this overall figure, the Council will also meet its need for 61 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers in full.

4.2.33 The relationship between the level of new homes and jobs is an important one for the achievement of sustainable development. This has been ensured via the parallel economic and demographic work undertaken for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015, which has assessed the level of jobs arising from the objectively assessed need. Whilst there are signs of economic recovery nationally, but locally there is caution about its scale and pace, The scaling back of retail ambitions in Sittingbourne and poor viability in the housing market reinforce this caution, at least in the short term. The adoption of the higher economic growth scenario balances this caution with the potential locally to maximise growth in certain sectors to put in place the building blocks of economic recovery. Greater confidence is given by the fact that much of the land bank is already committed and some of the growth forecast for retail/leisure and pharmaceuticals is already being put in place. Therefore, it is concluded that a level of jobs based on 353 jobs per annum - 7,053 for the plan period is achievable. nevertheless, the aspiration to achieve the 10,900 jobs in Swale with a generous and

flexible supply of employment land (60 ha) and floorspace (130,000 sq m), is considered to be in the interest of the national agenda for growth, with a plentiful supply of land with a good contingency an important part of this.

4.2.34 The Council has considered the adoption of a jobs target for the Local Plan, but has not progressed this option. As well as some uncertainty surrounding the strength of the local office market, employment forecasts are regularly revised as new data is released and the economic outlook changes; likewise, the rates of floorspace take-up can also change over time. Whilst the Local Plan can and should influence the amount and type of floorspace that can be provided, it cannot strongly influence the amount of jobs being created due to a whole range of external factors. Given this, the Council believes that it would not be appropriate for the Local Plan to adopt a target for job generation; rather a target within Policy ST2 for the delivery of 130,000 sq m of net employment floorspace across the 'B' use classes.

4.2.35 The Council will take a proportionate view as to how often its economic data is revised and will monitor closely its economic indicators, including both changes to floorspace and job provision. This approach is considered to be both pragmatic and practical in terms of monitoring performance and will enable the Council to track the economic performance of the plan and make any adjustments necessary.

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~~4.2.36 To support this level of job growth a housing target of some 14,800 dwellings (740 per annum) would be required, but a local plan must be effective; namely that it should be deliverable. Setting an undeliverable housing target from the outset puts the Council at risk of being labelled as persistently under delivering against Government policy and its communities vulnerable to speculative and uncoordinated releases of land for development.~~

~~4.2.37 If housing market signals are considered, they indicate that historic delivery of housing falls well short of rates above 540 per annum. With rates achieved since the start of the plan period already falling well below this and the short term period going forward affected by poor viability, there are real concerns over the realism of achieving higher targets for the rest of the plan period. Considering the long term past average rates of completions and the average of past housing targets that show how variable performance can smooth out over a range of economic cycles, these indicate housing provision at around 540 per annum.~~

~~4.2.38 If the Council were to prematurely adopt higher targets, it believes these would challenge the presumption in favour of sustainable development as they would limit the Council's ability to take local circumstances into account so that it can respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas. As a result they would:~~

- ~~• weaken a development strategy that focuses upon growth and regeneration (including that on brownfield land) within the Swale part of the Thames Gateway, forcing the need for a significant growth at Faversham where substantial harm to a designated heritage asset and the role of the settlement could occur;~~
- ~~• limit responses to the social and economic issues facing the Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne;~~
- ~~• fail to take account of the most sustainable locations for managing patterns of growth to make the best use of public transport, walking and cycling and fails to focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable;~~
- ~~• lead to shortfalls in funding for essential infrastructure where there is no reasonable prospect that it would be deliverable in a timely fashion, potentially leading to a delay or failure to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing by delivering insufficient levels of facilities and services. These could compromise social conditions in deprived parts of the Swale Thames Gateway;~~

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- compromise the use of land of lesser environmental value, resulting in the significant loss of higher quality soils; and
- put in place less sustainable travel patterns for work and shopping that would be difficult to reverse by delivering housing growth before positive signs of employment growth on Sheppey and in Sittingbourne town centre.

4.2.39 The 2013 [Sustainability Appraisal](#) recommended the Council consider increasing its proposed housing target of 540 dwellings per annum to support economic growth and meet future housing needs and that the full provision for Gypsies and Travellers should be met. The [2014 appraisal](#) continues to note this need, but also the potential risks arising from higher housing growth relating to the environment and social wellbeing. As a result, the appraisal concludes that there are few short term effects arising from a lower housing target, provided a review of the Local Plan is undertaken. The Council's [Habitats Regulations Assessment](#) indicates uncertainties as to the impacts and mitigation that would be needed to meet a higher housing target.

4.2.40 Taking into account the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal, the Council believes that a premature commitment to a higher housing target renders the Local Plan undeliverable and unrealistic. We believe that, at the present time, a higher housing target would work against sustainable development as defined by the NPPF.

4.2.41 Our conclusions are that the housing target should be based on the short term average of housing delivery (reflecting current economic difficulties), the longer term average and the long term average of development targets (both reflecting a range of economic cycles). These factors point to provision of at least 540 dwellings per annum – 10,800 dwellings for the plan period 2011-2031. This target minimises the risks, whilst remaining challenging. Included within the overall housing target is a specific target for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation of 82 pitches which will meet their needs in full. The Council's full reasoning is detailed in Topic Paper No.1 [Swale Development Targets](#). For Gypsies and Travellers, the Council will meet their objectively assessed needs in full.

4.2.42 We acknowledge that our preferred housing target is below the objectively assessed development needs, including that relative to our adopted employment target. We recognise that to support its economic strategy and boost housing supply there are strong reasons why we need to considerably boost housing and other provision – but not yet. This Local Plan must be short term in nature and there are strong reasons why this must be so:

- viability that affects the delivery of housing and infrastructure;
- sluggish but emerging progress for the economies of central Sittingbourne and West Sheppey;
- resolution of a major constraint on the strategic road network; and
- further progression of longer term development opportunities.

4.2.43 We believe that our position is sustainable for the short term, requiring a review once key indicators are triggered. At that time we will re-assess our objectively assessed needs and respond appropriately. We have provided for this mechanism with ST Development targets for jobs and new homes 2011-2031 and within Chapter Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements.

4.2.44 The Duty to Co-operate is a national policy requirement that councils should discuss with other local authorities whether any unmet development need could be met beyond their own boundaries. The Council's actions are further detailed in its [Duty to Co-operate Statement](#). However, in summary, for Ashford and Medway Councils, their Local Plans are not yet sufficiently advanced, whilst Canterbury and Maidstone Councils have not agreed with the Council's request. The Council's unmet need is from a relatively self-contained housing market area and only envisaged to be short-term in nature. Therefore, it is not critical to address any unmet need elsewhere as it will be addressed in due course within Swale's own boundaries via a future Local Plan review.

Mitigating the impact of development targets on European designated wildlife sites

4.2.45 Natural England consider that the assumption should be made of a 'Likely Significant Effect' on the SPA for all North Kent Local Plans and relevant planning applications. They consider that a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) strategy should be put in place to identify measures that can be implemented with a monitoring process developed. The North Kent Environmental Planning Group completed its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy in 2014 and are examining the mechanisms that will provide a means to collect developer contributions for its implementation. Once the strategy and its mechanism is in place, the Council will require developer contributions from proposals within 6km of an access point onto the SPA, via S106, to secure wider mitigation measures within and adjacent to the SPA. Beyond 6km from access points onto the SPA, large developments may also result in increased recreational use on the SPA. The Council will seek Natural England's advice for any such developments within the local authority's area, so that these can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.2.46 The Council's Habitats Regulation Assessment 2014 has concluded that in the light of the above and the appropriate provisions included in the Local Plan, there will be no likely significant effects on European sites. Natural England are satisfied with these conclusions.

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Our development targets for jobs and new homes 2013/14-2031

4.2.47 Our development targets are set out in Policy ST2. We need to ensure there are as few barriers as possible to kick-starting our economy and we want to secure a five-year supply of housing land and new jobs as soon as possible in accordance with national policy. Unless there is a strong reason why development should be delayed to a later period, allocated sites will be allowed to come forward as the market deems it ready to deliver them. Targets are therefore expressed as the minimum to be provided and a mechanism is included by which indicating the circumstances under which a review of the Local Plan would be undertaken, most notably relating to employment, housing and key infrastructure delivery. ~~In the case of housing and employment delivery, these relate to completions reaching the bottom of the range of objectively assessed needs and floorspace completions at levels achieved prior to the current recession. Other triggers relate to the issues of concern set out in para 4.2.27. In any event, the Council will commence a review of the Local Plan within three years.~~

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4.2.48 Within the Borough, there are proposed variances in emphasis reflected by two planning areas. The first is for the growth area, represented by the Thames Gateway within Swale (comprising Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey) and, the second area, provides for more modest scales of growth at Faversham and the rest of Swale (inc. the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), in recognition of the need to conserve and enhance important environmental assets. These very different characteristics between the two planning areas strongly indicate a need for an indicative percentage split of development to enable a basis upon which to consider a broad approach to development distribution. This is made having regard to growth opportunities, the need to boost housing supply and environmental capacity.

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Planning Area	Housing (rounded) provision (dwellings)	Industrial (rounded) provision (sq m)
Swale Thames Gateway (comprising Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey)	9,350	331,000
Faversham and the rest of Swale (also comprising the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	1,450	4,700
TOTAL	10,800	335,700

Table 4.2.1 Indicative sub-area dwelling split 2013/14-2031

Planning Area	Percentage split of development as of 31/03/15 ⁽¹⁾
Swale Thames Gateway (comprising Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey)	85%
Faversham and the rest of Swale (also comprising the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	15%
TOTAL	100%

Table 4.2.2 Indicative sub-area dwelling split 2014/15-2031

1. This would include 32 dwelling completions achieved in 2014/15, 202 dwellings at end of 2014/15 as extant planning permissions and 111 windfall dwellings (proxy figure calculated from Table 6 of Topic Paper No. 5).

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4.2.49 Table 4.2.1 shows this indicative split across the two planning areas, the boundaries of which are shown on the Key Diagram (Picture 3.1.1). The approach is further explained within section 4.3. It is not proposed to determine policy based sub-area development targets for each planning areas; rather as a guide to the developer and decision maker as to the way the Local Plan strategy and the settlement strategy, outlined in section 4.3, should be applied; namely that there should not be significant deflections of growth away from the Swale Thames Gateway area to other locations. A consequence is through the monitoring of the five-year supply of housing as required by the NPPF, Whilst it will not be the case that each planning area should maintain its own five-year supply (this will continue to be calculated on a Borough basis), when a Borough shortfall in this supply occurs as a result of significant non-delivery within the Swale Thames Gateway area, the variances in policy emphasis between the two sub-areas will need to be considered alongside the need to improve housing land supply mean that there will be no 'in-principle' acceptance of major replacement/additional development at the Faversham planning area.

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Policy ST 2

Development targets for jobs and homes ~~2011-2031~~ 2014-2031

Land is identified by the Local Plan to meet the following development targets:

<u>Job-Target B Class Employment floorspace provision (sq.m)</u>	<u>Housing provision Target (inc. Meeting the needs for Gypsies and Travellers)</u>
7,053 (353 per annum) 130,000	13,192 (776 dwellings per annum)

Table 4.2.3 Development targets for Swale 2013/14-2031

Planning permission will be granted on sites allocated for development and/or where in accordance with policies of the development plan.

To ensure the ~~longer term~~ alignment and achievement of its jobs and housing targets, the Council will monitor the take up of land and commit ~~itself~~ to commencing a review of this Local Plan within three years of its adoption, or sooner if or when:

- ~~The past five-year moving trend average of 'B' class net employment completions exceeds 24,000 sq m per annum~~ Economic indicators suggest there is likely to be a significant change in the delivery of jobs or employment floorspace; or
- ~~The past five-year moving average of net housing completions exceeds 600 dwellings per annum~~ Shortfalls in the five year supply of housing land seriously compromise the ability of the Local Plan to achieve its housing target; or
- There is tangible progress on the delivery of ~~one of the longer-term development~~ regeneration opportunities identified by the Local Plan at the Port of Sheerness; or
- ~~A national statement of transport priorities indicates major programmed improvements to Junction 5 of the M2 within 10 years;~~ There are significant delays in the commencement of major works to improve J5 of the M2 with the A249; or
- Significant delays in the delivery of infrastructure within the Local Plan implementation and delivery plan schedule risks significant harm to the creation of sustainable communities; or
- Assessment under the Habitats Regulations indicates that detailed proposals at a Local Plan allocation are unable to protect the integrity and special interest of a European designated site and that this threatens the ability of the Council to maintain a 5-year supply of housing land; or
- Other material changes in national planning policy leave the plan significantly outdated or unable to provide a clear policy context on an important issue.

~~Where a failure to achieve a Borough five-year supply of housing land arises due to the non-delivery of sites within the Swale Thames Gateway planning area, this will not give rise to further replacement/additional provision within the Faversham and rest of Swale planning area unless otherwise in accordance with Policy ST3 and ST7.~~

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4.3 Where future change will take place - the strategy for our towns, villages and countryside

The Swale settlement strategy

4.3.1 There are a wide range of towns, villages, hamlets and isolated settlements across Swale. This part of the Local Plan strategy presents the approach to these locations and examines their role within the overall strategy in terms of the broad distribution of growth and decisions about other development.

4.3.2 A significant part of the Borough falls within a national priority area for regeneration - the Thames Gateway (Picture 4.3.1). It comprises the Sittingbourne and Isle of Sheppey areas of the Borough. The Gateway is supported as a strategy priority by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (it being one of its four strategic objectives) and financially by £442M from the Single Regional Growth and EU Structural and Investment Funds. The Thames Gateway is under the Minister of State for Communities and local Government, who also chairs its Partnership which promotes the creation of jobs, infrastructure and new homes across North Kent and South Essex. Its presence and the major regeneration emphasis that underpins it is a continued and strong influence upon Local Plans.

4.3.3 Outside the Gateway, the eastern and southern parts of the Borough reflect a more rural profile, characterised by the small market town of Faversham, its rural hinterland, and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). For Faversham it is the historic character of its setting and urban form that strongly guides the planning approach here, whilst national policy for the AONB strongly promotes its conservation and enhancement.



Picture 4.3.1 The Thames Gateway

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4.3.4 These differences in emphasis and what they have meant for the development strategy have been explored by successive sustainability appraisals and have been found to be the most appropriate and sustainable approach. As a result, we have evolved our local strategy through the creation of the two planning areas identified by para. 4.2.48 and by the indicated and varying scales of growth directed at them. As well as reinforcing the emphasis on regeneration with the Swale Thames Gateway area, a reduced scale of growth at Faversham:

- avoids significant adverse impacts on heritage assets, limits the release of high quality agricultural land, limits upward pressures on out-commuting, whilst boosting housing provision;
- there is no overriding housing market evidence indicating a need for a housing led strategy;
- limits pressure upon the Kent Downs AONB;
- allows for a greater range of less constrained sites in more sustainable locations to be allocated with the Gateway, especially on previously developed land;
- supports, in the Gateway, the significantly greater levels of employment land and the largest proportions of the Borough's economically active residents and share of local GDP. This helps to compensate for forecast declines in the working age population; and
- assists in the stimulation of demand for improved retail/leisure facilities at Sittingbourne.

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4.3.5 This has the effect of limiting growth at Faversham to a level that limits the use of land sensitive for heritage, landscape or biodiversity and maintains its small market town character and role to focus on meeting more locally based needs. ~~It also means a diversion of growth back to the Gateway of between 418 and 1,142 dwellings.~~

4.3.6 In the case of job creation, the variances between the Swale Thames Gateway and Faversham is as the result of creating a flexible portfolio of sites that meets wider identified needs for the Gateway and more local needs at Faversham. This and the growth area status of the Swale Thames Gateway supports the overwhelming majority of provision being made there.

4.3.7 With these two planning areas providing the overall contexts, the Local Plan set out a strategy for the settlements within them. This section defines a series of settlement tiers and the policy approach to them, whilst Policies ST5-ST7 give greater articulation for the main urban locations and their hinterlands.

4.3.8 These and other relevant influences upon the Local Plan settlement strategy and, as a result, where development is located, are detailed more fully in Technical Paper No.4 [Influences on the Settlement Strategy](#).

Settlement tiers

4.3.9 Defining and implementing a settlement strategy is assisted by the identification of settlement tiers that guide the location of development and services. Evidence strongly points to the principle of steering the largest scales of growth to reflect the existing largest concentrations of population, where services, employment and transport choices are present. This means that the urban centres and the larger well-connected villages occupy the higher settlement tiers, whilst those with strong environmental character, poorer access to services and/or limited capacity for change generally occupy the lower. Settlements are assigned to the tiers as shown in Table 4.3.1, with the strategy directing amounts of development on a descending scale; in other words the lower the tier of settlement, the reduced amount of development envisaged. Further information on the main services and facilities in villages can be found in the [Swale Rural Sustainability Study](#) (2011).

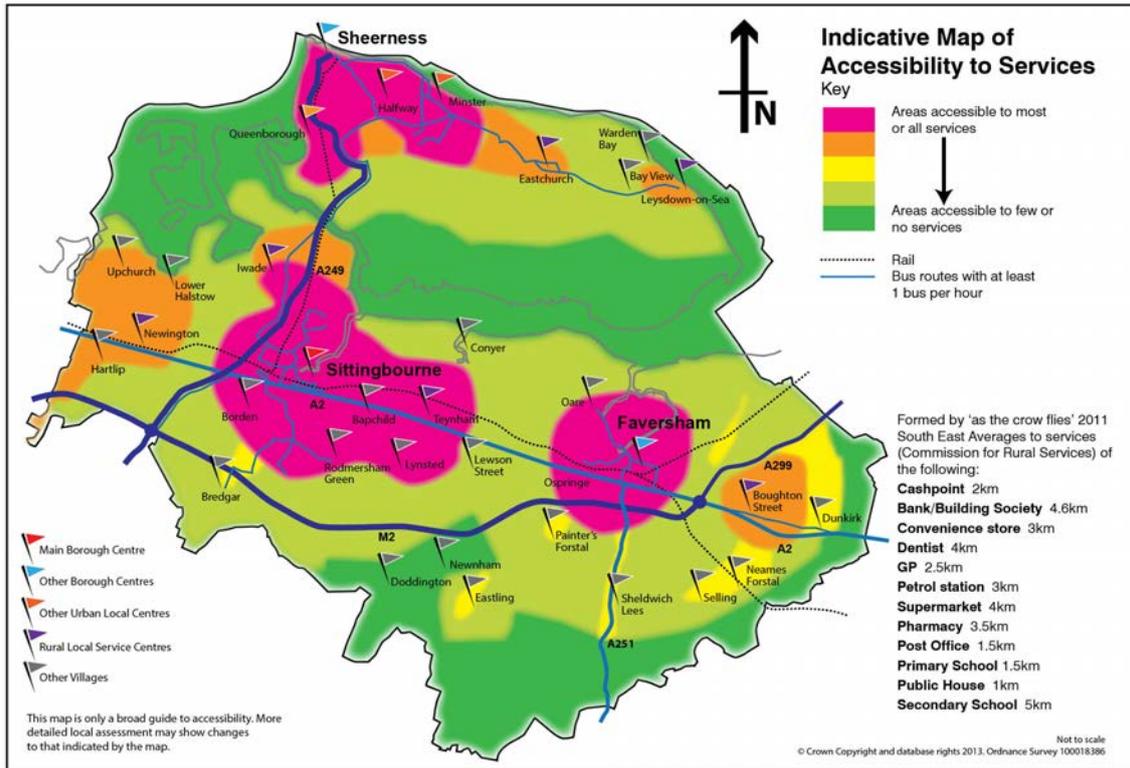
Settlement tier	Role	Name of Settlement
1. Main Borough Urban Centre	All services and job opportunities. Good quality transport options. Primary focus for housing, retail, employment and other developments and for the concentration of principal public services and facilities. Likely to attract population from widest area.	Sittingbourne.

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Settlement tier	Role	Name of Settlement
2. Other Borough Centres	Most services and job opportunities. Fair to good quality transport options. Smaller towns with a secondary focus for housing, retail, employment and other developments and concentration of principal or satellite public services and facilities. Likely to be acting as centres for their home and surrounding populations and close to other nearby smaller urban centres.	Faversham and Sheerness.
3. Other Urban Local Centres	Limited/variable range of local services at each, but in-combination providing a reasonable range. Variable quality transport options. Clusters of larger urban areas close to other Borough Centres. Likely to be the focus of developments seeking to meet the needs of their own and wider needs.	Minster and Halfway and Queenborough and Rushenden.
4. Rural Local Service Centres	Provides most or all of the following: primary health care, education, organised sport and recreational facilities, food and other shopping, pub, post office and place of worship. Mostly, accessible by frequent (hourly) bus and/or train services. Usually on main transport corridors which contributes to the range of services. Likely to be serving passing, home and surrounding rural populations for day to day services, with some sharing of services with nearby smaller settlements. Populations will travel to other centres for more major shopping, leisure and employment needs.	Boughton, Eastchurch, Iwade, Leysdown, Newington, Teynham.
5. Other villages with built-up area boundaries	A variety of settlements. The more sustainable provide: primary education, recreation area, a shop, and accessible by bus or train (of reasonable frequency). Currently less sustainable villages will be without one or more of these services, with little or no public transport or relatively remote from their nearest urban centre or main transport corridor. Single or occasional clusters of villages may contain limited day to day services for their home communities, whilst others lack these services or are only able to improve them with new investment. Populations will travel to other centres for more major shopping, leisure and employment needs, whilst less sustainable locations will need to travel to meet even day to day needs.	Bapchild, Bayview, Borden, Bredgar, Conyer, Doddington, Dunkirk, Eastling, Hartlip, Lewson Street, Lower Halstow, Lynsted, Neames Forstal, Newnham, Oare, Painter's Forstal, Rodmersham Green, Selling, Sheldwich Lees, Upchurch and Warden Bay.
6. The open countryside outside the built-up area boundaries	A variety of settlements, hamlets, ribbon development, clusters of buildings and isolated houses. Dependent on location, services limited or non-existent. Usually well away from transport corridors or of small and sporadic form. Some locations able to meet a very limited range of day to day services for their home communities, but many with no immediate access to these or a wider range of services.	All other remaining settlements and habitation without built-up area boundaries and other areas.

Table 4.3.1 Settlement tiers

4.3.10 The first five tiers of settlement are shown on Picture 4.3.2 and illustrates the Settlement Strategy's potential positive contribution toward sustainable development by bringing housing jobs and services closer together.



Picture 4.3.2 Indicative map showing broad accessibility to local services from Policy ST3 settlements

The role of built-up area boundaries

4.3.11 Based upon those settlements with more significant concentrations of existing development, built-up area boundaries are defined on the Proposals Maps. Not all settlements have built up area boundaries defined, usually because their loose-knit, sporadic, historic or landscape character makes definition difficult and/or could lead to infill development harmful to their intrinsic value and/or that of the countryside.

4.3.12 The ability to define a built up area boundary is an important dimension to the settlement strategy because it informs judgements about where development can take place by helping to determine the change in character between built development and the open and undeveloped character of the wider countryside (as opposed to the social, economic or administrative boundaries to a village). A review of the boundaries in the 2008 adopted Local Plan can be found within Technical Paper No.3, [A Review of Built-Up Area Boundaries](#) but they are drawn by reference to:

- identifiable physical features, such as roads, hedges or tree belts and existing property lines, avoiding, where possible, open undeveloped or environmentally sensitive land;
- sites on the edge of settlements which have planning permission, or are allocated for development in the Local Plan because of an overriding need to release the land; and
- excluding predominantly open land uses on the edge of settlements, such as playing fields, large gardens and utilities.

4.3.13 Whilst it will normally be the case that development can take place within built-up area boundaries, this will not always be so. For example, where heritage assets or their settings, or the primary purpose of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty would be compromised. The development of garden land or other gaps within settlements may also be inappropriate due to their character, amenity or biodiversity value.

4.3.14 The line between consolidated areas of built development and open countryside may not always be clear cut and judgements on a case by case basis may sometimes need to be made. However, beyond the defined built up area boundaries, land and other settlements are regarded as being within the open

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countryside. Here, only development essential to the social, economic or environmental well-being, as set out by national and local planning policy, will be permitted, where consistent with the primary objective of protecting and, where required, enhancing the countryside.

Interpreting the settlement strategy

4.3.15 Policy ST 3 provides the scale and primary objectives appropriate to each settlement tier. It is not intended to prevent communities from bringing forward Neighbourhood Plans that conform to the Local Plan.

4.3.16 As well as decisions about development, maintaining the position of a settlement in its tier is also reliant on the decisions of infrastructure providers, in particular health, education, the Post Office and transport. A reduction in services could mean that a settlement no longer performs its defined role, with resultant implications for planning policy. As well as for planning decisions about new service provision or the change of use of existing services, Policy ST3 should additionally inform the decisions of service providers when prioritising investment.

4.3.17 For developments seeking to meet the national planning policy intended to support the vitality of existing communities with new development, the Council will expect applications to be accompanied with evidence to show how it will support the viability of existing services and/or demonstrate how its scale will bring a new service(s) to the community.

4.3.18 The following paragraphs amplify the interpretation of Policy ST3 to avoid over-simplification in its implementation and to ensure flexibility.

Tiers 1-3 - at the urban centres

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4.3.19 As already indicated, the two planning areas presented by the Local Plan themselves require distinctions in approach, but within the Swale Thames Gateway, there are also variances:

- **Sittingbourne:** The largest share of the Borough's population and economy, together with its town centre regeneration, indicate the most significant scales of growth, whilst safeguarding environmental designations. The regeneration of the town centre needs to capture the benefits of a growth in population.
- **The West Sheppey Triangle:** Although a smaller share, relative to Sittingbourne, the population and economy of the Island is focused at its western side and provides for a smaller, but still significant growth emphasis. Whilst settlements in their own right, with distinct characters and needs, the centres of population here are dependent upon each other to meet local needs. Sheerness is the main town, with nearby Queenborough and Rushenden, Minster and Halfway acting as local centres, but lacking the range of facilities of the main town. Sheerness is not able to meet all of its own needs and those of the wider Island's residents and visitors because of a lack of sites and surrounding environmental constraints. Both Queenborough and, especially, Minster, have historically met wider housing needs, but are impacted by environmental designations at the coast and concerns about coalescence and wider visual impacts. The Local Plan approach to growth is that it shall be on shared basis between the settlements, but not at the expense of their individuality, character and, for Sheerness, its town centre. The strategy is for the delivery of existing development commitments and regeneration opportunities before the release of new land, other than where allocated.
- **Faversham:** Is the main focus for growth within this planning area where new development is especially viable, but at levels well below the other urban areas because of the historic importance of the town, the quality of its surroundings and a need to manage levels of out-commuting.

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Tier 4 - at the rural local service centres

4.3.20 Although providing the main focus of growth in the rural areas, these villages vary in the scale of opportunities available and in their relationships with nearby communities.

- **Boughton:** There are some opportunities for development, but its setting and the valued habitats and landscapes around the village constrain its major expansion. Given its population, local services are not as extensive as other centres and could be enhanced. Although not a service centre, the future and health of nearby Dunkirk is closely linked with that of its larger neighbour and both will be considered through a Neighbourhood Plan.
- **Teynham:** Reflecting a strong level of local services and transport choices, north of the A2 there are a number of large and medium sized development opportunities that can be achieved without significant harm to the wider countryside. South of the A2, the more linear development pattern, more open landscape and high quality agricultural land and distance to the strategic road network limit are an influences on the scale of growth, as is the Air Quality Management Area declared in the centre of the village.
- **Newington:** Despite its role and level of services, development opportunities are ~~very~~ relatively limited due to the valued and important heritage, landscapes and habitats to the north of the village, poor pedestrian connections between north and south of the village, a restricted internal road network, poor air quality and surrounding high quality agricultural land.
- **Iwade:** Its role and character has changed dramatically with 20 years of expansion, but despite this, its local centre role is not as fully developed as others due, probably, to its closeness to Sittingbourne. ~~Although surrounded by lower quality agricultural land, its opportunities are limited now to those within its confines and where no overriding harm to the character of the exposed landscapes around it or to settlement separation would occur.~~ The village is located close to the A249, although the Grovehurst junction requires significant upgrading, however, public transport services for the village require enhancement. There is further potential to expand the village in such a way as to sensitively and improve integration with the countryside and create major new areas for open space, landscape and biodiversity enhancement without significant harm to international biodiversity designations. These areas will also enable further growth to safeguard land important to the separation of the village with Sittingbourne.
- **Eastchurch:** The village serves the needs of local residents, but also the nearby prisons and holiday population. Its open and elevated position within the surrounding landscape and less accessible location to the main centres of population, limit opportunities to minor development aimed at meeting local needs.
- **Leysdown:** Whilst an important centre for the resident population and tourists, its remote location at the end of a 10 km cul-de-sac off the A249 and more major services, makes development opportunities less sustainable and viable, unless they can be shown to deliver tangible benefits such as more diverse employment opportunities, public transport improvements and support for local services.^(4.19)

Tier 5 - other villages with built-up area boundaries

4.3.21 Across the Borough, the remaining villages with built up area boundaries have variable levels of services and vitality. In broad terms, these settlements fall into two categories:

1. Smaller to medium sized settlements currently displaying less sustainable characteristics stemming from their relative remoteness from the nearest town and/or their generally poorer levels of public

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transport provision or local facilities. These settlements include Bayview, Conyer, Dunkirk, Lewson Street, Neames Forstal, Painter's Forstal and Selling; and

- Settlements currently displaying more sustainable characteristics, usually as a result of better levels of public transport provision and/or local facilities and/or their closeness to urban or larger village populations. These settlements include Bapchild, Borden, Bredgar, Doddington, Eastling, Hartlip, Lower Halstow, Lynsted, Newnham, Oare, Rodmersham Green, Sheldwich Lees, Upchurch and Warden.

4.3.22 Development at some locations could help meet local needs, improve the viability of existing services or enable new provision to be made, but other than through infill and modest redevelopment, opportunities are likely to be limited both within and, exceptionally, when required, at the edges of built-up area boundaries. Where larger scales of growth relative to the village are proposed as the means to meet local needs that cannot be met elsewhere and/or support services, planning applications will submit detailed evidence to demonstrate the social, economic and environmental benefits to the settlement and how they will support more sustainable outcomes.

Outside the built-up area boundaries

4.3.23 All other settlements and sporadic buildings are considered to sit within the open countryside where the primary objective will be to protect it from isolated and/or large scales of development. Some minor development may though be essential for the social, economic or environmental health of a community. In so doing, they will be required to protect and, where required, enhance, the intrinsic value, character, beauty, wildlife value, tranquillity and undeveloped nature of the countryside and its communities and buildings.

Main Modification 45

Use of Policy ST3 for Gypsy and Traveller provision

4.3.24 Policy ST3 will be used to guide the identification of suitable allocations for Part 2 of the Local Plan that is addressing allocations for Gypsies and Travellers. It will also be read in conjunction with Policy DM 10 when considering planning applications. It will however be flexible in terms of recognising that there may be specific business or personal requirements that may need to be taken into account.

Main Modification 46

Policy ST 3

The Swale settlement strategy

With emphasis, where possible, upon the ~~By~~ use of previously developed land within defined built up area boundaries and on sites allocated by the Local Plan, development proposals will be permitted in accordance with the following settlement strategy:

- The main Borough urban centre of Sittingbourne will provide the primary urban focus for growth, where development will support town centre regeneration and underpin the town's role as the principal centre;
- The other Borough urban centres of Faversham and Sheerness will provide the secondary urban focus for growth at a scale and form compatible to their historic and natural assets and where it can support their roles as local centres serving their hinterland. Additionally at Sheerness its role and functioning will be supported by the other urban local centres within

the West Sheppey Triangle to meet the Island's development needs on previously developed sites or at existing committed locations and allocations well related to the urban framework and strategic transport network;

3. The Rural Local Service Centres will provide the tertiary focus for growth in the Borough and the primary focus for the rural area. At allocated sites relating well to the existing settlement pattern and the character of the surrounding countryside, development will meet provide for the local housing or employment needs for their home and surrounding communities, whilst supporting existing and new services;
4. Other villages with built-up area boundaries, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), will provide development on minor infill and redevelopment sites within the built up area boundaries where compatible with the settlement's character, amenity, landscape setting, heritage or biodiversity value and;
5. ~~On sites adjacent to a built up area boundary, related to the existing settlement pattern and the character of the surrounding countryside, modest development will be permitted that meets a recognised community need that cannot be met elsewhere and reinforces or enhances the settlements sustainable characteristics; and~~
6. At ~~Locations~~ locations in the open countryside, outside the built-up area boundaries shown on the [Proposals Map](#), ~~fall in the open countryside where~~ development will not normally be permitted, unless supported by national planning policy and able to demonstrate that it would contribute to protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the intrinsic value, landscape setting, tranquillity and beauty of the countryside, its buildings and the vitality of rural communities.

How our development targets will be met

4.3.25 The Local Plan cannot directly provide the jobs and homes that the area needs, but identifies the land necessary to produce the opportunities for them. This section illustrates how this is achieved. The allocations themselves are shown on the Proposals Map.

Main Modification 47

How do we know how much land is needed to meet our development targets?

4.3.26 Our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment shows how site conditions, constraints, design and the density of development affects the amount of land we need, but calculating the land needed to meet our jobs target employment needs is complex. Our ~~SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment (2013) gives an assessment of the amount of floorspace needed in the B-class group of business sectors (industrial development, excluding retail and leisure), remembering that not all jobs will be created from specific allocations: study - Employment Land needs in Swale 2014-2031 (October 2015) - showed that the Experian economic forecast of 10,900 jobs for the plan period (2014-31 @ 641 jobs per annum) would be distributed as follows:~~

- 5,500 jobs are in in non B space sectors (retail, services, health & education etc.)
- 1,400 jobs are in sectors normally found to occupy industrial land uses:
 - minus 1,400 jobs are in manufacturing (B2, B1c)
 - 1,300 jobs are in warehousing (B8, B1c)and
 - 1,500 jobs are in other industrial sectors including waste, utilities, construction
- 4,000 jobs are in sectors normally found in office space (B1a & B1b).

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4.3.27 Most of this job growth was found to be in non B space sectors, with the decline in manufacturing offset by the growth in warehousing and specialised construction and utilities. The forecast also showed strong office sector growth, but Experian considered that this should be treated with some caution due to the influence of one specific location in the Borough.

4.3.28 The net result is that Swale needs around 130,000 sq. m of net additional 'B class' floorspace to meet the projected number of jobs. Most of the demand is for industrial uses driven by the growing warehouse and 'other industrial' uses. The growth of these sectors more than offsets the continuing decline in traditional manufacturing jobs. Using a standard approach, translating these jobs into the amount of land needed, determines that around 60 ha of new land is needed to meet the jobs forecast over the plan period.

4.3.29 The overall floorspace needs are shown in Table 4.3.2, however, we cannot say in advance how many jobs will actually be created on each site.

Main Modification 48

<u>Use classes Sector</u>	<u>Local Plan job target (The Higher Economic Growth Scenario-NLP for-SBC-2013) provision for employment floorspace and land</u>	
	<u>Net indicative floorspace (sq. m)</u>	<u>Indicative land (ha)</u>
Offices (B1a/b)	45,550	7.7
Industrial (B1c/B2/B8)	129,984	32.5
Other industrial inc. utilities	62,995	17
Manufacturing	-58,738	5
Office	42,284	14
Warehouse	81,835	23
All B use classes	175,534 128,376	40.2 59

Table 4.3.2 Gross-Net employment floorspace (sq. m) and land (ha) requirements 2014-2031

Main Modification 49

4.3.30 To meet our floorspace requirements, we need to look first at our existing committed supply of industrial land as at 2012/13. Table 4.3.4 shows that as of 2014/15 we current have a net supply of 159,418 sq. m - slightly higher than the total 'target' provision identified in Table 4.3.2. Currently, the Borough has a net supply of 197,769 sq m, slightly higher than the requirements from Table 4.3.2. Within this total, there would however be a shortfall of some 38,194 28,936 sq. m for offices, but a numerical surplus against other sectors. In respect of the surplus in industrial requirements, as explained in Section 4.2, there are strong reasons for having a land portfolio in excess of this so that we get the right quality and choice of sites, whilst for offices, there is some caution around the economic forecast which the Council intends to monitor.

4.3.31 For retail and leisure floorspace, our [Retail Needs Assessment](#) tells us that some 29,227 sq m of comparison floorspace is required by 2025. This is ambitious and intended to enable the Borough to capture some 60% of market share.

Main Modification 50

4.3.32 For Gypsy and Traveller provision, the Council does not need to make specific allocations for new pitches. This is because most of the requirement for pitches in the plan period have already been met by planning permissions granted. The remainder required is small and can be comfortably provided from planning applications during the plan period on suitable 'windfall' sites.

Main Modification 51

4.3.33 ~~Table 4.3.3 below shows how these commitments reduce the amount of new land needing to be identified and illustrates how the Council proposes the remainder be provided:~~

4.3.34 The Local Plan does not need to allocate new sites to meet the whole of its development needs. This is because these needs are derived from a plan period with its base date set at 2013/14, with its first year represented by the period 1st April 2014 through to 31st March 2015. As a result, there are sites already completed and those with planning permission that have either yet to be commenced or completed. Table 4.3.4 shows how these commitments reduce the amount of new land needing to be allocated by the Local Plan. The table does not consider any additional dwellings that might be required to achieve the continuous 5-year supply of housing land required by Government planning policy.

Source of supply for development	Net no. of new dwellings	Net amount of 'B' class employment floorspace (sq m)	Net amount of 'A' & 'D' class retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Policy ST2 Local Plan Development Targets 2010/11-2031	10,800	175,534	29,227
Completions between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2013	775	Minus 8,890	11,013
Sites with planning permission as at 1 April 2013 yet to be completed	2,273	206,659	16,343
<i>Sub-total of commitments</i>	<i>3,048</i>	<i>197,769</i>	<i>27,356</i>
Provision needing to be made by Local Plan	7,752	Minus 22,238	1,871
Provision proposed by Policy ST4	7,946	454,248	29,754
Provision proposed with Swale Thames Gateway planning area	9,644	331,021 proposed allocations only	Unable to split
Provision proposed with Faversham and the rest of Swale planning area	1,501	4,700 proposed allocations only	Unable to split

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Source of supply for development	Net no. of new dwellings	Net amount of 'B' class employment floorspace (sq m)	Net amount of 'A' & 'D' class retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Total provision made by Policy ST4 against target (total commitments + new provision)	41,314	533,490 after proposed losses	57,110

Table 4.3.3 Sources of development committed and proposed to meet Local Plan development targets as of 1 April 2013. Source KCC Housing and Commercial Information Audits.

Source of supply for development	Net no. of new dwellings	Net amount of 'B' class employment floorspace (sq m)
Policy ST2 Local Plan Development Targets 2014-2031 (17 years)	13,192 @ 776 dpa	130,000
<i>From this target we deduct the following:</i>		
1. <u>Completions between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015</u>	<u>618</u>	<u>7,072</u>
2. <u>Sites with planning permission as at 31 March 2015 yet to be completed</u>	<u>2,198</u>	<u>152,346</u>
3. <u>Allowance made for windfall completions 2014-31 (11 years @110 dwellings per annum)</u>	<u>1,210</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<u>Sub-total of commitments</u>	<u>4,026</u>	<u>159,418</u>
Provision needing to be made by Policy ST4 to meet Local Plan target	9,166	Minus 29,418

Table 4.3.4 Sources of development committed and proposed as of 1 April 2014. Source KCC Housing and Commercial Information Audits.

Main Modification 52

Determining where the development targets will be met

4.3.35 New allocations are selected from a portfolio of sites contained within our draft [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) (2014/15) and [Employment Land Review](#) (2010). These sites have been assessed and where judged as deliverable, they have been allocated in accordance with the Local Plan settlement strategy within Policy ST3. This means that we have focused development growth using the following general prioritised approach:

1. The primary and greatest scales of development are at Sittingbourne, in line with its position as the main Borough urban centre;
2. A secondary focus at the urban centres on western Sheppey closest to the Island's main facilities and transport choices, whilst at Faversham, growth is accommodated without significant harm to its smaller scale and its built and natural assets; and
3. A tertiary focus and scale at the Rural Local Service Centres, notably, Iwade, Teynham and Newington, to support their role as the primary focus for the rural area, without harm to their

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character and settlement separation. Other centres have a lesser focus as suggested by their remoter location and/or availability of sites with lesser environmental harm.

4.3.36 Our planning strategy is led by development needs and objectives, however, as a guide to the broad distribution of growth in the Borough, Table 4.3.5 identifies the split of allocated dwellings at each of the settlement tiers within Policy ST3, with further information on individual settlements.

Settlement tier in Policy ST3	Percentage of allocated dwellings ⁽¹⁾	Individual settlement	Percentage of allocated dwellings ⁽²⁾
Main Borough Urban Centre	43.6	Sittingbourne	43.6
Other Borough Urban Centres	44.90	Faversham	17.2
		Sheerness	0
		Queenborough and Rushenden	12.5
		Minster and Halfway	15.0
		Total West Sheppey Triangle	24.7
The Rural Local Service Centres	12.05	Boughton	0.4
		Teynham	4.1
		Newington	1.3
		Iwade	6.0
		Eastchurch	0.2
		Leysdown	0.1

Table 4.3.5 Percentage split of allocated dwellings in Policy ST3

1. May not add to 100% due to rounding
2. May not add to 100% due to rounding

4.3.37 It is not necessary to allocate sites at settlements below the Rural Local Service Centre level within Policy ST3. This is because these locations do not present the necessary combination of better location and sites of limited environmental impacts for such settlements to be prioritised above those in para. 4.3.34. This does not mean that no development would come forward in these rural locations, development in accordance with Policy ST3 and DM9, together with Neighbourhood Plans and other national initiatives, will ensure that appropriate development continues to support rural communities.

4.3.38 Within the above prioritised approach, we have allocated sites of lesser environmental value and steered major growth away from designated sites. We have protected high quality agricultural land by steering a significant proportion of growth to lower quality land, unless where this would result in less sustainable locations for development. ~~and~~ Where we have had to use ~~such~~ high quality land, we have used sites reasonably well contained by existing development or landform or when the mitigation of landscape impacts can be achieved to acceptable levels. We have also avoided sites where development would be ~~harmful to~~ substantially harmful to historic assets ~~its historic significance~~ or when ~~Some sites have not been allocated because of their significant cumulative environmental impact would occur.~~ In identifying development allocations, environmental impacts, notably ~~but~~ some

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erosion of the countryside between our towns and villages, will occur in the interests of meeting future development needs, but in so doing the critical spaces will continue to be protected. Where these and other impacts occur, our allocations will identify the mitigation needed to reduce the harm.

4.3.39 As well as meeting its housing target, the Council needs to provide for a 5-year supply of housing land. The Council will achieve this by ensuring that sufficient of the sites it has allocated will deliver completions within the first five years of the plan and has, as a contingency, reinforced its position with a surplus of dwellings allocated over and above the housing target.

The identification of broad locations for windfall sites

4.3.40 National planning policy allows the identification of broad locations based on a geographical area that can contribute to housing land supply. Planning guidance confirms that this could include a windfall allowance - sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process that normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

4.3.41 Technical Paper No. 5 [Defining a Windfall Allowance](#) demonstrates that there is evidence that sites for some 1,210 windfall dwellings will continue to come forward in Swale in the plan period from two broad locations:

1. Around 823 dwellings from the urban areas of Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness, Queenborough, Halfway and Minster; and
2. Around 387 dwellings from the villages and the wider rural area.

Main Modification 53

4.3.42 The windfall allowance is not currently applied to the first five years of the Local Plan. This will be monitored over time reviewed as part of the 2013/14 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment that will support the submission version of the Local Plan.

Main Modification 54

Policy ST 4

Meeting the Local Plan development targets

Land is allocated for development at the following locations on the Proposals Map or where identified as suitable for development within broad locations. Planning permission will be granted for such, whilst development quanta shall be the minimum to be achieved, where in accordance with national or local planning policy:

Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
<i>Total commitments from Table 4.3.4</i>	3,048 <u>2,816</u>	197,769 <u>159,418</u>	27,356
Sittingbourne allocations:			
Land at NW Sittingbourne (comprising land north of Quinton)	1,370 <u>1,450</u> ⁽¹⁾	0	0

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Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Road, land at Pheasant Farm, Bramblefield Lane and land at Great Grovehurst Farm)			
Land at SW Sittingbourne	564	0	0
Land at north east Sittingbourne	106	43,000	0
Lydbrook Close	70	0	0
Milton Pipes (Cooks Lane)	190	0	0
152 Staplehurst Road	75	0	0
Freesia, Grovehurst Road	15	0	0
35 High Street, Milton Regis	10	0	0
Stones Farm, Canterbury Road	550	0	0
Crown Quay Lane	465	0	0
Orbital Staplehurst Road	60	0	0
Manor Farm	20	0	0
Land north of Key Street	30	0	0
Within the central regeneration area	296	38,194 To be determined within future phases.	29,754
Ridham and Kemsley	0	145,985	0
Land south of Kemsley Mill	0	8,000	0
Total Sittingbourne	3,585	238,094	29,754
	4,417 (excl. 50 beyond plan period)	153,985	
Sheerness allocations:			
Land at West Minster	0	7,500	0
Total Sheerness	0	7,500	0
Faversham allocations:			
From the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan	103	0	0
	94		

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Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Land at the Western Link	240 <u>250</u>	0	0
Faversham Police Station, Church Road	12	0	0
Bysingwood Primary School, Hazebrouck	15	0	0
Land at Ham Road	35	0	0
Oare gravel workings, Oare Road	300 <u>330</u>	1,500	0
Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane (Phase I and II)	200 <u>260</u>	20,000	0
<u>Land at Graveney Road</u>	<u>90</u>	<u>0</u>	0
<u>Perry Court Farm, Ashford Road</u>	<u>370</u>	<u>18,525</u>	0
<u>Land west of Brogdale Road</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>0</u>	0
<u>Preston Fields, Salters Lane</u>	<u>217</u>	<u>0</u>	0
Land at Selling Road	0	6,300	0
Land east of Faversham	0	7,000	0
Total Faversham	905 <u>1,739</u>	34,800 <u>53,325</u>	0
Minster & Halfway allocations:			
<u>Belgrave Road</u>	<u>140</u>	<u>0</u>	0
<u>Land west of Barton Hill Drive</u>	<u>620</u>	<u>0</u>	0
<u>Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>0</u>	0
<u>Land at Chequers Road</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>0</u>	0
Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road	60	0	0
Land at Preston Screens, Minster Road	24	0	0
Plover Road (Thistle Hill)	430 <u>97</u>	0	0
Scocles Road (Thistle Hill)	294 <u>473</u>	0	0
Land at Minster Academy, Admirals Walk	20	0	0
Total Minster and Halfway	649 <u>1,494</u>	0	0

Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale 4

Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Queenborough & Rushenden allocations:			
The Foundry	37	0	0
Nil Desperandum	22	0	0
Land at Manor Road	6	0	0
Within the regeneration area	4,135 <u>1,180</u>	<u>137,011</u>	0
Land at Cowsted Corner	0	5,600 ⁽²⁾	-
Total Queenborough and Rushenden	4,200 <u>1,245</u>	425,440 <u>142,611</u>	0
Boughton allocations:			
Bull Lane	16	0	0
Land off Colonel's Lane	15	0	0
Land south of Colonel's Lane	6	0	0
Total Boughton	37	0	0
Eastchurch allocations:			
Land north of High Street	15	0	0
Total Eastchurch	15	0	0
Iwade allocations:			
<u>Village expansion (north, east and southern areas)</u>	<u>572</u>	<u>0</u>	0
Iwade Fruit & Produce, The Street	21	0	0
Iwade Village Centre II, The Street	10	0	0
Total Iwade	34 <u>603</u>	0	0
Leysdown allocations:			
Shellness Road/Park Avenue	10	0	0
Total Leysdown	10	0	0
Newington allocations:			
<u>Land at The Tracies</u>		<u>0</u>	-

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Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
Parsonage Farm, School Lane	14	0	0
Land north of High Street	115	0	0
Total Newington	14 134	0	0
Teynham allocations:			
Land at Frogal Lane	260	26,840	0
Land east of Station Road	420 107	0	0
Land adj. Mayfield, London Road	13	0	0
Barrow Green Farm	30	0	0
Total Teynham	423 410	26,840	0
From within broad locations (windfalls):			
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness, Queenborough, Halfway and Minster.	915 823	0	0
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of villages and in the wider rural area in accordance with national planning policy.	430 387	0	0
Total broad locations	1,345 1,210	0	0
Sites for Gypsies and Travellers to be identified within Part 2 of the Local Plan:			
In locations to be confirmed	82	NA	NA
Pending losses arising from draft allocations			
To be deducted from provision being made	0	96,950 44,380 ⁽³⁾	NA
TOTAL PROVISION BEING MADE IN PLAN PERIOD	41,314 14,130 (excl. 94 50 dwellings phased beyond the plan period.)	533,490 499,299	57,110
Surplus against planned requirement	938	369,299	NA
Planning Area totals (committed and allocated dwellings)	Thames Gateway	12,009 (85.0%)	

Settlement/site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/office floorspace (sq m)	Retail and leisure floorspace (sq m)
	Faversham and rest of Swale	2,121 (15.0%)	

Table 4.3.6 Sources (net) for the supply of development and its location to 2031

1. ~~the 1,160~~ 1,330 at land north of Quinton Road and at Pheasant Farm (plus ~~20~~ 50 dwellings beyond 2031), ~~80~~ at land at Pheasant Farm, Bramblefield Lane and ~~430~~ 120 at land at Great Grovehurst Farm.
2. excl. hotel site.
3. Losses at Queenborough-Rushenden regeneration area and Crown Quay Lane already within monitored land supply data. For remainder of allocations, a total loss of 12.68 ha of employment land is proposed at Lydbrook Close, Freesia, Milton Pipes, Orbital and 152 Staplehurst Road, The Foundry and at Graveney Road. Assumed loss at 3,500 sq m per hectare.

Our area strategies

4.3.43 Within the context of the two planning areas identified by Section 4.2, our communities most recognise the Borough as three distinct areas – Sittingbourne, the Isle of Sheppey and Faversham, each with their own rural areas. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is considered within the strategy for Faversham.

Our strategy for the Sittingbourne area

4.3.44 The Sittingbourne area covers the main town, the rural local service centres of Teynham, Newington and Iwade and a series of villages lying in countryside between the Borough boundary with the Medway Towns through to Teynham in the east and from the coast of the Swale and Medway to the M2 motorway in the south. Sittingbourne town is the largest centre in the Borough, with a 2011 population of 47,376 and has the main concentration of services, alongside good quality transport choices. Our vision here is of Sittingbourne transformed into an attractive, competitive and prosperous town, with a thriving centre that residents across the Borough are proud to use. To secure this, we consider that the town is suitable for the largest scale of developments proposed in the Plan to underpin and enhance its role as the principal settlement.

4.3.45 Achieving a strong, competitive economy will necessitate improving the availability of employment land at the town, including securing the continued success of one of the Borough’s most enduring economic success stories – the Eurolink business park where planning permission has now been granted for 43,000 sq. m of floorspace to the north east of the town. In addition, 8,000 sq m is identified on land to the south of Kemsley Mill, whilst at Teynham, some 26,840 sq m of rural employment is allocated as part of a mixed use extension to the village. Other 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites' are identified at Ridham and Kemsley, Kent Science Park and Sittingbourne town centre and these too should be the focus of further growth.

4.3.46 The existing land portfolio of committed employment sites is focused at Ridham and Kemsley which is still substantial and suitable for a range of businesses. Although generous in scale, its attractiveness to businesses with larger floorspace requirements looking for immediate access to the strategic road network may quickly diminish the supply. Further land will be identified as part of a Local Plan review once other opportunities for such businesses at Neatscourt on Sheppey have also been exhausted.

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Main Modification 55

4.3.47 Office (B1a/b use class) floorspace needs will also be directed at Sittingbourne, either within the regeneration of central Sittingbourne, or elsewhere within the A249 corridor in accordance with Policy CP1. The Kent Science Park will also be attractive to such businesses in accordance with Policy New Regen 5. whilst any potential for more major expansion will, if prospects for delivery improve, be considered by a Local Plan review.

4.3.48 To ensure the vitality of Sittingbourne town centre, we are looking to create and enhance the range of shops, leisure facilities and public, commercial and voluntary services. Ensuring that these ambitions are advanced will enable retention of local spending by both the existing and new residents we expect to house on allocations in and around the town.

Main Modification 56

4.3.49 The Council is now part of a development partnership with the group 'Spirit of Sittingbourne' which is set to deliver further regeneration in and around the town centre. Economic conditions and changing priorities have necessitated a scaling back and a re-focus of attention on the main town centre and Policy Regen 1 has redefined the boundaries to the regeneration area for a mix of retail, leisure, civic facilities and new housing. Within the town centre boundary, the Council will bring greater flexibility to the consideration of uses at the outer edges of the primary shopping area frontages and in the secondary shopping area frontage to take advantage of opportunities that may arise during this time of economic difficulty for the centre.



Picture 4.3.3 Sittingbourne and Milton Creek

4.3.50 To promote sustainable transport we are focusing on improving the quality of bus journeys, in particular the accessibility and facilities for passengers in central Sittingbourne. Within the town centre, major proposals will provide a central focus for bus and rail services in the vicinity of the station, which has been boosted by the award of £2.5m from the South East Local Economic Partnership local growth fund. Central Sittingbourne regeneration will also contribute to improvements to the highway network and traffic management within the town centre. A bus quality partnership will aim to improve public transport conditions and services at the town and in its centre, alongside additional routes to new developments and better walking and cycling routes.

4.3.51 Some 42% of the working population that live in the area work in Swale, whilst 34% work within the Sittingbourne area.^(4.20) Some 58% work outside the Borough; this is a high figure given the share of employment in the area, but is a feature of its undeveloped retail sector and a product of the Borough's undeveloped finance, office and science sectors. Support will be given to proposals that increase the opportunities for people to live and work locally.

Main Modification 57

4.3.52 Delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes in the area will be from sites able to take advantage of sustainable transport choices and will be from a range of sites within the urban area and as sustainable extensions to the town and the village of Teynham rural local service centres of Teynham, Newington and Iwade. In total, some ~~3,585~~ 4,297 dwellings during the plan period are ~~proposed~~ allocated for the town, whilst ~~468~~ 1,209 are to be ~~built~~ allocated across the rural local service centres of Teynham, Iwade and Newington.

Main Modification 58

4.3.53 At the north-west of the town, ~~where~~ good connections to rail, bus and roads will enable a new community of ~~1,370~~ 1,500 dwellings and ~~3,000 sq m of employment floorspace~~ to be focused there. This location offers excellent connections to the existing urban area and beyond and is located close to Kemsley rail station and to the A249. It has significant potential to provide new schools, major open space and biodiversity enhancements.

Main Modification 59

4.3.54 To the south-west of the town a major allocation of some 560 dwellings is proposed on land around Wises Lane, Brier Road and Cryalls Lane. Located close to local services and the A249, the site offers the opportunity to create open space and biodiversity enhancements alongside a possible new primary school. Two smaller allocations are also made in this vicinity close to Key Street, together providing 60 houses.

Main Modification 60

4.3.55 In addition to the completion of the East Hall Farm development to the north east of the town, a further allocation is made to the east, where, in addition to the extension to Eurolink, 106 new homes can be built. Here we also expect major open space and ecological enhancements to be secured as the means to 'finish' this long standing area of expansion for the town. South of this site, land at Stones Farm is allocated for 550 homes with new open space proposed between the town and Bapchild. ~~Two small allocations are also made in the west of the town which will provide 50 houses between them.~~

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Main Modification 61

4.3.56 Finally, To meet development needs and to avoid the allocation of more sensitive sites in more peripheral locations at Sittingbourne, allocations for ~~423~~ 410 dwellings are identified at nearby Teynham and 134 at Newington where sites well related to the village and close to a range of services and public transport choices have been chosen. At Iwade, a further phase of development at this expanded village is proposed. Here, 603 dwellings will create a high quality development at the edges of the village on its southern, eastern and northern sides. This will be supported by a major green infrastructure initiative which will be required to address potential impacts on the Special Protection Areas. In so doing, this will also bring substantial benefits to residents of both Sittingbourne and Iwade, who via a created 'green chain' of open space and new habitats, will be able to walk or cycle some 3km on land linking the west of the town and the village.

Main Modification 62

4.3.57 These allocations will give rise to a series of improvements needed to the highway network, notably at junctions with the A249 to the west of the town and particularly at its junctions with Key Street and Grovehurst Road. Crucially, beyond limited planned improvements to Junction 5 of the M2, major improvements are now programmed for completion by 2024. ~~with the A249, there will be a need for a longer term scheme that is likely to be of such a scale as to require intervention from the national roads programme. Other options that may create additional road capacity and reconfigure the town's transport network, such as a link between the M2 with the A2, will be a matter for a review of the Local Plan.~~

4.3.58 Although not required to support current local plan growth targets, the final section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to the A2 is needed to improve traffic and air quality conditions in central and eastern areas of the town. It will also enable the full benefits of changes in traffic management in the town centre to be realised. The proposals are identified as a safeguarded 'Area of Search', the alignment for this road being progressed as part of a future Local Plan review.

4.3.59 To promote healthy communities, we are seeking to reduce the relative disparities between the stronger housing market, better environmental quality and lower levels of deprivation within communities to the south of the A2 as opposed to those to the north. Developments will target the reduction in deprivation within communities at Milton Regis, Kemsley and Murston whilst maintaining the qualities of the housing market in the south of the town. This will be brought about by strong built and landscape design, new facilities and, in some locations, new jobs.

4.3.60 Local Plan development proposals will contribute toward a need for 11.1 ha of parks and gardens, 4.5 ha of amenity greenspace, 43.4 ha of natural & semi-natural greenspace, 0.4 ha of space for young people and 0.2 ha of allotments, alongside improvements in the quality of existing sports pitches and play facilities. For indoor sport and recreation, a need has been identified for a facility for indoor sport and recreation has been identified arising from growth within the A249 corridor and we will explore with the developers and Kent County Council the possibility that this could be included within the school campus allocation in the north west of the town. Failing this, other locations within the A249 corridor will be explored.

Main Modification 63

4.3.61 Within new open spaces, significant contributions will be made toward meeting standards of natural and semi natural greenspace and these will be focused at the allocations in central, north-west and east Sittingbourne and at Iwade. At Milton Creek country park we will secure its expansion

northward to achieve additional habitat to support existing wildlife designations. Within the town, there is little urban green space beyond the parks and few street trees. Memorial tree planting in Central Avenue, Bell Road and The Avenue of Remembrance adds value, stature and character to the town, reinforcing its historical connections. We will be looking to development opportunities to safeguard and expand this network.

Main Modification 64

4.3.62 Conservation and enhancement of the natural environment means safeguarding the integrity of European designated wildlife sites. For the Medway and Swale Special Protection Areas (SPA), Milton Creek country park and space proposed at NW Sittingbourne, Iwade and other development sites will be a key part of ensuring that growth does not increase recreational pressures in the wider area by allowing the management of recreation closer to these centres of population. In the centre of the town, we are expecting developments closer to the head of the creek to open up land for improved access to the waterfront, flood management and biodiversity enhancements so that new residents and businesses can rediscover this lost waterway. Where allocations have local impacts upon biodiversity, net gains in biodiversity will still be expected. On larger allocations, such as north west, south west and east Sittingbourne, Stones Farm, Crown Quay Lane, at Iwade and on land to the south of Kemsley Mill, the scale of these gains is expected to be greater. These, together with other applications that may come forward, will require further assessment at the planning applications stage and may require developer contributions to mitigate impacts in accordance with Policy CP7. Each application will utilise the full range of existing and potential natural assets to safeguard the SPA and achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Main Modification 65

4.3.63 There are local landscape designations proposed for the North Kent Marshes, land along the marshland fringes and downland landscapes outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where development allocations are not proposed. To the south of Sittingbourne and the A2, the landscape generally has a low capacity to accommodate change because it is often locally distinct, has a strong rural character and is not strongly influenced by the existing urban edge of Sittingbourne. To the east, there is moderate capacity to accommodate change, with the landscape helping to maintain the separation from Bapchild, whilst the setting of Tonge Conservation Area adds to its sensitivity. However, to the west of the town, on the east side of the A249, the landscape has higher capacity for change, diminishing however to the north as the landscape forms part of the open space between the separate settlements of Iwade and Sittingbourne. The northern edge of the town has a low capacity to accommodate change because of the open space and marshland between urban areas of Sittingbourne and linking to the wider marshes further north.^(4.21) The condition and quality of the local landscape area designations around Sittingbourne will be maintained and, where possible, enhanced. This will also extend to other landscapes in poor condition, such as south of the A2 between Sittingbourne and Newington and Teynham.^(4.22)

4.3.64 Other than the northern edges of Sittingbourne, the town is surrounded by the highest quality agricultural land, part of the belt of such land located north and south of the A2 running from the edge of the Borough in the west through to Teynham (and beyond) in the east. Where such land is not required for development as allocated by this Local Plan, its loss will be strongly resisted.

4.3.65 Strategically, the cumulative impacts of development pressures within the A2 corridor between Sittingbourne and Rainham would have negative impacts upon the character of settlement patterns, whilst increases in the growth of traffic as a result, would have a negative impact upon air quality and the quality of life of local

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

communities. More locally, some villages surrounding Sittingbourne are separated from the town only by a few fields, and important local countryside gaps are identified by Policy DM 25 to ensure their integrity remains. One especially sensitive part of the Borden-Sittingbourne gap is land at Borden Lane and Auckland Drive, proposed as a Local Green Space by Policy DM 18.

4.3.66 Land for a new secondary and primary school is reserved as part of the housing allocation at the north-west of the town. Increased capacity will also be created at existing schools, whilst community adult and youth learning facilities will be incorporated as part of the central Sittingbourne regeneration proposals where we are working hard to secure future provision of further education facilities. Increased capacity will be needed at Sittingbourne and Teynham libraries, whilst extensions and improvements to existing GP surgeries are needed at most locations, with new facilities already planned at The Meads and the centre of the town. Changes to health services will also be needed at Teynham to support the expansion of the village.

Main Modification 66

4.3.67 Parts of the town and the wider A2 corridor experience poor air quality and Air Quality Management Areas have been declared for St. Paul's Street and East Street, Teynham Greenstreet and Newington High Street. Development affecting air quality in these areas will need to be consistent with the local air quality action plans and bring forward innovative mitigation measures.

4.3.68 Conservation and enhancement of the historic environment requires the significance and special interest of the areas historic assets to be properly considered. This is especially so within Sittingbourne where heritage can potentially be overlooked in areas such as its town centre, but there are a wider range of assets needing to be considered in the area including: Roman Watling Street (including the linear High Street, a route of medieval pilgrimage and important coaching stops, the 14th-15th century St. Michael's Church and 18th and early 19th century development); Saxon heritage of Milton Regis and pre-Roman coastal occupation around the coast and creek; industrial heritage of brick, paper and barge making and an emerging significance for first world war invasion defences; and rural area historic farmsteads, the network of rural lanes and drove tracks set within the historic landscapes of the North Kent Marshes, the agricultural plain and Kent Downs.

4.3.69 To the south of the town centre an area of high townscape is proposed by Policy DM 36 due to the concentration of buildings and spaces of historic and architectural interest.

Main Modification 67

Policy ST 5

The Sittingbourne area strategy

Within the Sittingbourne area, the town is the principal urban centre and focus for the main concentration of developments in and adjacent to the town. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Increase the supply and quality of employment provision at 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites' or at allocations, or within the town centre regeneration area, where the need for office floorspace can be additionally met. Unanticipated needs that cannot be met at these or other existing employment sites, will be permitted at locations close to the A249 in accordance with Local Plan policies;
2. Ensure the vitality of Sittingbourne town centre, as appropriate, by:

Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4

- a. enhancing its retail offer and attractiveness to secure local spending and jobs, whilst providing improved spaces, better north-south links and buildings of architectural excellence;
 - b. providing a wider range of services, including transport, education, health, leisure and cultural facilities;
 - c. enhancing secondary areas of the town within West Street, Dover Street, Cockleshell Walk and East Street;
 - d. enhancing local character, heritage and the built environment by either working with the grain and focus of the A2 or aiding the rediscovery of Milton Creek;
 - e. safeguarding and expanding the network of urban green space and street trees; and
 - f. adding to the mix of uses within the town centre to increase its vitality and viability.
3. Support, as required, improved connections to the A249 and M2 from west Sittingbourne and, in the longer term, the completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to the A2;
 4. Provide housing/mixed uses within the Sittingbourne town centre regeneration or at other sites within urban and village confines, or as extensions to settlements where indicated by proposed allocations;
 5. Create, where appropriate, mixed use and healthy communities and address disparities and housing market variances between communities north and south of the A2 through high quality design, new facilities and new jobs as appropriate;
 6. Maintain the individual character and separation of important local countryside gaps around Sittingbourne ~~and to the east of Rainham~~ in accordance with Policy DM25 and within the A2 corridor to the west of the town through to Rainham;
 7. Reduce levels of deprivation in the most deprived wards and facilitate as required, increased capacity in infrastructure and services;
 8. ~~Manage recreational pressures arising from development proposals to safeguard international biodiversity sites and, where possible, achieve net gains in biodiversity and natural/semi-natural greenspace at development sites, especially within allocations to the north west and east of the town and Milton Creek~~ Where possible, achieve net gains in biodiversity and natural/semi-natural greenspace at development sites, especially within allocations to the north-west, south-west and east of the town and at Milton Creek and Iwade;
 9. ~~Include assessments of noise and other disturbances to enable control of any adverse effects on wintering SPA birds on Milton Creek, The Swale SPA and the Swale Ramsar site. In accordance with Policy CP7, minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)~~;
 10. Improve the condition and quality of landscapes in the area, especially those in poor condition and ensure that development is appropriate to landscape character and quality, especially within landscape designations and areas with low or moderate capacity to accommodate change;
 11. Unless allocated by the Local Plan, avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land in accordance with Policy DM31;
 12. Are consistent with local air quality action plans for Newington High Street, Teynham Greenstreet, St. Paul's and East Street;
 13. Conserve and enhance the historic and special interests of the town, coast, its rural area and landscapes; and
 14. Are appropriate to the level of risk from climate change, flooding and coastal change, especially where subject to Coastal change management on Coastal Change Management.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Our strategy for the Isle of Sheppey

4.3.70 The Isle of Sheppey has a 2011 population of 40,291 and is separated from the mainland by the Swale channel. It covers some 93 sq km (36 square miles) of low lying southern marshland and a north facing clay cliff coastline separated by an east-west range of south-facing hills. The main town of Sheerness (population 11,398) and the nearby settlements of Queenborough, Rushenden, Halfway and Minster are situated at the more populated, urbanised, industrialised and better connected western end of the Island. In contrast, Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown are located within its more rural and remote eastern end. Our vision here means that the western end of the Island is the main focus for growth to achieve rejuvenation of the coastal settlements and bring success to the whole of Sheppey, whilst its eastern areas are intended to retain a more remote and tranquil rural and coastal character. Growth proposed through this local plan on the Island is at a lower level to that in the Sittingbourne area.

Main Modification 68

4.3.71 Whilst Sheerness is a secondary urban centre to Sittingbourne, for the Island's inhabitants it is their main centre. For the Local Plan vision to be achieved, Policy ST 3 looks to a 'West Sheppey Triangle' of Sheerness, Queenborough and Rushenden and Minster and Halfway to act collectively to meet the whole of their own and the Island's development needs, as well as contributing to the development targets for the Borough. The settlements within this 'Triangle' will each look to its neighbours to meet certain development needs; not at the expense of their individual integrity and distinctiveness, but as the means to secure sustainable development in the most accessible part of the Island. Further eastward, less accessible settlements, such as Eastchurch, Leysdown and Warden, will accommodate very small scale development aimed at supporting the needs of their home communities. However, larger scales of growth are not supported due to the more peripheral location of these settlements.

4.3.72 Building a strong, competitive economy for Sheppey is especially important. Despite investment in new road infrastructure, its economy is the poorest performing and has borne the brunt of the economic recession in Swale, with the highest levels of unemployment and poor levels of skills. However, the Island remains well placed to build on the investment in road infrastructure made there and has the most significant amount of employment land already committed at Neatscourt in Queenborough and on smaller sites at West Minster. Some of the land at Neatscourt is already coming forward to bring jobs in retail that cannot be situated at Sheerness and a modest extension to the allocation is proposed at its eastern edge. However, the majority of the remainder of the Neatscourt land will be required to meet the need for industrial floorspace on the Island. Consequently, no further allocations for employment are necessary. Elsewhere, evidence suggests continuing potential for a small business centre for business startups in eastern Sheppey to encourage local business formation and diversify local employment, but in the current economic climate, this is likely to be a long term aspiration.^(4.23)

Main Modification 69

4.3.73 ~~Planning permission is also in place for some 177,000 sq m of floorspace for the manufacture of off-shore wind-turbines at the Port of Sheerness – a proposal potentially capable of employing over 2,000 people. Currently no operator is in place for this element of the land supply to be deliverable, but the site is immediately available to support this important area of energy production.~~

Main Modification 70

4.3.74 Policy CP1 identifies the Port of Sheerness as an 'Existing Strategic Employment Site', whilst Policy New Regen 4 identifies both the short and longer term opportunities that could arise as a result of an emerging Port Masterplan it is also identified as a longer term opportunity both for the event that an operator implements the wind turbine planning permission and, potentially, the likelihood that wider regeneration opportunities arise from a Port Masterplan currently being prepared.

4.3.75 Such proposals are likely to be technically and environmentally challenging, but there is longer term potential here for very significant changes that could transform the prospects of Sheerness and Bluetown and those of the Island as a whole. These will be matters for a future review of this Local Plan should matters progress sufficiently.

4.3.76 The Island has a tourism offer unique to Kent, offering a traditional seaside holiday destination and accommodation that gives both facilities and independence on a large number of holiday parks spread across the north coast. Given that outside agriculture, tourism is likely to be the dominant contributor to the Island's rural economy, its good health is crucial. This industry will be supported through flexible policies to allow appropriate sites to extend the holiday season. However, there is potential to modernise and diversify into new areas such as through green tourism linked to the Island's outstanding heritage and wildlife assets.



Picture 4.3.4 The Sheppey Crossing - The Island's Gateway

4.3.77 Ensuring the vitality of Sheerness town centre, is supported by identifying it as an 'Existing Strategic Employment Site' by Policy CP 1. However, we need to tackle its potential decline.^(4.24) This is a centre at risk due to a lack of larger modern units, poor connections between the High Street and the main food store at Bridge Road, a poorer offer in comparison shopping, a lack of higher quality eateries and cafés and a need to improve the physical appearance of parts of the centre. These aspirations present particular challenges, firstly because of the general poor viability of development currently and because not all of its needs can be met from available sites within the centre. The response to these challenges are a mix of short to longer-term measures:

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Main Modification 71

- on-going - the Council will bring flexibility to the consideration of uses at the outer edges of the primary shopping area frontage and in the secondary shopping area frontage, taking advantage of opportunities that may arise;
- short term - securing a heritage lottery bid to fund heritage and townscape enhancements in and around the centre;
- medium term - bringing forward development opportunities on public and private land holdings at Trinity Place. A development brief will enable development to successfully utilise local assets, rationalise existing uses and act as a catalyst for wider change; and
- longer term - reliant upon the potential and wider regenerative benefits of the Port of Sheerness and a heritage-led regeneration plan for Sheerness, the detail of which will be developed through a proposed Heritage Strategy for the Borough.

4.3.78 The potential lack of development sites in the centre to accommodate further retail and leisure uses places pressure upon sites further afield and may be detrimental to its vitality and viability. Proposals for further retail and leisure growth at Local Plan allocations and other locations will therefore be resisted if they are not complementary to Sheerness town centre.

Main Modification 72

4.3.79 Promoting sustainable transport is a challenge for parts of the Island, although the road investments of the last 10 years have far exceeded those anywhere else in the Borough. The Island's well-connected western half has access to both rail and bus services as well as the strategic road network. However, its eastern more rural half is served by a single cul-de-sac road and a fragmented, disjointed and unsuitable assemblage of unmade roads along the northern coast. In the summer tourist season the population of the Island can increase substantially, serving to further highlight these local transport deficiencies. The improvement of existing queuing problems on the A2500 Lower Road approaches to the A249 will largely be a matter for resolved by the County Council to resolve via its transport strategy for Swale, together with land and/or financial contributions made available by housing allocations at Minster. ~~However, housing sites at Thistle Hill, Plover Road and other locations may be expected to contribute financially to its solution.~~

4.3.80 This pattern of transport distribution and the quality of bus services on the Island has had a strong bearing on how development has been distributed with larger scales of growth steered away from settlements such as Eastchurch, Warden and Leysdown. We will work to ensure that growth in the West Sheppey Triangle will produce improvements in sustainable transport. More longer term, there may be an opportunity to enhance the interchange between bus and rail services at Bridge Road in Sheerness.

4.3.81 Of its resident workforce, some 57% work off the Island.^(4.25) The retention of labour locally is the lowest of the three strategy areas and as a result, it is a net exporter of labour. This is a reflection of the poorer availability of local jobs and, to some degree, the levels of new and cheaper housing that has been built.

Main Modification 73

4.3.82 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes on the Island raises complex questions. Much of the new development built over the last 20 years has been focused at Thistle Hill, which still has land available for a considerable number of additional dwellings. This housing was to have been supported by new jobs and previous local **Page 202** jobs, but it is only recently that the land put aside

for employment over 20 years ago at Neatscourt has begun to come forward after a period of economic contractions on Sheppey overall. As a result, the Island exports more of its workforce each day than it receives from elsewhere and these levels have increased between 2001-2011.^(4.26) ~~Other than meeting regeneration objectives at Queenborough-Rushenden, immediate development needs for Sheppey will be sufficient from the Thistle Hill area and other smaller allocations. However, given its population and employment share, recent job creation, the availability of brownfield land and the need to ensure that losses of higher quality agricultural land are minimised elsewhere, the 'West Sheppey Triangle' will need to accommodate further new housing during the plan period.~~ Overall ~~though~~, levels of new housing on the Island are lower than Sittingbourne and lower relative to its population and employment share. ~~However, the Island must meet its housing needs over the longer term (once housing market and viability issues are improved) and contribute toward meeting Borough housing targets, especially given the availability of large amounts of brownfield and lower quality agricultural land there.~~

Main Modification 74

4.3.83 The most important development in the West Sheppey Triangle is at Queenborough and Rushenden. This area, on both banks of Queenborough Creek, is a major opportunity for housing, employment and community regeneration. Development of the housing areas in the master plan are now being spearheaded by the Homes and Communities Agency. It is identified as a proposed regeneration area by Policy Regen 2. The area represents a major opportunity to regenerate the environment by the removal of industry and the creation of new living and working environments that can enhance the waterside locations. It also offers the opportunity to create an improved physical relationship between the separated communities of Queenborough and Rushenden; the latter suffering considerable levels of deprivation. A small allocation is also provided on the fringe of Rushenden on its southern edge.

Main Modification 75

4.3.84 Thistle Hill will continue to be a focus for development for the plan period, with some 473 dwellings estimated as remaining to be developed, together with a further 97 dwellings at the adjacent Plover Road. There are other opportunities for housing development at the southern edge of Halfway and at the western edge of Minster. The most significant of these is for 620 houses on land to the west of Barton Hill Drive where major landscape and open space enhancements will be expected to ensure integration into the wider local landscape, whilst transport improvements to the A2500 Lower Road will also be achieved. A smaller allocation is also proposed at Belgrave Road where 140 dwellings can be integrated into the landscape behind the south facing ridgeline, whilst 20 dwellings are proposed within the current grounds of Minster Academy. A total of 60 dwellings are proposed on number of smaller allocations are made on the fringes of Rushenden on two smaller allocations to the east and north east of Minster and 74 dwellings from within the urban area of Minster-Halfway, mostly as a result of the closure of schools and factory premises public sector premises. To the east of the Island there are also small allocations proposed at Eastchurch and Leysdown. There is also likely to be a continuing range of infill and other small scale opportunities at existing settlements, although the vulnerability of the Island to flooding and landslip will continue to strongly influence where development can take place.

4.3.85 Promoting healthy communities is a particular concern for Island residents where levels of deprivation both on the western and eastern sides of the Island are linked to a range of issues including unemployment, poor health and housing. New development at Queenborough/Rushenden is already bringing benefits in terms of tackling fuel poverty with new investment in retro-fitting, although the benefits

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brought about by wider regeneration both here and at Sheerness are likely to take place over a long period of time. A new primary school, GP surgery and increased library capacity is proposed at Queenborough/Rushenden, whilst increased capacity will be needed at other schools and surgeries on the Island. Local Plan development proposals will contribute toward a need for 5 ha of parks and gardens, 2 ha of amenity greenspace, 19.6 ha of natural & semi-natural greenspace, 0.1 ha of space for young people and 0.1 ha of allotments, alongside improvements in the quality of existing sports pitches and play facilities. A need for indoor sport and recreation has been identified arising from growth within the A249 corridor and this will either be met from sites in this location and/or from the mainland. A number of spaces across the Island are also proposed for designation as Local Green Spaces.

4.3.86 With the West Sheppey Triangle, an important local countryside gap is identified by Policy DM 25 that is intended to maintain the individual character and separation of the settlements and reinforce the flood risk and designated local landscape and wildlife site constraints that limit development opportunities there.

4.3.87 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change is most evident on the Isle of Sheppey. For low-lying areas and the crumbling cliffs of the north coast, our coastal change management (Policy DM 23) identifies the areas and communities most vulnerable to change and sets out our approach to dealing with proposals in areas that are subject to long term risks. Much of the Island is low-lying marshland with large parts of its existing urban areas at or below sea level. Here, proposed developments need to be made safe, whilst across the Island localised surface water problems must not be worsened. Rising sea levels will, in time, present challenges to the extensive coastal and estuarine areas internationally recognised for birds. Through our natural assets and green infrastructure strategy, in partnership with the Greater Thames Nature Improvement Partnership and flood agencies, we will build on the work already done to ensure the sustainable management of this area so that habitats can continue to be created in the face of the long term changes that threaten them.

Main Modification 76

4.3.88 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment represents both challenges and opportunities. The undeveloped nature of much of the Island's landscape is strongly valued by residents, but much of the land outside the marshland environment is not designated. The range of hills between Queenborough and Leysdown have a moderate to low capacity to accommodate change, especially where development is not physically and visually well contained by the landform, or when the open, rising landscape leads to development being prominent in views from lower ground.^(4.27) These same areas are of lower agricultural quality and may be under development pressure as a result. These pressures will be managed through the wider strategic planning of the Borough, but due to the poor condition of the landscape, where development is to be permitted, or as part of landscaped wide based initiatives, the Council will look to enhance landscape structure and condition.^(4.28) This is particularly relevant for areas to the east and north-east of Minster.

4.3.89 The international, national and local landscape, biodiversity and geological interests of designated areas on the coast and estuary will be protected and enhanced through the mechanisms set out by Policy CP7 and through the compensatory land needed as a result of developments at Queenborough and elsewhere. It will also be supported by the actions being brought about and planned to the south and east of the Island by the Environment Agency, Natural England and the RSPB.

Main Modification 77

4.3.90 The Island has some of the lowest quality agricultural land in the Borough and although much is on environmentally designated land, these poorer soils also extend onto the higher ground. However, where pockets of best and most versatile land occur, these shall be protected in accordance with national planning policy.

4.3.91 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment can and has presented tensions with meeting development needs on the Island. It has a greatly understated range of heritage assets brought about by its past of invasion and defence both from man and by natural processes. We will look to safeguard these interests in the face of change, but also recognise that they too will play their part in the future success of the Island both as catalysts for development like tourism and in the long term regeneration proposals in the Port of Sheerness. Across the Island there are a range of heritage assets needing to be considered including: Sheerness Dockyard and the Queenborough Lines; Queenborough; Sheerness town centre and Bluetown; the pioneering role of the east of the Island in the development of aviation; Minster Abbey; Shurland Hall; and the historic landscape of the marshes with its wide-open skies and criss-crossing ditches that have evoked literature and art, as well as places for early settlement, flood and military defence and industry.

Main Modification 78

Policy ST 6

The Isle of Sheppey area strategy

On the Isle of Sheppey, settlements within the West Sheppey Triangle are the focus of development and long-term change. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Bring forward economic development on allocated sites and, as available, at the 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites', including, at the Port of Sheerness, supporting diversification of its activities in accordance with Policy New Regen 4 as a centre for the location of low carbon industries;
2. Support the existing tourism offer or assist its modernisation and diversification into new markets, including eco-tourism;
3. Consolidate and enhance the retail and service role of Sheerness Town Centre, especially where increasing its comparison provision or providing other services that enhance the centre. Where sites cannot be made available in the town centre, planning permission will not be granted for retail and leisure proposals at other sites where these would undermine the vitality of the town centre or prejudice the delivery of industrial floorspace, especially at the 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites' identified by Policy CP1;
4. Bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of the Trinity Road area in accordance with its development brief, alongside wider enhancements across the centre;
5. For larger scales of development, be well located in respect of the most accessible parts of the Island to both car and public transport and, where appropriate, bring forward improvements to the A2500 Lower Road;
6. Regenerate Queenborough/Rushenden on allocated land and at other sites as they become available and in accordance with its Masterplan, or be located at other sites within the built-up area boundaries.
7. ~~Other large scale housing proposals will be supported on suitable sites, provided that an increase in local job opportunities have been achieved;~~

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8. Reduce levels of deprivation in the most deprived wards and facilitate as required, increased capacity in infrastructure and services;
9. Manage the level of risk from climate change, flooding and coastal change, especially where subject to the Policy DM 21 and Policy DM 23;
10. Improve the condition and quality of landscapes in the area, especially those in poor condition and ensure that development is appropriate to landscape character and quality, especially within landscape designations and areas with low or moderate capacity to accommodate change. Additionally, the Council will seek to bring landscape wide initiatives to Sheppey to improve landscape condition;
11. ~~Manage recreational pressures arising from development proposals to safeguard international biodiversity sites and.~~ Where possible, achieve net gains in biodiversity and natural/semi-natural greenspace at development sites and minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including, from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) in accordance with Policy CP7. The Council will, where appropriate, establish the Island as a focus for achieving net gains in biodiversity both through the appropriate mitigation and compensation of projects within the Borough and further afield;
12. Unless allocated by the Local Plan, avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land in accordance with Policy DM31;
13. Maintain the individual character and separation of important local countryside gaps between the settlements of Minster, Halfway, Queenborough and Sheerness in accordance with Policy DM25; and
14. Make effective heritage protection, integration and enhancement a priority, whilst conserving and enhancing the historic and special interests of the town, coast, rural area and landscapes.

Our strategy for the Faversham area and the Kent Downs

4.3.92 Faversham is a small historic market town, with a 2011 population of 19,316, set off the A2 Watling Street within a belt of high quality agricultural land between the North Kent Marshes and the Kent Downs. The eastern part of the area is overlooked by the wooded outcrop of The Blean close to the rural local service centre of Boughton. Across the area is the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

4.3.93 Faversham acts as a focal point for trade and services for a wider rural area that is relatively successful with unemployment levels the lowest in the Borough, a strong housing market and a healthy town centre served by excellent road and rail links.^(4.29) Our vision here is for a different focus and scale of growth - gradual growth, not forced, artificial or overwhelming. Although the town remains the primary focus for growth in the planning area, overall levels are significantly lower than at Sittingbourne and Sheppey. The conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environments of the town and its surrounding rural hinterland (inc. high quality agricultural land) are the primary planning aims. Within this context, the principal considerations for the area are to:

- support Faversham's market town role and reinforce its strong local character, identity and relationship with surrounding settlements; and
- value, secure and strengthen the qualities and distinctive features of the Kent Downs AONB.



Picture 4.3.5 Faversham

4.3.94 Although Faversham is not the Borough's main town or centre, for much of the area's population, their affinity and main point of interaction is with the town itself. Given its key role as a market town and service centre, its individuality is the key to its enduring success, both as a commercial business and retail centre, an attractive residential location and a visitor destination. It needs to consolidate these and its other strengths - its range of services, compact small town character and outstanding built and natural environments - so that it continues to thrive in the face of 21st Century change.

Main Modification 79

4.3.95 Building a strong, competitive economy means safeguarding existing employment sites where there remains the prospect of them being delivered in the longer term. 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites', identified by Policy CP 1, will continue as the focus of providing the majority of the town's industrial employment: to the north-west of the town at the Western Link/Oare Road; the town centre; and at the brewery complex within the centre of the town. We also need to deliver suitable employment allocations of some long standing at Selling Road and at Graveney Road, east of the town. ~~We are also aiming to secure new employment uses at the former Nova Garden Furniture site, east of the town.~~

Main Modification 80

4.3.96 We also need to provide improved quality and choice and address some contraction in the quantity of employment land.^(4.30) This is because former allocations at the Western Link and the nearby Oare gravel workings have been reviewed and re-allocated for housing. Our Employment Land Review 2010 indicated a need for a further 20,000 sq m (5ha) of employment floorspace, with residential development needed to financially improve the prospects for its delivery. Additionally, the town may offer the potential to increase the amount of office provision in the Borough. Land has been allocated for these purposes to meet these needs at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane and at Perry Court Farm to the west of Ashford Road.

4.3.97 The Faversham area's tourism appeal remains important and we will support the continued expansion of its heritage-based focus to further complement activities based around a strong, green

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

countryside and active leisure offer.^(4.31) This potential arises from the location of the area close to the North Kent Marshes and Kent Downs and its connectivity to Europe, London, Canterbury and the wider Kent tourism product. Faversham is within a 'triangle' of interest with Canterbury and Whitstable all providing an accent toward arts and culture, quality shops and a focus of quality for local food and drink. We will safeguard tourism assets, whilst meeting demands for change when compatible with the primary planning aims of conservation and enhancement.

4.3.98 Within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), support will be given to businesses and services conserving and enhancing its natural beauty and contributing to the vibrancy of communities. Both within and outside the AONB, the development of sustainable visitor and tourism facilities will be supported, especially where committing to nationally recognised green accreditation.^(4.32) Supporting a prosperous rural economy will also be strongly assisted by our approach for supporting a healthy market town. We will support appropriate employment opportunities and be especially welcoming to those creating a link between their business and the retail diversity of the town.

4.3.99 Ensuring the vitality of Faversham town centre will require the accommodation of necessary change, whilst not undermining the services, facilities and characteristics that support the town's role and health. The centre is both healthy and attractive with vacancies falling and strengths that include its uniqueness, strong sense of place and the range of independent businesses.^(4.33) This last strength can, for example, be found in the local network of people who buy, sell, produce and supply food. Links like this support local jobs, raise awareness about where and how products are produced, contribute to the character and identity of the area, strengthen demand for local producers and places them at the heart of the local community.^(4.34) We will support proposals that consolidate existing or create more of such links.

4.3.100 The availability of town centre sites are limited for more major retailers, but locating such stores elsewhere means careful consideration of any impacts upon the current role and health of the town centre. Our evidence does not suggest a need to support new floorspace outside the existing centre.^(4.35) Therefore, local plan policies will support a robust approach to maintaining the vitality, role and character of the town centre. Proposals outside the town centre require careful scrutiny of submitted evidence, particularly how the catchment area for the town and proposal is treated. Given the relationship between the town and rural area, we will also consider the impacts of retail stores outside the town centre upon trade retailers, producers and consumer choice within the wider rural area. We will also look at how proposals intend to adapt their business models to the scale and character of the town centre.

Main Modification 81

4.3.101 Promoting sustainable transport will be aided by the area's already excellent rail and road links, but we will look for opportunities to improve bus links from outlying rural areas into nearby towns. The A2 through Ospringe is subject to an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and this will influence the scale and type of growth on the western side of Faversham. Development proposals will be expected to demonstrate a no increase in relevant pollutants and bring forward innovative proposals for mitigation. At the town's junctions with the M2, development may be required to fund interim improvements, pending more major longer term enhancements resulting from the national roads programme.

4.3.102 Of its total resident workforce, 35% work within Swale and 24% in the Faversham area itself. Commuting out of the Borough is the highest level of the three strategy areas at some 65%, the most popular location being Canterbury.^(4.36) This is probably not untypical of a market town with high quality transport links close to a range of employment markets, but it underscores the efforts needed to improve local job opportunities whilst damping down housing demand.

Main Modification 82

4.3.103 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes requires us to balance the popularity and strength of the local housing market with our primary planning aims (these being key reasons as to the strength of the housing market) and the need to manage levels of out commuting. Significant increases in housing in the area are not justified in terms of supporting any social or economic objectives (i.e. high unemployment, poor housing market or town centre, high levels of in-commuting), other than where supporting the viability of employment for increasing levels of affordable housing. However, housing at an appropriate level is required at the town to both support local needs and those of the Borough as a whole. Additionally, development here is likely to be more viable than other areas and better able to support the readily available supply of housing land that is required in Swale. Therefore, at some 1,500 dwellings for the plan period, As a result, housing provision will be is likely to be at levels below housing demand, but still higher than at any time since 2006, but will be contained at levels that Levels above this will not detract from the strategy of the Local Plan.

Main Modification 83

4.3.104 Our main allocations for housing will be some ~~200~~ 260 dwellings to support the employment site at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane, ~~240~~ 250 dwellings on land at the Western Link, some ~~300~~ 330 dwellings at Oare gravel works, together with a series of land releases to the south of the town at Brogdale Road (66 dwellings), Perry Court Farm (370 dwellings) and Preston Fields (217 dwellings) to the east of Ashford Road. These sites have good access to the town and the strategic road network, but development will need to be sensitively planned so as to address the issues arising from their location within the setting of the town. At Graveney Road, the former Nova premises is proposed for redevelopment for some 90 dwellings.

Main Modification 84

4.3.105 Elsewhere, smaller land releases are proposed at Ham Road (35 dwellings) and on three sites at Boughton (39 dwellings). It will remain the case that sites will continue to come forward within the central areas of Faversham, including within the Neighbourhood Plan at Faversham Creek. These will be permitted where they support employment and retail diversity and, in the case of the Neighbourhood Plan, do not undermine its vision, objectives and policies. Elsewhere, some new housing may come forward within neighbourhood plans, such as that being considered for Boughton and Dunkirk. However, it is too early to determine the amount or its appropriateness in terms of conformity with the Local Plan.

Main Modification 85

4.3.106 It will be at Oare gravel works where some of the most significant change will arise that will need to respect the sensitive nature of the site and its surroundings. Existing industrial activity will cease and new housing will be provided on land outside areas at risk from flooding, whilst at risk heritage assets will be brought back into appropriate use. Significant areas are to be put aside for the primary purpose of the management of biodiversity and recreational pressures so as to avoid adverse impacts on the wider North Kent Marshes. Additionally, sites at Perry Court Farm and Preston Fields are expected to make significant contributions to levels of natural green space available at the town.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

4.3.107 Promoting healthy communities will be supported and aided by the area's access to outstanding countryside and its close association with local food production. Proposals for new outlets, farmers' markets and community-supported farms, village shops, community gardening and allotments will therefore be supported.

4.3.108 Despite its outwardly prosperous image, the area has some notable areas of deprivation - Davington and the East Downs Wards. Development in these locations will seek to improve the conditions present. Accommodating the wider growth in the area will require increased capacity at existing schools, libraries and health facilities, as well as in community adult and youth learning. Notably a new primary school will need to be built.

Main Modification 86

4.3.109 Development proposals will provide for major new open space at the Western Link, but more significantly at Oare gravel works, and land east of Love Lane and at Perry Court Farm and Preston Fields. These, and others, will look to meet a need for 3.4 ha of parks and gardens and 1.4 ha of amenity greenspace, 0.1 ha of space for children and young people and 0.1 ha for allotments, alongside improvements in the quality of existing sports pitches and play facilities. Within these spaces, it will be likely that a forecast need for some 13.5 ha of natural and semi natural greenspace can be met.

4.3.110 A specific part of the town where a new mixed use community can be created is Faversham Creek, where a Neighbourhood Plan is proposed by Policy NP 1. Here, the main objectives are the regeneration of key creekside sites and improvements to footpaths and public areas. We will also look to achieve a linked network of spaces and routes between Faversham and Oare Creeks with the Neighbourhood Plan and Oare gravel workings allocation instrumental to this.

4.3.111 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change will focus in the areas north of the town. Around the developed areas of Faversham Creek, a flexible response to the issue of flood risk will be necessary to enable regeneration to take place. Careful siting of development at Oare gravel workings is also necessary to remove risk in accordance with Policy DM 21 and Policy DM 23. As a result, our decisions will consider the longer-term implications and appropriate management response on such matters as sea level rise.

4.3.112 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment is one part of the primary planning aims. The focus of this attention are the internationally and nationally designated coastal and woodland areas together with the nationally and locally protected landscapes in the AONB, The Blean Woodland complex (inc. the lowland farmland in its setting) and the valley spur from the North Downs to the west of the town. To the north of Faversham, the landscape capacity is generally low because of the open and sensitive nature of the marshland landscape and the resultant high visibility. Also at the northern edge, marshland views expose the town's creeks, sailing barges, Abbey Barns, brewery and Parish Church as key landmarks, whilst the separation of Oare from Faversham is a consideration.^(4.37) To the west, the landscape has a low capacity for change because of its high landscape sensitivity and value. To the south and east of Faversham, the landscape has a moderate capacity to accommodate change because it is physically and visually contained. However, the landscapes to the south of the town are sensitive because they may form part of the settings to the Kent Downs AONB, or the town itself, or provide for the individual character and separation of Ospringe.^(4.38) Landscape condition is generally good, but where development is to be permitted, opportunities will be taken to enhance landscape condition, especially in areas to the north west of the town.^(4.39)

4.3.113 Other than the northern edges of Faversham, the town is surrounded by the highest quality agricultural land, part of the belt of such land located north and south of the A2 running from Teynham (and beyond) in the west through to Boughton where land quality gives way to the clay soils of the Blean. Where such land is not required for development as allocated by this Local Plan, its loss will be strongly resisted.

4.3.114 Development close to the Special Protection Area (SPA) raises questions over possible disturbance to birds from allocations at Oare, the Western Link, east of Love Lane and within the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. These, together with other applications that may come forward, will require further assessment at the planning applications stage and may require developer contributions to mitigate impacts in accordance with Policy CP7. Each application will utilise the full range of existing and potential natural assets to safeguard the SPA and achieve a net gain in biodiversity. In some locations, impacts arising from recreation will need to be considered in the context of local wildlife designations.

4.3.115 Within the Kent Downs AONB, proposals will support the adopted management plan. For biodiversity, its distinctive wildlife habitats should remain in favourable, resilient condition, whilst the diversity of landscape character and qualities distinctive to the area will be protected, enhanced and managed. We will support the agricultural industry throughout the rural area, but especially where it supports the qualities of the AONB. We will also support proposals to conserve and enhance woodlands that will enable sustainably managed woodlands and local markets for timber.

4.3.116 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is one of the primary planning aims, reflecting the area's range of historic buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and historic parks and gardens. At Faversham itself, 40% of its urban area within a conservation area, its historic significance and morphology reflects its long time-span of occupation that includes: the waterway used from pre-Roman times; Roman settlement around Watling Street; a Saxon royal estate centre; a 10th century founded market; Cinque Ports membership from the 11th century; the 12th century royal abbey establishment; early prosperity at the creek, Abbey and Court Streets; the 1698 founding of Britain's oldest brewery; the remains of industries including oyster fishing, gunpowder manufacturing and brewing; the 19th century expansion brought by the railways; and the legacy of local charitable giving.

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4.3.117 Whilst its medieval, creek side and maritime cores are the town's outstanding features, its small compact urban form and setting is an important part of its uniqueness. On the town's southern edges, despite the proximity to the London-Canterbury (A2) road, the maritime draw of the town and its industries was sufficient over the years to keep most of the town's development on the north side of the A2. This position, just off the main road network has, perhaps, helped the survival of an outstanding heritage of archaeological sites, old wharves, historic buildings, streets and other spaces.^(4.40) This urban form and its setting is unique in terms of A2 towns in Kent, but is under pressure as the town seeks to expand to meet development needs. As the town derives some of its heritage significance from this morphology, the Council and English Heritage consider that it is desirable to preserve those aspects that have contributed to it, including undeveloped sites outside the existing town confines within the area forming the setting of the town where essential development needs to be provided at the town, the Council will avoid the most sensitive locations and ensure that within other development proposals, those aspects that contribute to the town's heritage significance will be preserved as far as possible.

4.3.118 Within the Kent Downs AONB, the principal components of the historic character of the historic landscape, the field patterns, hedgerows, droveways, woodlands and parklands should be conserved and enhanced in accordance with its designated landscape status. Across the area, the rich heritage of buildings, settlements, farmsteads and sites that characterise the historic and cultural fabric of the rural areas will be maintained and supported by our policies for tourism, rural housing and the economy.

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

Main Modification 88

Policy ST 7

The Faversham area and Kent Downs Strategy

Within the Faversham area, the conservation and enhancement of the historic and natural environment are the primary planning aims. Decisions will strengthen the viability of Faversham or its rural communities and support their shared social, economic and cultural links. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Maintain existing land and buildings in employment use, especially at 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites' or bring forward industrial development at Local Plan allocations;
2. Safeguard, diversify or expand the tourism focus of the area through appropriate proposals with an environmental, countryside or active leisure emphasis;
3. Maintain or enhance the range of town centre services and facilities to secure Faversham's role and functioning and support its vitality and its uniqueness, strong sense of place and the range of independent retailers;
4. Within rural settlements, support local economies, especially where maintaining or enhancing the countryside, or helping to maintain or enhance services and facilities;
5. Provide appropriate employment opportunities within the rural area, especially where creating supply or production links with Faversham or supporting the character of the AONB and its economy;
6. Develop public transport networks which meet the needs of both the market town and its surrounding rural area;
7. Provide housing at allocations and, as appropriate, within Neighbourhood Plans or other appropriate locations, where the role and character of Faversham and its rural communities can be maintained or enhanced and where levels of out-commuting would not be exacerbated;
8. Reduce levels of deprivation in the most deprived wards and facilitate as required, increased capacity in infrastructure and services;
9. Maintain the individual character and separation of Oare and Ospringe from Faversham;
10. Accord with Policy NP1 and the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan, enhancing this locality as a tourist hub and a place of special interest and activity, with strong associations with the water and improved links to the town centre;
11. Address the risks of flooding and forecast climate and coastal change, particularly around the coast and at Faversham and Oare Creeks, in accordance with Policies DM21 and DM23;
12. Ensure the landscape qualities and distinctive features of the Kent Downs AONB remain valued, secure and strengthened, alongside the local landscape designations within and around the North Kent Marshes, The Blean and North Downs. Improve the condition and quality of landscapes in the area, especially those in poor condition and ensure that development is appropriate to landscape character and quality, especially within areas with low or moderate capacity to accommodate change;
13. Unless allocated by the Local Plan, avoid the loss of high quality agricultural land in accordance with Policy DM31;
14. Are consistent with local air quality action plans for Ospringe and bring forward innovative proposals for mitigation of adverse impacts;
15. Where possible, achieve net gains in biodiversity and natural/semi-natural greenspace at development sites and minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including, from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) in accordance with Policy CP7; Manage recreational pressures arising from development proposals to safeguard international biodiversity sites and achieve net gains in biodiversity and

~~natural/semi-natural greenspace at development sites, especially within allocations to the west, north west and east of the town, together with the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan area; and~~

16. Protect and enhance the diversity, character, appearance and setting of the area's historic assets. When considering development proposals at undeveloped sites outside Faversham, preserve those aspects of the town's morphology that contribute to its significance, including its small scale and compact urban form, surrounding countryside and its rural approaches ~~and its position standing adjacent to the A2 rather than astride it.~~

4 Setting out our local plan strategy for Swale

End Notes

- 4.1 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.5
- 4.2 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.29
- 4.3 2011 Census
- 4.4 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 8.33
- 4.5 Swale Retail and Town centres Study 2010. CBRE for SBC. Para. 5.16
- 4.6 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 5.35
- 4.7 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Survey 2001. Kent County Council
- 4.8 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 17
- 4.9 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 8.53
- 4.10 Baseline study of the current information on birds and habitats (NE Commissioned Report 082: What do we know about the birds and habitats of the North Kent marshes?); bird disturbance report (Bird Disturbance Study North Kent 2010/2011); visitor Survey (North Kent Visitor Survey Results, Sept 2011); concluding report summarising the results (Phase 1 Bird Disturbance Report, July 2012)
- 4.11 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 8.52
- 4.12 Swale Open Space Strategy: PPG17 Audit & Assessment 2009 - 2014 and Facilities Planning Model. Local Assessment Report for SBC 2012. Swimming Pool, Sports Hall and Artificial Grass Pitch Provision
- 4.13 Sport England and the Council have not updated the Facilities Planning Model as a result of reductions in development proposed for the draft 2013 Local Plan. Provision for indoor sports facilities should therefore be regarded as indicative
- 4.14 Environment Agency, North Kent and Swale Catchment Abstraction Strategy 2013, Water resource reliability expressed as percentage of time available, whilst Chapter 2 highlights the issue of scarcity of water resources in the North Kent and Swale catchment
- 4.15 South East Water published their WRMP for 2015-2040 in June 2014 while Southern Water's WRMP for 2015-2040 was published in October 2014
- 4.16 SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013. NLP for SBC. Paras 4.31-32
- 4.17 2009 Cambridge Model, Kent Hotel Development Hotspots Report 2011
- 4.18 2011 Census
- 4.19 SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013, NLP for SBC paras 4.32
- 4.20 2011 Census
- 4.21 Fig 2 and Pages 100-101 Swale Urban Extensions Capacity Study 2010
- 4.22 Swale Landscape and Biodiversity Assessment 2010
- 4.23 Swale Employment Land review 2010 and SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.32
- 4.24 Swale Retail and Town Centres Study 2010
- 4.25 2011 Census
- 4.26 Comparison between Census 2001-2011
- 4.27 Fig 2 and Pages 100-101 Swale Urban Extensions Capacity Study 2010
- 4.28 Swale Landscape and Biodiversity Assessment 2010
- 4.29 Swale Retail and Town Centre Study 2010. CBRE for SBC
- 4.30 Swale Employment Land review 2010 and SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 4.32
- 4.31 Faversham Tourism Survey Faversham Enterprise Partnership 2010
- 4.32 Policy VC7 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2014-2019
- 4.33 Swale Retail and Town Centre Study 2010. CBRE for SBC. Para. 2.78
- 4.34 From field to fork: Faversham May 2012. CPRE
- 4.35 Swale Retail and Town Centre Study 2010. CBRE for SBC. Para.5.13
- 4.36 2011 Census
- 4.37 Faversham Conservation Area Appraisal 2004. SBC. Paras.2.19-20, 4.40
- 4.38 Fig 2 and Pages 100-101 Swale Urban Extensions Capacity Study 2010
- 4.39 Swale Landscape and Biodiversity Assessment 2010
- 4.40 Faversham Conservation Area Appraisal 2004. SBC. Para. 1.6

5 Core planning policies

Introduction

5.0.1 The Core Policies in this chapter are intended to ensure joined up consideration, across the themes covered, to matters of critical importance to the success of the Local Plan. They apply to all development proposals.

5.1 Building a strong, competitive economy

5.1.1 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) stresses the Government's commitment to securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity, building on the country's inherent strengths, and meeting the twin challenges of global competition and of a low carbon future.^(5.1) The planning system is expected to do everything it can to support sustainable economic growth.

5.1.2 The creation of the [South East Local Enterprise Partnership](#) (SELEP) in April 2011 includes councils and businesses from Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex. Their aim is to 'create the most enterprising economy in England'. To promote steady, sustained economic growth over the next two decades, the LEP has four objectives:

- secure the growth of the Thames Gateway;
- promote investment in coastal communities;
- strengthen the rural economy; and
- strengthen the competitive advantage of strategic growth locations.

5.1.3 The [Kent Regeneration Framework](#) (2009–2020) is the County Council's overarching assessment of the opportunities and challenges facing Kent over the next ten years. It advocates sustainable regeneration within which businesses can grow and flourish and with a workforce equipped with the skills and learning it needs. The Framework identifies Kent Thames Gateway as a key driver of growth for the county with Swale needing to deliver transformational projects and economic regeneration to assist areas of deprivation.



Picture 5.1.1 Distribution hub at Ridham/Kemsley

5.1.4 Prior to the recession our economy was growing strongly, dominated by manufacturing and a number of small niche sectors. We are a net exporter of labour mainly to London and adjoining areas of Kent, with some weaknesses in the local labour market, including relatively high unemployment levels, below average skills and lower earnings. Our rates of new business formation are also currently lower than the regional and county averages and have declined more rapidly during the recession. Most of our stock of employment space comprises industrial uses, with very modest amounts of office accommodation, although this has grown in recent years.

5.1.5 Policy CP 1 supports the goals and objectives of the LEP to strengthen economic development in the Borough. It supports our Local Plan Strategy and addresses the issues highlighted by the [Swale Employment Land Review](#) (2010), [SHMA Update and Development Needs](#) (2013), [Employment land needs in Swale 2014-2031](#) (2015) and [Retail and Town Centre Study](#) (2010) to produce a near comprehensive employment land portfolio to meet needs over the Plan period.

5 Core planning policies

5.1.6 Whilst acknowledging our current stock of existing employment sites and commitments, Policy CP1 supports the need to address qualitative and broad needs at certain parts of the Borough.^(5.2) It supports our future potential growth sectors (see Statement 2^(5.3)) and the needs of:

- the manufacturing sub-sectors and their underlying strengths in certain specialist sectors;
- the retail sector;
- the visitor economy (recreation, accommodation and food services);
- growth focused on the natural environment and heritage offer; and
- expansion proposals in the pharmaceutical sector.

5.1.7 Policy CP 1 confirms and encourages the appropriate development of the following 'Existing Strategic Employment Locations', as identified by the area strategies and within Regeneration and town centre policies as appropriate, at:

- Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Faversham town centres;
- Ridham, Kemsley, Eurolink and the Kent Science Park in the Sittingbourne area;
- Neatscourt and the Port of Sheerness on the Isle of Sheppey; and
- North west Faversham and at the Brewery complex toward the centre of the town.

Statement 2

Swale's future potential growth sectors

- General and advanced manufacturing, engineering,
- Distribution;
- Agriculture/ forestry/woodland;
- Financial/business services,
- Environmental technologies (low carbon sector);
- Healthcare/biotechnology;
- ICT, media/telecommunications;
- Construction:
- Retail/leisure, cultural activities, tourism, hotels and catering and boat repair.

5.1.8 Future growth depends on attracting inward investment, developing the sectors where there are already established strengths and stimulating growth of smaller scale home-grown firms (inc. creating a positive climate to encourage school and higher education leavers to base new businesses in Swale). We also need to diversify into higher value manufacturing, logistics and distribution and the environmental sectors, all of which offer potential that can build on the area's strengths.

5.1.9 Agriculture is also an important economic sector and the industry needs to keep pace with the changing context brought about by climate change, food security, global markets, major food retailers and changing legislation/guidance.^(5.4)

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Statement 3

The importance of Swale's agricultural sector

- Swale has 37,000 ha of land; of which 23,000 ha is farmed and approximately 15,000 ha (around 70%) is classified as best and most versatile (BMV).
- For arable farming (e.g. winter wheat), the output from BMV land is estimated at £900 – £1,300 per ha. The estimated gross margins are between £4.9 and £9.5 million.
- For soft fruits, the output from BMV land is estimated at £43,000 – £109,000 per ha. The estimated gross margins are between £1.5 and £66 million.
- These Gross margins are similar (but not equivalent) to Gross Value Added (GVA), and are worth between 0.3% and 3% of the £2 billion of GVA in Swale.
- It is estimated that there are between 1,250 and 2,500 FTE jobs in agriculture and food and drink manufacture in Swale. This represents approximately 3 - 5% of the 47,400 FTE jobs in Swale.
- BMV can also provide other 'ecosystem services' benefits such as flood water storage, ecological and landscape values

Value of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land in Swale October 2015. Eftec for Swale Borough Council

5.1.10 As a Borough with a woodland resource, there is also potential employment through its better management, both for woodland products and as a renewable energy source.^(5.5)

5.1.11 Policy CP1 safeguards for future use the employment potential of existing land or buildings, but acknowledges the desirability of releasing older, poorer performing industrial sites to other uses. This safeguarding includes both land or buildings in current employment use or allocation, land where planning permission has expired or other vacant land and premises where their potential for employment remains relevant. For sites not considered suitable or viable, the Council must be convinced that evidence points to wider, fundamental and deep seated structural problems with the site, rather than shorter term difficulties caused by a particular economic context. This is important where allocations and committed employment sites have been made on the basis of a particular economic and/or locational need to serve the plan period.

5.1.12 Given the outstanding environment in Swale, Policy CP1 seeks to expand our potential for sustainable rural tourism to benefit local communities and raise awareness and support for conservation of the environment. There is an important link between the quality of environment (both historic and new) and economic development, in particular the area's ability to attract investment, jobs and population. Swale's historic environment has the potential to play a significant role in supporting enterprise, especially in helping under-performing parts of Swale to transform themselves, such as at Sittingbourne town centre and Sheerness. Also important is our current portfolio of principal tourism assets (see Statement 4), with Policy CP1 supporting their growth and, if necessary, their protection from inappropriate development proposals.

5 Core planning policies

Statement 4

Swale's principal tourism assets and potential

- Coast - beaches, cliffs, lively seaside resorts including holiday parks and amusements, wild landscapes and marshes, Saxon Shore Way, Church Marshes, bird life and quiet sailing waters. The Isle of Sheppey is unique within Kent.
- Countryside - downland, valleys, woodlands, orchards, parkland, narrow lanes, picturesque villages and houses and a network of foot and cycle paths (including a National Cycle Route) and bridleways.
- Built heritage - a great range of heritage assets reflecting its Roman and Medieval legacy, its naval and maritime history and its industrial and agricultural past.
- Fruit Heritage - the National Fruit Collection, and 'fruit' celebrations.
- Festivals – such as the Faversham International Hop Festival.
- Market Town of Faversham. A small historic Cinque Port town, lively town centre, unexploited creek and marshland, a multi-faceted town with links to the countryside.
- Unspoilt villages.
- Industrial heritage - gunpowder, naval, brewing, aviation, 'defence of the realm', sailing barges, brick and paper-making.
- Naval and aviation history, sustainable rural tourism e.g. walking/cycling, other outdoor activities and sustainable accommodation at Faversham and Sheerness
- Food and drink - high quality restaurants, pubs and local food suppliers.
- Accommodation - small number of hotels, pubs with rooms, guest houses and bed and breakfast establishments.



Picture 5.1.2 Leysdown beach

5.1.13 For our town centres and the retail and leisure sectors, our Local Plan Strategy indicates that there is a need for further comparison (non-food) floorspace to help claw back expenditure lost to other centres.

5.1.14 We cannot anticipate every business opportunity. Policy CP1 indicates a series of 'Priority Locations' where, when demonstrated that an existing employment location or allocation is unsuitable or unavailable for the development in question, appropriate sites will be considered. For such proposals, the Local Plan Strategy and environmental quality should not be compromised. The 'Priority Locations' are:

- the extension of an existing employment site;
- where benefits to deprived communities can be achieved;
- well related to either the A249, A2, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road or A299 Thanet Way; and
- the re-use of heritage assets or where delivering significant benefits to the conservation of landscape or biodiversity.

5.1.15 Some of our businesses will be at the front line of climate change, either by being potentially affected by future natural processes or offering potential for the Borough to be a focus for low carbon technologies. Policy CP1 supports improved resilience and new business opportunities.

5.1.16 Swale is a net exporter of labour, with a net outflow of 10,293 working commuters amounting to 16% of the resident workforce.^(5.6) Whilst reducing the level of out-commuting will be challenging, Policy CP1 is supportive of proposals able to realistically deliver a reduction in commuting out of the Borough, especially for those sectors currently the focus of out-commuting.

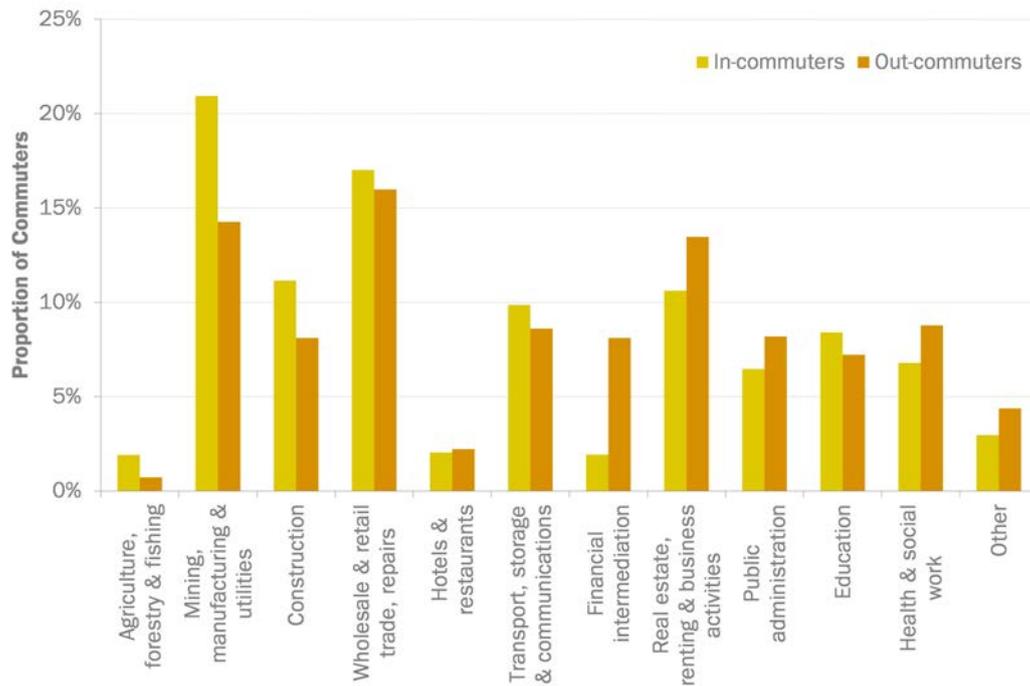


Figure 5.1.1 Swale commuting flows by sector

5.1.17 Unemployment benefit levels in Swale in July 2014 were about 2.4%, above the south east average of 1.4%.^(5.7) Against the Kent average, Swale has a comparable economic activity rate, but a lower proportion of workers at higher skill levels and below average earnings.^(5.8) Improving the skills performance of the local labour supply is needed. Policy CP1 supports the use of development funding though the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy or S106 agreements to support job training.

5.1.18 High speed Internet connectivity is important to encourage economic growth, especially in the rural areas. All new development will be required to provide for access to this technology regardless of location.

Policy CP 1

Building a strong, competitive economy

Actions by public, private and voluntary sectors shall work towards the delivery of the Local Plan economic strategy. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Stabilise losses of jobs and/or floorspace within the manufacturing sector or exploit competitive strengths in the Swale economy including uplifting sectors related to the visitor economy and expansion of the pharmaceutical and science sectors;
2. Bring forward an increase in homegrown business creation and inward investment, including those able to encourage younger people to retain their skills within Swale;
3. Secure additional non-food retail/leisure growth, taking account of committed schemes and existing centres and provide flexibility over uses in town centres to enable them to respond to the challenges they face;
4. Encourage educational facilities or an expansion of vocational learning, developing links between institutions and the private sector or work-based learning at key locations;
5. Contribute to the delivery of a comprehensive land portfolio for the Borough by:
 - a. safeguarding and maximising the potential of identified 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites';
 - b. bringing forward the stock of existing designated employment sites for industrial use; and

5 Core planning policies

- c. addressing qualitative issues with new provision at Local Plan allocations to support established industrial markets, additional office space, the release of poorer quality locations and the broader upgrade of the supply; or
 - d. managing existing and future employment potential by upgrading older industrial areas.
6. Be supported when including sectors that are under-represented in Swale that may potentially enable a reduction in commuting out of the Borough;
 7. Avoid proposals that would result in the diminishing of existing employment sites and allocations where appropriately located and suitable, viable for users under normally functioning economic conditions or required to meet the identified needs for the plan period;
 8. Address future challenges to the agricultural and woodland/forestry industries with sustainable and appropriate proposals to create new markets and greater resilience;
 9. Safeguard or enhance Swale's 'Principal Tourism Assets' and consolidate or widen the Borough's tourism potential, particularly where embracing principles of sustainable tourism;
 10. Focus large scales of development where they utilise the strategic and primary road networks;
 11. Support sectors attractive to the local population who would otherwise out-commute for work;
 12. Facilitate the delivery of digital infrastructure, including access to high speed Internet connectivity from all new developments;
 13. Create resilience in existing businesses to forecast changes in flood risk, climate change and natural processes or lead to an expansion of businesses in the low carbon sectors; or
 14. Provided the Local Plan strategy is not significantly compromised and sites cannot be found within criterion 5, meet unanticipated needs on appropriate sites within one or more of the following 'Priority Locations':
 - a. the extension of an existing employment site;
 - b. where benefits to deprived communities can be achieved;
 - c. sites well related to the A249, A2, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road or A299 Thanet Way; or
 - d. re-use of heritage assets or where delivering significant benefits to the conservation of landscape or biodiversity.

5.2 Promoting sustainable transport

5.2.1 Transportation will play a key role in the delivery of the Local Plan strategy. An efficient transport network which has good connectivity with the regional and national network is vital in helping the Borough to realise its economic potential. At the local level, easy access to employment, education, shops, services and facilities is important in creating inclusive and prosperous communities. The transport network needs to strike a balance between providing adequate capacity for current and future residents and business needs, whilst minimising any negative environmental, social and health impacts. This can be achieved through improvements to the capacity of the highway network and through provision of an integrated sustainable transport network.

5.2.2 This Core Policy therefore deals with matters relating to public and private modes of transport, cycling and walking; reducing the need to travel; and the infrastructure needed for efficient transport operation.

5.2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) continues the core principle of sustainable development, through means such as using technology to reduce the need to travel, using planning policies and decisions to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest use of public transport, walking and cycling and focusing significant developments in areas which are or can be made sustainable. Only if the residual cumulative impacts of development are 'severe' when all of these policy measures have been explored and exhausted, is there a reason to prevent development on transport grounds. 'Severe' in terms of the NPPF is not defined.



Picture 5.2.1 Modern bus in Sittingbourne High Street

5.2.4 Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating development and also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. It is nevertheless recognised that different policies and measures will be needed in different communities and that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

5.2.5 Key national objectives for transport policy are therefore:

- working with relevant transport providers and neighbouring authorities to develop strategies for viable infrastructure necessary (including for the growth of ports) to support sustainable development;
- ensuring that opportunities for sustainable transport have been taken up to minimise the need for major new transport infrastructure to support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and to reduce congestion;
- ensuring that the necessary improvements can be undertaken as far as possible within the transport network and are cost effective at mitigating the significant impacts of development;
- achieving safe and suitable access to sites for all people and goods; and
- designing developments to prioritise pedestrian and cycle access and give access to high quality public transport facilities.

5.2.6 The NPPF also gives the option for local planning authorities to develop their own vehicle parking standards. Currently, Swale uses Kent County Council standards for development management, which are intended to be reviewed post adoption of the Local Plan. The exception to this is the work in hand for rationalisation of car parking as part of the Sittingbourne town centre regeneration plans.

5.2.7 The Department for Transport Circular 02/2013: [Strategic Road Network and the delivery of sustainable development](#) (September 2013) relates specifically to the impact of proposed development on the strategic road network (SRN) which is operated, maintained and improved by Highways England on behalf of the Department for Transport. The SRN play an important part in enabling and sustaining economic prosperity as part of wider sustainable development objectives, with Highways England ensuring the continued safe operation of the network.

5.2.8 For the SRN, development proposals are likely to be acceptable if they can be accommodated within the existing capacity of a section (or link or key junction) of the relevant part of the network; or they do not increase the demand for use of that section which is already operating over capacity, taking account of any mitigation and/ or capacity enhancement measures which may be proposed. Generally, development should only be prevented or refused where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Safety of the SRN is the key consideration for judging impact of proposed development.

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5.2.9 The key issues for the Local Plan are to promote development patterns which minimise the need to travel; encourages the use of sustainable means of transport and minimises journey lengths for everyday activities such as work, education, shopping and leisure. Capacity on the SRN is limited and additions are difficult, costly and time consuming, so these measures are integral to the local plan approach to reducing the potential for congestion on the SRN.

5.2.10 The Circular states that capacity enhancements and infrastructure necessary to deliver strategic growth should be identified through the Local Plan. Where this is identified as necessary, Highways England will work with delivery agencies to assess the suitability, viability and deliverability of such proposals (including funding arrangements). If the need and deliverability is confirmed when balanced against other environmental and practical considerations, it may be considered for inclusion in the Highways England forward programme of works.

5.2.11 The objectives of the Circular are reflected throughout the Local Plan in terms of its overall development strategy, land allocations and general policies for guiding design, layout and access, they are supported by and influence complementary plans, projects and funding programmes of the transport providers, highway authorities and the Local Economic Partnership (for Kent, Essex and East Sussex).

5.2.12 The following paragraphs examine the Swale transport network and the current approach to local transport strategies and plans which the Council has been working on in partnership with the various transport agencies.

Swale Transport Network

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5.2.13 The SRN within Swale consists of the M2 (with junctions 5, 6 and 7 serving the Borough) and the A249 corridor from M2/J5 north to Sheerness. The motorway runs east - west through the Borough and carries international as well as national and local traffic. It is designated as part of the Trans European Transport network. Junction 5 is already operating over capacity in peak hours and development within Swale inevitably affects and is in turn affected by this. Faversham is served by M2 Junctions 6 and 7. Junction 7 also serves Canterbury and the Thanet towns and is nearing capacity at peak times, and will be further affected by current development proposals at Faversham and major new development being pursued through the adjacent Canterbury City Council, Thanet and Dover Local Plans. The issues with the SRN capacity in the Swale area ~~are proving intractable and have not yet attracted the level of public funding needed to mitigate the issues and unblock capacity for further growth and investment in the area beyond the short term~~ remain significant and although public funding has now been confirmed for M2/J5, this will not commence until 2019-20 at the earliest and is unlikely to be completed until 2024. Junctions linking the local network to the SRN, particularly within the A249 corridor, may also at capacity and will need public funding support to mitigate the issues and provide capacity to support planned growth and further investment in the area.

5.2.14 The local road network is overseen and maintained by Kent County Council. Whilst there are local issues with peak time congestion and air quality issues and traffic domination of the public realm, particularly at Sittingbourne Town Centre, these have been eased by the opening of the Milton Creek section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (SNRR).

5.2.15 During 2011, Swale saw the completion of two major schemes including the Milton Creek section of the SNRR which now provides a direct link from the A249 to the Eurolink Business Estate. This has reduced journey times for freight traffic and reduced congestion in Sittingbourne Town Centre, which enables further regeneration and traffic calming there.

5.2.16 The Queenborough and Rushenden Relief Road was also completed and provides a link to the A249 on Sheppey and opens up large new regeneration in the Queenborough and Rushenden

area, not least of which are expected new developments at Neatscourt, and in the longer term, expansion at the Port of Sheerness. This complements the major benefit of the A249 Sheppey Crossing to the Island opened in 2006. However, these schemes have highlighted a remaining local pinch point at the junction of Barton Hill Drive/ Lower Road, Minster, where replacement of the existing traffic signals with a roundabout would relieve local congestion and facilitate better access to the eastern side of Sheppey.

5.2.17 A Quality Bus Partnership has been established and is led by Kent County Council Highways, with regular meetings and input from bus operators in the area and Swale Borough Council. This has the objectives of improving services and expanding use of buses in the Borough and liaison on the progress and proposals of the Local Plan so that bus provision is made from the earliest stages of new development.

5.2.18 High speed domestic rail services have reduced journey times to central London (St Pancras, twice hourly service) to 53 minutes from Sittingbourne and 62 minutes from Faversham. These services offer easy access to central London employment opportunities via a sustainable mode of transport. There is also a good (twice hourly) service through the Borough to London Victoria, with stations at Faversham, Teynham, Sittingbourne, Newington and a branch line to Sheerness, which will have direct services to London Victoria in the morning and evening peaks operating from January 2015.

5.2.19 The preliminary commuting statistics from the 2011 Census are difficult to compare directly with the 2001 results due to the difference in the way people working at home or with no fixed workplace have been counted. Although there has been an increase in the numbers of people both living and working in the Borough, its degree of self-containment declined in percentage terms between 2001-2011. The percentages of those Swale workers commuting to all other Kent districts has though remained fairly constant. The most popular Kent destinations continue to be Medway, Canterbury and Maidstone. London continues to be the most popular commuting destination, although showing only a small increase since 2001.

5.2.20 The way in which people access work does seem to be showing increased reliance on car travel, with an increase from 60% to 70% using the car to get to work. The exception appears to be London commuting, where the proportion driving has remained fairly constant at 38%, train at 46% and bus at 11%.

Car commuting journeys to Maidstone and Medway increased in both absolute numbers and as a percentage of journeys. Commuting to Canterbury from Swale increased in terms of absolute numbers, but the proportion of those made as car journeys stayed at around 77% with a slight increase in train use.

5.2.21 These results perhaps also reflect the 2011 Census results for car ownership in Swale. The proportion of households with one or more cars available has increased to just under 80%, which is an increase on 2001 figures and now makes Swale identical to the Kent average. Kent car ownership as a whole is higher than the national average (80% of households compared with 74% nationally). The rate of increase in car ownership in Swale has been twice the national rate of increase over this period.

5.2.22 The commuting data therefore suggests that there has been an increase in out commuting, particularly by car, to other Kent districts, with Medway, Maidstone and Canterbury being the most popular destinations. London commuting has risen only slightly, and whilst car commuting has also increased in absolute terms on this route, train and bus use have maintained their proportionate share of commuters. These figures therefore suggest increasing pressure on the strategic and interurban road network.

Transport Strategies and Plans in Swale

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5.2.23 The Highways Agency embarked on developing their Route Based Strategy covering the Kent SRN in 2013 and the Council have worked in cooperation with them and other Kent authorities and stakeholders in collating evidence around the SRN routes through Kent and Medway. These will form the basis of an evidence led approach to identifying investment needs on the SRN and subsequently inform the allocation of funding prioritisation for schemes. In the initial evidence summary,

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~~the M2 and Swale junctions, especially M2/J5 have emerged as scoring poorly in terms of capacity, safety and environmental issues. It is not yet clear where resources will be prioritised across the country. Following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement announcements of 2014, Highways England published their Delivery Plan 2015-2020 (September 2015), which includes major improvement to the M2/J5 junction within the national roads programme. However, even if Swale is successful, it is highly unlikely that the the M2/J5 improvement will not be completed until 2024 will be the subject of delivery on the ground of any major improvement scheme within the first five years of the Local Plan, due to the lead in time needed for the design and scale of construction work. A start date of 2019-20 has been estimated.~~

5.2.24 Kent County Council (KCC), as local transport authority, has produced a 20 year transport delivery plan Growth without Gridlock (originally published in 2010 and currently being updated). This sets out the strategic transport priorities for Kent and Medway over the next 20 years and is to be supported by a local transport strategy for Swale. Swale is recognised in Growth without Gridlock in Kent and Medway as part of the Kent Thames Gateway growth area which has a key role in the prospects for economic growth and regeneration in this area, particularly at Sittingbourne and Sheerness Port.

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5.2.25 Key schemes identified to address the accessibility, connectivity and capacity issues in Swale which present challenges for the delivery of growth include:

- Sittingbourne Central Area Regeneration transport interventions;
- the extension of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to the A2 (Bapchild link) to the east of the town;
- the A249 at Grovehurst junction;
- addressing capacity of M2/Junction 5 and M2/Junction 7 (also identified as a cause for concern by Highways England in HA Route Based Strategy evidence submission);
- provision of a roundabout at Lower Road/ Barton Hill Drive A2500 to facilitate better access to eastern Sheppey;
- improved access to Kent Science Park; and
- ~~for the longer term, the opportunity of a new A2/M2 link and new motorway junction to the east of the town, which could offer new highway capacity and support major expansion of the Kent Science Park.~~

5.2.26 The Kent Local Transport Plan (April 2011) (LTP) sets out Kent County Council's priority areas for transport interventions and investment over a 5 year period. These priorities are grouped under the five main themes of :

- Growth without Gridlock
- A Safer and Healthier County
- Supporting Independence
- Tackling a Changing Climate
- Enjoying Life in Kent

5.2.27 The current edition focuses on the period 2011 - 2016 and notes that the modelling work undertaken for this Local Plan was incomplete at the time the LTP was finalised.

5.2.28 It is expected that the LTP will be updated; it is no longer a funding bidding document. Instead, new regional administration of funding streams in the context of the new Local Enterprise Partnership (for Essex, Kent and East Sussex, Thurrock, Medway and Southend on Sea) are currently the mechanism under which bidding and prioritising for transport schemes has taken place. Funding for the first tranche

payments of Local Growth Funding was heavily oversubscribed and the only Swale infrastructure scheme to receive support was the Central Sittingbourne regeneration proposals. Round 3 LGF bidding submissions will take place in 2016 and the Council will be working with Kent County Council to prioritise bids which support the delivery of the Local Plan Strategy, with particular emphasis on the A249 corridor junctions and the A2500 Lower Road / Barton Hill Drive junction improvements.

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5.2.29 The Council will seek to plug significant gaps in transport infrastructure funding through use of the Community Infrastructure Levy, ~~and the pooling of Section 278 contributions for more strategic scale projects and will~~ continue to support bids for other forms of funding. ~~However,~~ the viability assessment for the plan suggests that there is likely to be very little headroom to set a CIL charge which would secure all of the transport infrastructure needed to support the development strategy for the whole plan period, even as proposed. More ambitious levels of growth development targets than objectively assessed need would be likely to exceed the capacity of the SRN within the short to medium term and there is little prospect of suitable mitigation being put in place during the early years of the plan period to accommodate that.

5.2.30 Kent County Council Highways have also worked with the Council to produce a detailed [Local Transport Strategy](#) (LTS) where current transport priorities are reflected. This will support and reflect the policies and specific development proposals in the local plan. This also contains a comprehensive list of transport infrastructure improvements which are not all directly related to Local Plan development proposals. These are nevertheless identified and could be supported either from public funds and or development contributions arising from proposals which may directly impact on them.

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Swale Transport Modelling

5.2.31 Multi modal strategic transport modelling was undertaken during drafting of the local plan to reflect the development strategy and proposals of this plan, which have re-used the earlier modelling work reflecting changes to the preferred land use allocations, most notably in Sittingbourne Town Centre. However, this has not had the benefit of being able to use the latest (2011) Census data on commuting as it was not published in time for the modelling work. Moreover, it has not been possible to upgrade the model to reflect in detail the transport movements arising from additional development proposals which have now been confirmed in the Faversham area. The promoters have had to undertake detailed assessments to satisfy the highway authorities as part of the planning application process. ~~So as to guide key decisions on development targets,~~ High level conclusions may be drawn from the model as to the potential impacts of the development strategy upon the strategic network and this may need to be supplemented with additional research in respect of the A249 corridor to assess the effect of additional land allocations. ~~whilst~~ Improvements to the County road network will be based on the Local Transport Strategy. More detailed transport assessments will be needed to assess the local impacts of development proposals and appropriate mitigation work on or off site (as set out in Policy DM 6).

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5.2.32 The main findings of the modelling work undertaken to date and supplemented with Kent Highways and Highways England research indicate that:

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- the level of growth anticipated as a result of the local plan development strategy will result in additional pressures on the highway network with traffic growth of some 35% over the base year and some further investment in the network will be necessary;
- congestion levels on the Kent Highways part of the network will accordingly increase, although it will not be as severe as in many other Kent locations and is deemed acceptable given the current development strategy;
- congestion is likely to increase at M2/Junction 5, given the increase in traffic arising from the proposed development strategy. As the junction is currently operating over capacity, some form of mitigation will be required going forward. This is now included in the Highways England national road programme for commencement in 2019-2020. Further work is ongoing as to the nature of the improvements which are needed. Whilst The Local Plan proposals, particularly for increased residential development will exacerbate the problems in the short term. Highways England have also indicated that regard will need to be had to the impact of a higher development target on the A249 junctions which link the SRN to the local road network. The need for and delivery of any necessary improvements will be reflected in the Implementation and Delivery Schedule and the Local Transport Strategy supporting the Plan.
- following changes to the land uses expected in central Sittingbourne, the final A2 link section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (SNRR) is no longer imperative to enable this regeneration to proceed (the bridge section having relieved the worst of the town centre congestion). Instead this road will function as part of a local distributor network rather than a bypass to the town. However, the final section of the SNRR will relieve congestion on the A2 to the east of the town centre, open up opportunities for regeneration and re-design of the town centre itself, achieve an alternative route in case of incidents and reduce traffic flows rat running on Lomas Road;
- the [Local Transport Strategy](#) also identifies the need for some junction improvements to the A249 as a result of the local plan proposals at Grovehurst and Key Street;
- a modest modal shift to bus transport was predicted (confirmed by census commuting data, and bus services are well used by school and college students, although this does not show up in Census data) although this is from a low base and more could be done through local initiatives and policy to extend and improve the quality of services to new and existing development;
- a small increase in rail transport was indicated by the earlier modelling (and the trend supported by 2011 Census results). Whilst no major changes to services are anticipated (other than direct London services from Sheppey to be introduced from January 2015), significant improvements to Sittingbourne station, the bus interchange and car parking are planned as part of the central area regeneration.

Investment in the Transport Network

5.2.33 The need for development to be well integrated with transport supports the approach taken by the Local Plan development strategy. Most new development is focused at the main urban areas, making best use of the existing or planned improvements to the transport network, looking to achieve a balance between new employment and housing provision and minimising the need to travel where possible. The development strategy is focused on promoting development at the most sustainable locations, or those which allow for greater use of sustainable modes of transport.

5.2.34 The capacity of the SRN is nevertheless a critical consideration for Swale. The Council has worked with Highways England since the inception of the plan to understand the transport implications of the scale and patterns of development options for Swale, as well as the cumulative and individual impacts of Local Plan proposals upon the ability of the SRN and relevant junctions to accommodate the forecast traffic flows in terms of capacity and safety.

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5.2.35 At the level of the SRN, peak hour congestion at M2/Junction 5 was the subject of earlier modelling work undertaken by Highways England and Kent County Council and is borne out by the latest research. This junction is over capacity in peak hour and the Department for Transport Highways England has significant concerns about further local development impacting on the junction is satisfied that the major improvements scheduled in its Delivery Plan 2015-2020 represent dissolution of a major constraint for the medium term and supports the development strategy focusing on the western end of the Borough. Further detailed research on the junction will be carried out prior to submission of the Local Plan by the HA, as part of its Route Based Strategies work. The junction itself is highly constrained by environmental designations and the costs of major reconstruction (likely to be of the order of £100M) are prohibitive, given Swale's viability situation, unless a substantial amount of funding is available from the HA budgets for such schemes. Some short term relief to the junction will be achieved by construction of an additional length of southbound lane on the A249 in conjunction with nearby development. However, the Highways Agency Route Based Strategies initiative has recognised the shortcomings of this part of the network as part of its initial research and it will go forwards with all the other candidates for funding under this initiative. Confirmation of schemes to be included within the first round (2016-2021) of the Route Based Strategy is not anticipated until spring 2015. Longer term solutions to improve M2/Junction 5 are consequently not likely to be delivered and in use within the short to medium term and certainly not within the first five years of the plan period. The Local Plan has therefore moderated development targets to what is achievable or capable of mitigation within the current network and expected resources. It focuses development on those parts of the local network with capacity, and endeavours to balance development in as sustainable a way as possible to manage further increases in pressure on this junction.

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5.2.36 This Local Plan continues to focus on Sittingbourne as the main urban area, with strategic allocations for housing and employment proposed to the north west and north east of the town. This utilises existing capacity on the A249 and the built and planned anticipated sections of the SNRR. The Grovehurst and Key Street interchanges with the A249 is are nearing capacity and will require improvement to accommodate traffic arising from development proposed in the Local Plan. The impact on the Bobbing junction of further land allocations will also need to be evaluated. Funding is being pursued through the SELEP Local Growth Fund Round 3 bidding, and the potential for pooling of S.278 contributions is also being explored, and development contributions, but has not been forthcoming in the first tranche of grants.

5.2.37 The central Sittingbourne regeneration plans and housing allocations will deliver new shopping, leisure, housing and eventually civic uses to the town centre. The opening of the Milton Creek section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road has been an important step in removing industrial and freight traffic from the town centre. Further improvements involving traffic calming, the pedestrian environment, and a completely revised bus train interchange are in hand as part of the town centre regeneration scheme, with the development partners' masterplan at an advanced stage of preparation. As part of the regeneration, the layout and operation of roads within the town centre will be fundamentally altered and traffic calmed and, as stated, there will be a new bus/rail interchange. A grant of £2.5m has recently been secured from the SELEP Local Growth Fund to assist with this. The work will include not only traffic based highway infrastructure, but also improvements to the bus, walking and cycling networks. This will be incorporated into the design and layout of development proposals and within supporting transport assessments and travel plans, both for the town centre and for other developments proposed around the town.

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5.2.38 The benefits of the SNRR in distributing local traffic will be best realised with its extension to the A2 in the Bapchild area (and may have a complementary role to any Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road if pursued at a future date). The SNRR was the subject of an unsuccessful bid in the first round of submissions to the SELEP Local Growth Fund, but funding will continue to be pursued through this route, as well as through developer contributions (or Community Infrastructure Levy). To support this longer term objective, retention of a safeguarded area of search for a potential route is identified by Policy AS 1.

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5.2.39 Faversham is well served by rail links westbound and is well placed in respect of M2 Junctions 6 and 7 although J7 is also nearing capacity. Local Plan allocations, the subject of planning applications, have undertaken Transport Assessments of cumulative impacts and these have been found to be acceptable. Major allocations in the Canterbury City Council Local Plan (plus those as yet unconfirmed in the Thanet and Dover plans) will also impact Brenley Corner M2/Junction 7, and the Council has supported HA Highways England proposals for minor improvements here. However, there are no proposals to improve this junction beyond minor developer funded mitigations and this may limit the quantum of development possible in the absence of major improvement. Should this limitation be deemed necessary, the Council is of the view that this would be an appropriate course of action, given the Local Plan development strategy focusing on the western part of the Borough and on committed infrastructure improvements there. Bus service links to the wider rural areas are patchy. The scales of development proposed at Faversham are not as significant as elsewhere in the Borough, and are situated in close proximity to Junction 6, the town and local services. Transportation improvements here will therefore concentrate on the quality of the bus, cycle and walking networks.

5.2.40 The Isle of Sheppey has benefited from the construction of the new Sheppey Crossing, which has already brought significant investment and regeneration to the western part of the Island. The recently completed Rushenden Link Road capitalises on this and opens up further regeneration land. The Local Transport Strategy identifies a need for improvements on the A2500 Lower Road, where congestion will worsen with the build out of residential allocations in the Minster area. There is a regular train service between Sittingbourne and Sheerness (with direct Sheerness to London services to be introduced from January 2015), although the eastern part of the Island still has a limited road network and public transport services.

5.2.41 Key transport infrastructure requirements in Sheppey will therefore focus on mitigating local congestion on the highway network, measures to support regeneration and expansion of the Port, improvement of the quality of the rail services, improved bus stop infrastructure, bus flags and timetables and improved walking and cycling routes.

5.2.42 Within the Borough's rural areas, access is generally by narrow rural roads and a modest public transport service. Scope to improve the rural highway network is limited, so improved public transport options will be the main means of improving accessibility for residents of rural communities. A number of cycle routes are also planned through rural areas (in addition to the national cycle route already established through Swale), the most extensive of these is on the Isle of Sheppey, where leisure routes will be extended to link communities across the Island.

5.2.43 Strategic transport modelling indicated only a small modal shift from car based to bus or rail based public transport and the Local Plan and associated Local Transport Strategy clearly has a role to play in maximising any opportunities to achieve this as development proposals come forward. A Quality Bus Partnership between the Kent Highways Service, Swale Borough Council and the local bus service providers has already been established. Bus use will be encouraged through application of Policy DM 6 to all suitable proposals to maximise access to bus services, for example through careful design of key allocation sites (such as North West Sittingbourne and Teynham). The implementation of the central Sittingbourne regeneration will also facilitate major improvements in bus/rail interchange in the town centre, which may also encourage increased use of rail commuting.

5.2.44 Policy DM6 also prioritises the integration of facilities for walking and cycling into the location design and layout of new developments to facilitate access to local services and facilities. There is also an important link here with the local plan objective of promoting an integrated approach to healthy environments which enable and encourage such activity.

5.2.45 The Port of Sheerness has access to deep water berths which makes it a suitable location for wind turbine manufacture and assembly and planning permission already exists for this use. The Port operator is also preparing a masterplan which will look 20-30 years ahead. Potential exists for longer term expansion for further berthing facilities, subject to appropriate consideration of designated biodiversity sites. Should major and wide impacting proposals come forward more quickly than expected, a Local Plan Review will be triggered. Ridham Dock also offers a smaller but nevertheless useful port facility.

Car Parking Strategy

5.2.46 A car parking strategy is being prepared as part of the central Sittingbourne regeneration masterplan. The regeneration plans have precipitated a major review of land use and car parking rationalisation. The regeneration plans will allow for the redevelopment of some car parks for alternative uses and the redevelopment of surface car parking at the Forum centre for a 310 space multi-storey car park. There will also be a re-designation of other more peripheral car parks for long and short stay. The net results of the strategy will be to provide for at least current peak demand plus that likely to arise from the proposals for new retail and leisure development and build in some capacity for potential future phases of regeneration. Further town centre capacity could be added through Network Rail adding a deck to their commuter car parking which would reduce the demand for long stay spaces in the Council operated car parks. This could afford further capacity for expansion, if needed to serve medium to longer term development strategies, alongside local plan policies to reduce car use by linking new residential areas to public transport through bus, cycling and walking routes.

5.2.47 At Faversham and Sheerness, no major new town centre developments are currently proposed which would necessitate a major review of car parking strategy within this local plan.

5.2.48 Policy DM 7 and the Local Transport Strategy set out the intention to review and implement a broader vehicle parking strategy and standards for Swale, to respond to the significant increase in car ownership in the recent past. In the interim, the framework for Swale parking standards is retained as set out in Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards.

Summary of Key Transport Network Improvements

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5.2.49 The following transport network schemes are seen as necessary to support Local Plan growth and/or the full implementation of the Local Plan strategy:

- longer medium term improvements to M2/Junction 5 via HA Route Based Strategy initiative Highways England national road delivery programme project commencing 2019-2020;
- A249/Key Street junction improvements;
- A249/Grovehurst junction improvements (including pedestrian and cycle way links between new development allocations at North West Sittingbourne and Iwade);
- the final (Bapchild) section of Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, the detail of which will be addressed via Policy AS 1;
- Sittingbourne town centre road layout, traffic management and calming measures, and car parking arrangements to support regeneration developments (some funding already secured from the SELEP Local Growth Fund);
- improvements to the A2500 Lower Road, Sheppey;
- other highway network improvements, (not necessarily associated with new development proposals) to resolve existing issues as set out in the Local Transport Strategy;

5 Core planning policies

- continue to support the Quality Bus Partnership and work with rail transport operators to promote use of public transport through enhancement of services and terminals;
- provision of walking and cycling routes to link new and existing communities to local services, facilities and public transport; and
- implement a new car parking strategy for Sittingbourne and review car parking standards across the rest of the Borough.

5.2.50 More detail of the means of delivery of these schemes is set out in the infrastructure delivery schedule. The Council will continue to work in partnership with Kent County Council, developers and the Highways Agency to secure funding for key transport infrastructure and will also pursue preparation of a Community Infrastructure Levy, which will enable pooling of developer contributions towards major infrastructure schemes. The viability assessment for the Local Plan nevertheless indicates that the headroom for this is limited and there will be many competing priorities for any levy raised.

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5.2.51 Whilst the development strategy of the Plan and supporting Transport Strategy is focused on locating development where the supporting transport can be provided in the most sustainable way, the Borough also has a rich heritage of rural lanes which contribute greatly to amenity. These may come under pressure with inappropriate development proposals. The issues are considered in the context of Policy DM26.

Policy CP 2

Promoting sustainable transport

New development will be located in accordance with Policy ST1 to Policy ST7, Local Plan allocations, approved Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build initiatives, which minimise the need to travel for employment and services and facilitate sustainable transport. Actions by the public, private and voluntary sector will adopt an integrated approach to the provision of transport infrastructure. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Contribute to transport network improvements, where capacity is exceeded and or safety standards are unacceptably compromised, with particular emphasis on those identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule;
2. Make best use of capacity in the network by working together with transport providers to improve the transport network in the most sustainable way, and extending it where necessary, as demonstrated by Transport Assessments and Travel Plans in support of development proposals;
3. Support the provision of major new transport infrastructure in accordance with national and local transport strategies;
4. Maintain and improve the highway network at key points to improve traffic flows and respond to the impact of new development and regeneration, as set out in the Local Transport Strategy;
5. Improve safety, through measures such as adequate parking, lighting and traffic management schemes;
6. Achieve alternative access to all services through promoting access to sustainable forms of transport particularly bus, cycling and rail transport and improving interchange between them from the earliest stages of development;

7. Provide integrated walking and cycling routes to link existing and new communities with local services and facilities, public transport and the Green Grid network; and
8. Facilitate greater use of waterways for commercial traffic, where this would not have an unacceptable adverse environmental impact, through working with the Port of Sheerness and other bodies.

5.3 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

5.3.1 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#) states that the Government's objective is to significantly boost the delivery of new homes. It expects Councils to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. They should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on evidence and need;
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations;
- for affordable housing, set policies for meeting this need on site, other than in certain situations;
- bring back into use empty housing and buildings;
- normally approve planning applications for change to residential use and any associated development from commercial buildings, provided that there are no strong economic reasons not to do so;
- consider policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens;
- in rural areas, consider use of market housing to facilitate significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs; and
- avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances.

5.3.2 [The Kent Housing Strategy](#) (May 2011) identifies 5 priorities:

1. The continued delivery of key infrastructure to support managed growth and housing delivery across the County.
2. The continued regeneration of our disadvantaged neighbourhoods to bring them in line with more affluent parts of the County.
3. The provision of choice and affordability in housing for the citizens of Kent and Medway, including rural communities, which meets their needs and aspirations.
4. The managed improvement and retrofit of existing homes to make them fit for now and the future.
5. To support vulnerable people in housing need to fulfil their potential and live a high quality life through the provision of excellent housing and support services.

5.3.3 Providing an overall context to our approach to housing in Swale is our [Housing Strategy](#) (2010). Its vision is for high quality sustainable homes where people choose to live, in new and existing communities. Its anticipated long-term outcomes are that:

1. All homes and neighbourhoods should provide sustainable environments for good quality, life-long living.
2. The housing supply is sufficient and matches needs and aspirations.
3. There is a good choice of housing options that support diverse needs and that everybody has an equal opportunity to live in a home that supports their life choices and maximises their health and wellbeing.
4. Adverse impacts to the environment from construction and occupation of housing are minimised.
5. All parties support and improve the life chances of vulnerable people and narrow the gaps in health and wellbeing.

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5.3.4 The [East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009](#) (SHMA) identified five local housing market areas within the Borough: East Kent Rural North; Faversham; East Sheppey; Sheerness/Minster; and Sittingbourne. These are shown on Map 5.3.1. However, other than within the rural areas to the east of the Borough, Swale itself is a largely self-contained market area.

Map 5.3.1 to be deleted.

5.3.5 As part of its assessment of development targets, the Council commissioned an update to the East Kent SHMA entitled [Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013](#). This found the 2009 document to be broadly correct in its conclusions.

Affordability

5.3.6 There are strong structural demographic drivers within the local housing market, caused by employment growth and in-migration. These have led to a growing population and relatively poor levels of affordability in the private housing market (although more affordable than the rest of Kent). Evidence indicates a level of need of 1,830 affordable dwellings per annum over the forthcoming five year period.^(5.9) The updated SHMA confirms the policy target for the level of affordable housing to be sought on development sites, but Policy DM8 considers this in the context of evidence on development viability.

Type and mix of housing

5.3.7 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009-13 indicated that across East Kent an ageing population and declining average household were fundamental to the type and mix of housing that will be needed. The mix needed to meet affordable housing needs is addressed by Affordable housing, but is characterised by the majority of need and demand being for smaller units of 1-2 beds, particularly given the forecast increased need from elderly households. There is also a smaller, but significant need for family housing e.g. 3 bed properties, also reflecting the fact that larger family households are set to increase.^(5.10)

5.3.8 The above research indicates a need for similar proportions of market housing, although actual market demand in Swale for different types/sizes of housing highlights some disparity through the proportions of the existing stock, the types of dwellings that are being brought forward for development and actual sales of property.^(5.11) Despite this, the need for smaller dwellings and larger homes remains, but current difficulties with the viability of developments indicates a need to not be over-prescriptive in terms of the mix of dwellings. However, the 2009 SHMA recommended broad guidelines to inform decision making:^(5.12)

- 1 bed flats = 10%
- 2 bed flats = 15%
- 2 bed houses = 25%
- 3 bed houses = 40%
- 4+ bed houses = 10%

5.3.9 The mix of housing will be affected by the overall viability of the scheme. For example, larger homes may be a means to improve viability and this will be taken into account in such circumstances.

Housing requirements of specific groups

5.3.10 The Census 2011 shows that the majority of households within Swale are families in couples and a smaller proportion of lone parent families. Older person households comprise over 20% of all

households. Demographic changes, illustrated by Figure 5.3.1 indicate that in future small household types of one person/couple households (younger and older) are set to account for the majority of future household growth.

Families with children

5.3.11 The East Kent SHMA 2009 identified the policy implications for housing for families. These included: ensuring an appropriate proportion of development of medium and larger houses, encouraging affordable housing in rural areas to keep families in the locality where they can support schools and local services and creating environments which are attractive to families.

Figure 5.3.1 to be deleted.

Older households (aged 65+)

5.3.12 With the number of elderly households set to increase by some 5,690 households, this will account for up to 50% of all net household growth (currently 21.4%).^(5.13) CP Homes and Communities encourages the provision of specialist housing for older people across all tenures in sustainable locations. It actively encourages developers to build new homes to the 'Lifetime Homes' standard so that they can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly as well as assisting independent living at home. However, it is unlikely that specific targets could be achieved in the current economic climate. Within the housing mix, developers will give appropriate opportunities for elderly households to downsize where they may be under-occupying larger homes. Providing good quality alternative accommodation may be one means to do this. As part of allocations or on 'windfall' sites in sustainable locations, the policy will support proposals for the development of retirement accommodation, residential care homes, close care, extra care and assisted care housing and continuing care retirement communities. Those falling within use class G2 will contribute toward the Council's housing target.

Young Households (aged 15-24)

5.3.13 Ineligibility for social housing, lower household incomes and the expense of owner occupation highlights the difficulties for households with non-dependent children who want to access housing. Growth in the number of households aged 15-24 is likely to be modest (370 households).^(5.14) However, the 2009 East Kent SHMA noted that factors such as a balanced approach to housing in terms of bedroom sizes and property types, along with high standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation, will help younger persons to access housing.

Housing need by ethnicity

5.3.14 The 2013 SHMA update indicated that some ethnicities have demands for new housing including: other white ethnicities (e.g. European white); mixed white and black Caribbean; mixed white and black African; and African.^(5.15) In the case of other white ethnicities in Swale, this could conceivably comprise white European households, including European migrants often associated with agricultural work or blue collar jobs in logistics or industrial sectors, which are important economic sectors in Swale. Increasingly, ethnic groupings will be evident across all sections of the workforce and housing need, but it is clear that certain groups face disproportionate barriers to home ownership and occupation.^(5.16)

5.3.15 The 2011 Census estimates that there are at least 730 individuals or 208 Gypsy and Traveller households in Swale. The local population is dominated by Romany Gypsies (88%) with a much smaller number of Irish Travellers (7%). Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs are considered, as mentioned above, by Policies CP3, ST2 and Gypsy and Traveller sites. In principle, meeting the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers is no different to meeting any other type of housing in the Borough and therefore should, given the overall need for provision in the Borough, be a matter that developers consider as part of their overall housing mix on housing sites.

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5.3.16 To ensure equal opportunities between Gypsies and Travellers and the settled community, on developments of 50 or more dwellings, pitches for Gypsies and Travellers will be provided as part of the development as this size of development will enable an imaginative approach to be taken on issues of design and integration. Whilst there will be negotiation over the precise number of pitches on each allocation, the starting threshold will be that pitch provision will be made at 1% of the total number of dwellings proposed, up to a maximum of 10 pitches per proposal. The foundation for negotiations will be the design led approach leading to a positive integration of pitches within the development based on the sites individual capacity and constraints.

5.3.17 The current Gypsy and Traveller community makes up around 0.5% of the population of the Borough, but because they tend to have larger households ([Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013](#)) and allowing for future household growth, it is appropriate to work towards a greater provision than 0.5% on housing allocations. This gives the basis for the 1% provision being sought.

5.3.18 These pitches will be made available either for sale or rent as appropriate and should be focused on private pitch provision, to reflect the aims of national policy, as expressed by the [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#), and the Council's GTAA. Local Plan Policy DM9 and Policy DM10 still allow for affordable pitch provision to come forward either via a rural exceptions site, or if further evidence to quantify the level of affordable need were to come forward, such as through the work currently being undertaken with Kent County Council, an allocation could be identified.

5.3.19 As part of the design led approach to this provision, developers will consult with the Council and local Gypsy and Traveller representatives and will also use the local and national Gypsy and Traveller networks so that the pitches are offered for sale or rent in such a way that their existence has been reasonably advertised. Pitches provided will be for Gypsies and Travellers to make their own housing arrangements, or, in some cases, if viable, as bespoke accommodation provided by the developer. Developers should also consider sustainable design and construction methods which are becoming more common in static mobile homes, examples of which can be found on existing permanent sites in the Borough. As part of planning applications, the Council will agree with the developer a period of time within which such plots should be made available and advertised.

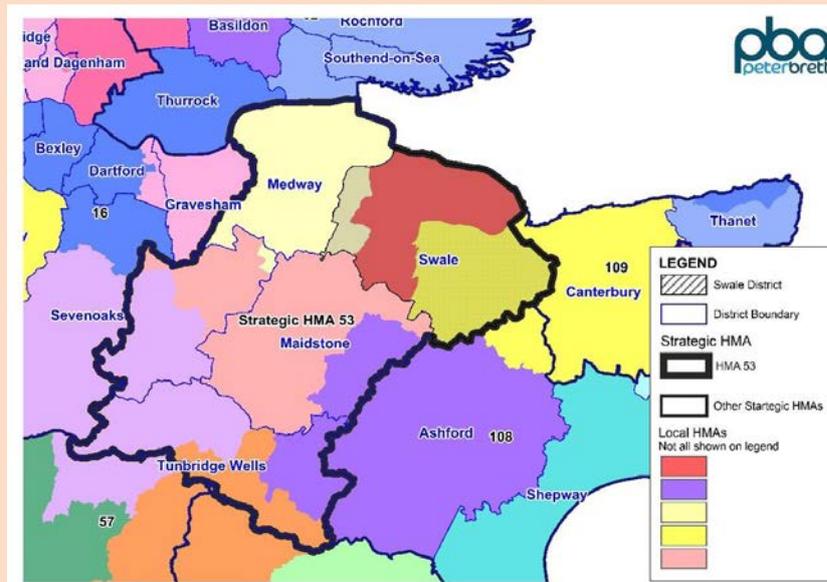
5.3.20 Although the Council will expect pitches to be achieved on-site in the majority of circumstances, exceptionally, for cases where it can be clearly demonstrated that a housing allocation would not be suitable, provision of pitches off-site, land transfers, or a commuted sum in lieu of provision will be considered. These and other means of provision would have to be directly related to the specific housing development.

Disability

5.3.21 The Census 2011 identified that 18.6% of our population considered that they had a long term health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activities to some degree. For these and those in receipt of adult social care, the 2009 East Kent SHMA indicated that policies should focus on both the affordable and market housing stocks, the type of dwellings (e.g. bungalow/single floor dwellings), adaptations to existing properties, supported living and application of lifetime home standards.

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5.3.22 The SHMA 2015 identifies Swale as a distinct housing market area with close links to its immediate neighbours.



Map 5.3.1 Swale Housing Market Area (2015 SHMA)

Affordability

5.3.23 There are strong structural demographic drivers within the local housing market, caused by employment growth and in-migration. These have led to a growing population and relatively poor levels of affordability in the private housing market (although more affordable than the rest of Kent). Evidence indicates a level of need of 190 dwellings per annum, however housebuilding, including affordable housing is affected by the viability picture in the Borough and Policy DM8 considers the context of such levels of delivery balanced against the viability of affordable housing development.

Type and mix of housing

5.3.24 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that the largest growth will come from single person and lone parent households. In terms of the accommodation required to provide a balanced housing market over the plan period, the SHMA suggests that the makeup of the new housing required should be:

- 25% affordable
- 7% private rented
- 68% owner occupied

5.3.25 These findings will be influenced by the outcomes of national policy initiatives on such matters as starter homes. The Council will monitor the outcome of these issues.

5.3.26 The SHMA also indicates that new owner-occupied accommodation should principally be two and three bedroom homes and new private rented housing should ideally be three and four bedroom homes. Figure 5.3.1 shows the size and tenure of new homes required within the level of objectively assessed need.

5.3.27 Figure 5.3.1 will be the starting point for negotiation on the percentages sought for a housing mix to meet the current needs assessment. The mix of housing will be affected by the overall viability of each scheme and a change in the mix can make appreciable differences, for example larger homes will normally enhance viability. Such matters will be a factor in negotiations for the housing mix sought on developments.

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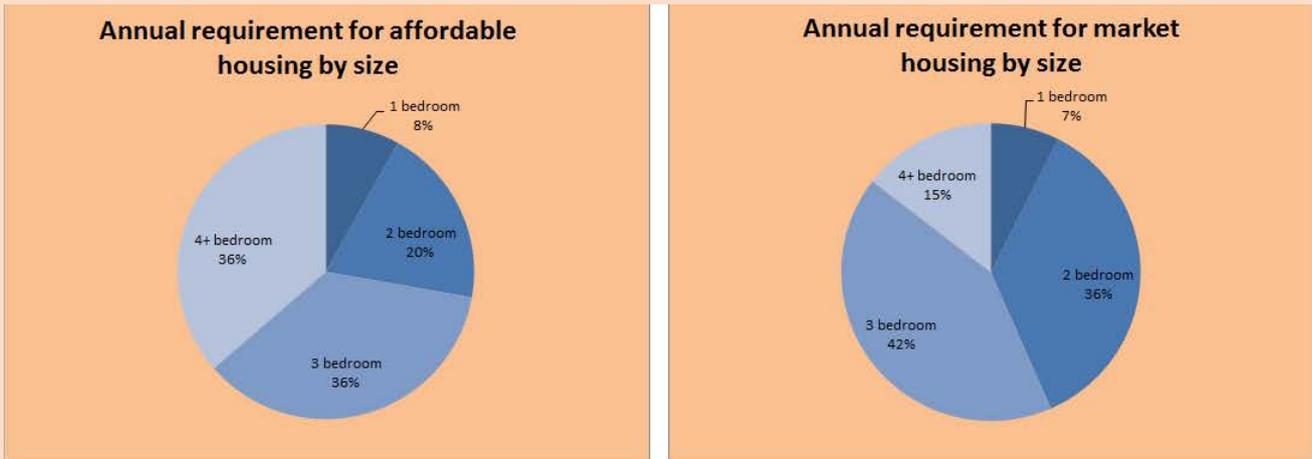


Figure 5.3.1 Required mix of housing by size (2015 SHMA)

Housing requirements of specific groups

5.3.28 National planning policy states that local planning authorities should address the needs of different groups of the community such as families with children, older people, disabled people, service families and those wishing to build their own homes.

5.3.29 The population profile of the Borough has aged slightly but broadly follows national trends, with levels of in-migration and natural change sufficient for Swale to retain its age profile over the past 10 or so years. The Council's SHMA 2015 projected the possible change in household types that could occur up to 2031. This has fed into the tenure and mix of future housing required and from this projection, Figure 5.3.2 shows that the number of one person and lone parent households is expected to show the highest increases.

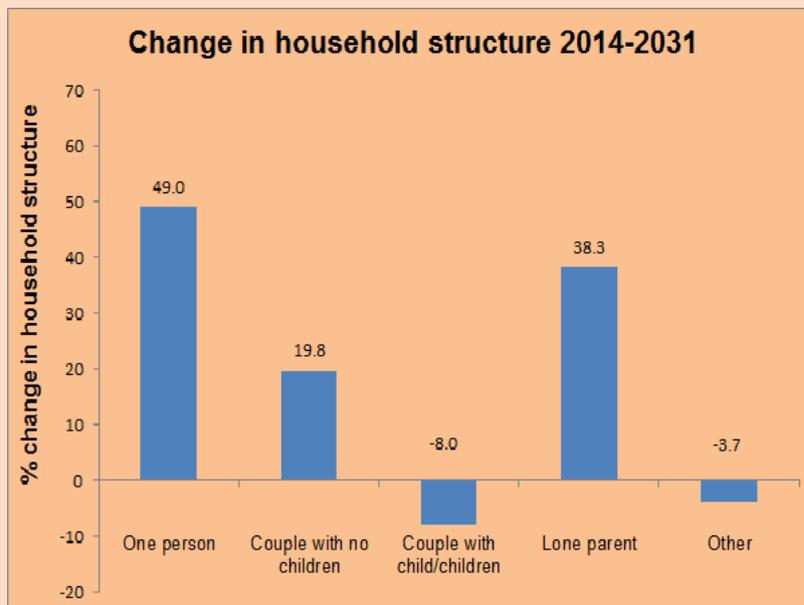


Figure 5.3.2 Change in household structure (2015 SHMA)

Housing need by ethnicity

5.3.30 The 2011 Census suggests that the Black, Asian, Minority Ethnicities (BAME) population has increased to 3.4% of the total population in Swale; this is still notably smaller than the regional and national figures. Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups represents the largest BAME group, comprising 1.2% of the Boroughs population with White Irish (0.6%), White Gypsy or Irish Traveller (0.5%) and White Other (2.6%). The majority of the population (92.9%) are White British.

5.3.31 The Census showed that just 0.7% of the population in 2011 had been resident in the UK for less than 2 years. Overwhelmingly the majority of the population have resided in the UK for over 5 years (including those born in the UK).

Older person households

5.3.32 The Census indicates that 21.1% of households in Swale were older person only households (households where all members are 65 or over), compared to 21.7% regionally and 20.5% nationally. Of these older person only households in Swale in 2011, 57.8% contained only one person, a similar percentage to that recorded in the South East (58.5%) and England (60.0%).

5.3.33 The SHMA (2015) showed that whilst single older person households in Swale were more likely than average to reside in social rented accommodation, both of the older person groups show a high level of owner-occupation. Older person households were also more likely than average to have multiple spare bedrooms in their home.

5.3.34 The population aged 65 or over is likely to increase dramatically over the plan period to 38,132 in 2031, a rise of 46.2%. The SHMA highlights the greatest future demand is for two/three bedroom owner-occupied dwellings and one/two bedroom private rent and affordable dwellings. Development for housing specifically aimed at occupiers over 65 should, in the first instance, aim to reflect this.

5.3.35 Some 18.6% of the resident population in Swale have a long-term health problem or disability, with 46.5% of all those aged 65 or over and 84.5% of those aged 85 or over. It is therefore relevant to consider the ability of specialist accommodation to meet the requirements of this group. The current rate of provision for specialist accommodation is much lower than the base recommended and, in light of an ageing population, the Council will seek to support proposals which improve the levels of sheltered housing and extra care accommodation in the borough.

5.3.36 As with other housing, the mix and particularly the affordable element of the specialist older person housing will be affected by the overall viability and these considerations will be a factor in negotiations for the housing mix sought on developments. Policy DM8 will provide further commentary on affordable older person specialist housing. There are also around 1,199 spaces in nursing and residential care homes in Swale and presuming the current occupancy rate continues there is a need for an additional 481 spaces over the plan period. This figure is indicative and would vary if occupancy rates change, with this in mind the Council will support appropriate proposals for nursing and residential care home spaces.

Self-builders

5.3.37 In April 2016 the Council established its self-build register. Over time, this register will inform future SHMA and policy in this particular area. In the meantime, it is anticipated that such provision will generally be made via the Council's windfall allowance in Policy ST4.

Quality and purpose of housing

5.3.38 Housing development takes up more space than any other form of building and strongly influences the character of a place, as well as influencing lifestyle, behaviour, health, crime and use of private transport. New housing also has a major influence upon the physical and social perceptions of an area and this can be shaped early on within the design of a scheme and the type of housing proposed. Our Property Market Review (November, 2011), by consultants CBRE, suggested that new housing could be used to achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- **Objective 1 Create**: extending or re-balancing the housing stock, market offer and appeal. Design playing the leading role to achieve this;

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- **Objective 2 Reinforce:** not changing an area's housing offer. Design protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area; or
- **Objective 3 Restore:** improving an area's offer when in decline or stress, to improve overall market appeal and to create confidence in the housing offer. Design to play a leading role and could lead change on an urban renewal basis in some areas.

5.3.39 To help meet the above objectives, Table 5.3.1 sets out an indicative and overall objective (from those listed in 5.3.37) within each of our local housing market areas in so far as they relate to specific postcode evidence^(5.17). Some local housing market areas have some variance within them at a very fine scale, as well as an overall characteristic. As a result these areas have an overall objective as well as a more focused objective where that might usefully apply to pockets of housing of different characteristics contained within them. Although this research is high level and the findings subject to change over the plan period, we will look to Design and Access Statements, Neighbourhood Plans, Masterplans, Development Briefs and other Supplementary Planning Documents to indicate what the intended purpose of the proposed housing will be within the area in question. With Table 5.3.1 acting as a guide, we will be flexible, especially in response to more detailed analysis submitted as part of a planning application.

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Postal Area	Relevant locations	Main issues, purpose and objectives of housing proposals
Sittingbourne Local Housing Market Area		
ME9	Rural parts of Sittingbourne, Iwade, Upchurch, Newington, Milstead and Teynham.	Has relatively high average prices and reasonable levels of demand and as such the market is reasonably strong. Going forward, the aspiration could be to encourage the development of good quality family housing, for which the greatest local demand exists. Objective: reinforce. <u>Overall Objective 2 - Reinforce: not changing an area's housing offer, Design-protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area.</u>
ME10	The town of Sittingbourne including Milton Regis and Kemsley.	Has opportunity to provide a mix of quality housing types and unit sizes. Prices are affordable and there are reasonable levels of demand from a range of consumers. Variations in housing markets between north and south of the A2 with south seen as more prosperous/desirable with housing prices generally higher. Objective: create and locally reinforce within more prosperous areas. <u>Overall Objective 1 - Create: extending or re-balancing the housing stock, market offer and appeal. Design playing the leading role to achieve this. Local variance within more prosperous areas should achieve Objective 2 - Reinforce: not changing an area's housing offer, Design -protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area.</u>
Sheerness/Minster Local Housing Market Area		
ME11	Queenborough and Rushenden on the Isle of Sheppey.	Property is very affordable but the market could improve with the provision of better designed and better quality housing, further enhanced by improvements to the local public realm. Future demand is predominantly for three bed family housing but also flats. Given that values are at the lower end of the scale, development viability in this area could be marginal. Consider the development of greater levels of private housing to enhance scheme viability and to introduce greater diversity in the stock. Objective: restore <u>Overall Objective 3 - Restore: Improving an area's offer when in decline or stress to improve overall market appeal and to create confidence in the housing offer. Design to play a leading role and could lead change on an urban renewal basis in some areas.</u>

Postal Area	Relevant locations	Main issues, purpose and objectives of housing proposals
ME12	Isle of Sheppey including Sheerness, Minster, Leysdown and Warden.	Demand is greatest for family housing. Future development of quality family housing that reflects the character of the area should be encouraged. If opportunities arise, improve design and/or levels of sustainability <u>especially in the pockets of deprivation found in this market area.</u> However, the East Kent SHMA noted that there were further sub-housing markets within this post code, with Minster, Leysdown and Warden functioning separately. Objective: reinforce and create locally within deprived communities: Overall Objective 2: Reinforce: not changing an area's housing offer, Design protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area. Local variance within deprived communities should achieve Objective 1 - Create: extending or re-balancing the housing stock, market offer and appeal. Design playing the leading role to achieve this.
Faversham and East Swale Rural Local Housing Market Areas		
ME13	Faversham and rural parts of east Swale including Boughton, Oare, Selling and Eastling.	<u>Overall a stronger housing market but with pockets of deprivation.</u> The development of family housing in keeping with the character of the existing area should be encouraged. Objective: reinforce and create locally within deprived communities: Overall Objective 2: Reinforce: not changing an area's housing offer, Design protecting and enhancing existing characteristics of a neighbourhood area. Local variance within deprived communities should achieve Objective 1 - Create: extending or re-balancing the housing stock, market offer and appeal. Design playing the leading role to achieve this.

Table 5.3.1 The purpose of housing in local housing market areas

Density

5.3.40 There is no longer a national minimum target figure for the density of new housing, but councils are allowed to consider whether local density standards should be set. Prescribing low densities can result in an inefficient use of land and a need to develop more greenfield sites to meet overall housing target numbers. The use of higher densities need not mean blocks of flats or featureless estates with little or no landscaping. For example, modern terraced housing of 2 or 3 storeys can achieve excellent internal and external space standards and still achieve medium or high densities. In suburban, village and other sensitive locations, a lower density may be more suitable where the conservation and enhancement of the character of the site, or its biodiversity or local context may be a priority. These considerations frequently arise in respect of proposals for development in the gaps between properties or in their gardens, or as a result of the redevelopment of the entire site. This type of development has been emotively referred to as 'garden-grabbing' and whilst not precluding the appropriate development of such sites, proposals leading to a detrimental change in the character of existing neighbourhoods will not be permitted.

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Picture 5.3.1 New house building in Faversham

5.3.41 The Local Plan's overall approach to density is not to be prescriptive, but to let the purpose of the development, the context of the site and the defining characteristics of the surrounding area lead the process, taking the opportunity to achieve higher density development where it is appropriate. Higher densities will generally be more appropriate to town centre locations, where land economics may also influence the intensity of land use, or on larger sites, where there is scope to design a range of environments to create neighbourhoods with variety of character and visual interest.

Windfall sites and use of previously developed land

5.3.42 Not all our identified needs for housing will be met from the development of sites allocated by this Local Plan. During the plan period, it is likely, for example, that outdated or unsuitable industrial sites will close down, infill plots will be identified and buildings redeveloped or converted. These sources all present opportunities for extra housing, which will generally be encouraged by Policy CP3. In particular, the development of brownfield sites (called previously developed land) is a priority and a means to reduce the amount of greenfield land needing to be developed. Not all brownfield land will be suitable for development, for example, sites in viable and suitable employment use, land at risk from flooding that cannot be made safe, or land that has developed as an important resource for biodiversity, amenity or recreation.

5.3.43 New housing will normally be supported on appropriate windfall sites, but we will be guided by Policy ST 3 so that the scale and location of proposals are generally in accordance with the role and function of the settlement in question and, where relevant, that the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is taken into account. New housing will be supported within deprived neighbourhoods where it would not perpetuate deprivation and is part of the means to restore the housing market and/or environmental conditions in the areas in question.

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Policy CP 3

Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Actions by the public, private and voluntary sectors shall work towards the delivery of a wide choice of high quality homes that extend opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Be steered to locations in accordance with Policy ST3, including:
 - a. Local Plan allocations, Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build initiatives;
 - b. windfall sites, except where the character of the site, its local context or environmental value determines otherwise; **Page 270**

- c. town centres when contributing to their vitality and viability; or
 - d. deprived communities when improving local housing markets.
2. Tailor the purpose and objectives of housing proposals to the issues present within local housing market areas;
 3. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area
 4. Provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8, or in rural areas, homes in accordance with Policy DM9;
 5. Achieve a mix of housing types, reflecting the findings of the current Strategic Housing Market Assessment or similar needs assessment; with emphasis toward smaller 1-2 bed properties and 3+ bed homes;
 6. ~~For housing proposals for 50 or more dwellings, provision should be made for Gypsies and Traveller pitches, up to a maximum of 10 pitches per proposal and in accordance with Policy DM10;~~
 7. Meet the housing requirements of specific groups, including families, older persons, or disabled and other vulnerable persons;
 8. Bring vacant homes back into use and up to the Decent Homes standard; and
 9. Achieve sustainable and high quality design in accordance with Policy CP4 and Policy DM19.

5.4 Requiring good design

5.4.1 The National Planning Policy Framework stresses that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and considers the two are indivisible from good planning.^(5.18)

5.4.2 The Council considers that high quality design, whether for large or small proposals, should be the aim for all in the development process. It is fundamental to creating sustainable developments, a flourishing economy, social development, the wise use of natural resources, and to environmental protection and enhancement. As part of its strategy to create lively places with distinctive character, safe streets and spaces that are pleasant and human in scale, this local plan promotes high quality design in all locations that is sensitive, inspired, and imaginative and responds to its context. There is no place in the Borough for ill-conceived designs that do not contribute positively to making places better for people.

5.4.3 For urban design, this includes the relationship between different buildings, the relationship between buildings and the streets, squares, parks, waterways and other spaces which make up the built environment. It also extends to the nature and quality of that environment itself, the relationship of one part of a village, or town with other parts and the patterns of movement and activity which are thereby established - in other words the complex relationships between all the elements of built and undeveloped space. As the appearance and treatment of the spaces between and around buildings is often of comparable importance to the design of the buildings themselves, landscape design is also an important component. In the countryside, high quality design also means responding positively to the character of the local landscape.

5.4.4 Identifying, understanding and responding to local distinctiveness is important for Swale, especially for the development of heritage assets and is more likely to lead to proposals that are positive in respect of the pattern of the built and natural environments and the social and physical characteristics of the locality. The detailed definition of locally distinctive materials in development involving heritage assets will be provided in the proposed Heritage Strategy. A new development may successfully be able to create a sense of place by addressing the following:

- letting the character of a place come through, as opposed to standardisation, corporate identity and national building styles;
- responding to the local and the vernacular by using the materials of the locality to reinforce the colour, patterns and craftsmanship of the place;

5 Core planning policies

- enhancing natural features and letting nature in by encouraging the local indigenous plants that already grow there;
- knowing and working with the knowledge and culture of a place;
- respecting local names, adding new ones with care;
- using the distinctive dimensions of a place to get things in proportion and scale;
- distinguishing between the urban, suburban and rural environments in design and detail;
- re-using old buildings; and
- avoiding the over zoning and segregation of uses that can stifle places.

5.4.5 Where strong local distinctiveness is not apparent, the objective should be to uplift the quality of the area through imaginative use of architecture, detail and landscape design that is, itself, locally distinctive.

5.4.6 The Council will expect developers to respond positively to the provisions of the following (and successor) publications:

- **Main Modification 105**

~~The National Code for Sustainable Homes (whilst still in place). See also The Cross Sector Group on Sustainable Design and Construction Good Practice Guide: [Sustainable Design and Construction](#).~~
- The [Manual for Streets](#): Department for Transport. Emphasises that streets should be places in which people want to live and spend time in, and are not just transport corridors. Aims to reduce the impact of vehicles on residential streets by planning street design intelligently and pro-actively, giving a high priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transport.
- [Kent Design Guide](#) (and appendices). Prepared by the Kent Design Group, it provides the criteria necessary for assessing planning applications. Helps building designers, engineers, planners and developers achieve high standards of design and construction. It is adopted by the Council as a Supplementary Planning Document;
- [Secured by Design](#) A UK Police initiative that focuses on crime prevention of homes and commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products. Now supported locally by Design for Crime Prevention, part of the Kent Design Guide.
- Design guidance from Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty unit. Includes its [Landscape Design Handbook](#) and Rural Streets and Lanes Manual.
- Sport England [Active Design Guidance](#). A set of design guidelines to promote opportunities for sport and physical activity in the design and layout of development. Promotes sport and activity through three key Active Design principles of - improving accessibility, enhancing amenity and increasing awareness.
- Swale Borough Council [Supplementary Guidance and Documents](#). These include guidance on house extensions, shop fronts and advertisements, landscaping, and converting rural buildings, together with a Supplementary Planning Document on Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment and Guidelines 2010 and the [Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study \(2010\)](#) .

Policy CP 4

Requiring good design

All development proposals will be of a high quality design that is appropriate to its surroundings. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Create safe, accessible, comfortable, varied and attractive places;
2. Enrich the qualities of the existing environment by promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness and strengthening sense of place;

3. Make safe connections physically and visually both to and within developments, particularly through using landscape design and open space to retain and create green corridors for pedestrians, cyclists and biodiversity;
4. Make efficient and prudent use of natural resources including sensitively utilising landscape features, landform, biodiversity and climate to maximise energy conservation and amenity;
5. Retain and enhance features which contribute to local character and distinctiveness;
6. Conserve and enhance landscape, biodiversity and local environments by:
 - a. assessing and responding to landscape character, condition, sensitivity and any limitations arising from its overall capacity for change, together with the guidelines set out within the [Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment and Guidelines](#) and Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study;
 - b. retaining trees where possible (including old orchards and fruit trees, hedgerows, shelter belts, woodland and scrub) particularly those that make an important contribution either to the amenity, historic, landscape character or biodiversity value of the site or the surrounding area;
 - c. providing a high standard of locally native plant species and trees (of local provenance and supportive of biodiversity) for soft (including green walls) landscaping in a pattern which respects the landscape character;
 - d. providing hard landscaping, surface and boundary treatments that are locally distinct and that respond positively to the character of the locality; and
 - e. provide features and management intended to encourage biodiversity.
7. Achieve a mix of uses, building forms, tenure and densities;
8. Be appropriate to the context in respect of materials, scale, height and massing;
9. Make best use of texture, colour, pattern, and durability of materials;
10. Use densities determined by the context and the defining characteristics of the area;
11. Ensure the long-term maintenance and management of buildings, spaces, features and social infrastructure;
12. Be flexible in order to respond to future changes in use, lifestyle, and demography;
13. Maximise opportunities for including sustainable design and construction techniques including the use of recycled and recyclable materials, sustainable drainage systems, carbon reduction and minimising waste; and
14. Adhere to relevant supporting design guidance.

5.5 Promoting healthy communities

Health and wellbeing

5.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses the importance of health and wellbeing and the role that the planning system should play in improving this.^(5.19) It explains that to achieve sustainable development, the planning system should perform a social role, including supporting strategies to improve health and cultural wellbeing, promoting healthy communities and identify strategic policies to deliver the provision of health facilities.^(5.20) The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to work with communities to gain a shared vision of the environment and facilities they wish to see and to deliver planning policies that facilitate social interaction and healthy inclusive communities.^(5.21) Planning for and protecting existing services and open space are also important parts of creating healthy communities, as recognised by the NPPF.^(5.22)

5.5.2 [The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning](#) (published 1st April 2011), provided evidence on the relationship between planning, the built environment and health inequalities.^(5.23) A key message

5 Core planning policies

from the review is that planning has great potential to affect health through the design of developments, ensuring that services are joined up and easier to access, community participation, accessible transport, well located services and by the pursuit of healthy lifestyles through active travel and use of green space.^(5.24)

5.5.3 Achieving healthier communities is at the heart of the Local Plan vision. To support this, the former Primary Health Care Trust for Swale undertook a [Rapid Health Impact Assessment](#) to identify the potential health gains and consequences of various options and policies that were being considered.^(5.25) This identified that there were significant health and wellbeing issues in Swale, especially in its deprived communities (see Statement 5), and that the Local Plan should seek to improve the population's health.^(5.26) It emphasised the role that mixed use developments could play in providing healthy communities and that a good relationship between the location of housing, employment and other facilities, could also support healthy communities.^(5.27) The health care needs arising from the Local Plan have also been determined and these can be found in its implementation and delivery schedule. If fully implemented, an integrated approach toward health should potentially reduce costs to health services in the long term.

Statement 5

Key health facts for Swale

1. The health of people in Swale is mixed when compared with the average for England. The Public Health England publication Swale Health Profile 2014 reveals levels of health/deprivation significantly worse than the England average in the following areas: children in poverty; violent crime; long term unemployment; smoking status at time of delivery; breastfeeding initiation; under 18 conceptions; obese adults; excess weight in adults; recorded diabetes; and smoking related deaths.
2. There are significant health inequalities depending on where people live within the Borough. The life expectancy for those living in the 20% most deprived areas of Swale (west and east Sheppey, Murston, Milton Regis, Kemsley and Davington Priory) is about eight years lower for men, and approximately five years lower for women, than for those living in the least deprived areas.
3. The highest crime levels in the Borough are in Sheerness, Leysdown, Kemsley, Milton Regis, Murston, the rural area around Teynham, part of the St Ann's ward and part of the Abbey ward in Faversham.

5.5.4 The Council has undertaken an audit of open space and determined standards to be applied to new developments. These can be found in Policy DM 17. Existing provision, whether of open space, health or other community facilities should also be safeguarded against development proposals that would result in their loss. Policy CP5 confirms the national policy intended to address this.

5.5.5 Policy CP5 brings together all the relevant matters affecting health to provide an integrated approach. Health impact assessments will be used to ensure these issues are properly considered and integrated at the planning application stage. The use of such assessments will be appropriate as identified by Local Plan allocations, or when statutory Environmental Impact Assessments are required, or for larger developments within Swale's most deprived wards.

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Policy CP 5

Health and wellbeing

The Council, working in conjunction with relevant organisations, communities and developers, will promote, protect and work to improve the health of Swale's population, and reduce health inequalities. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Bring forward accessible ~~and~~ new ~~and/or~~ community services and facilities, including ~~new~~ health facilities;
2. Safeguard existing community services and facilities where they are viable or can be made so, or where replacement facilities can be provided without leading to any shortfall in provision, or where the local Clinical Commissioning Group has indicated a need for health facilities;
3. Safeguard or provide as appropriate, open space, sport and recreation in accordance with Policy DM17, additionally enabling access to nature in accordance with the Local Plan Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy in Policy CP7;
4. Promote healthier options for transport, including cycling and walking;
5. Improve or increase access to a healthy food supply such as allotments, markets and farm shops;
6. Create social interaction and safe environments through mixed uses and in the design and layout of new development;
7. Create a healthy environment that regulates local climate by providing open space and greenery to achieve shading and cooling, particularly within existing urban environments; and
8. Undertake and implement a Health Impact Assessment for relevant proposals that are:
 - a. required to undertake Environmental Impact Assessments; or
 - b. within Swale's most deprived wards; or
 - c. identified as required by the Local Plan.

Community facilities and services to meet local needs

5.5.6 The National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) requires the timely provision of all types of physical infrastructure, including transport, and communications, water and energy. Local plans are also required to take account of the need for strategic infrastructure, including those of national significance.^(5.28) One of the core principles of the NPPF requires account to be taken of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well being and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.^(5.29)

5.5.7 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to include policies to deliver the provision of infrastructure in their local plans. It also requires that they should work with other authorities and service providers to assess the quality and capacity of infrastructure to meet the forecast demands arising from the local plan and also the need for strategic infrastructure (including nationally significant infrastructure) within their areas.^(5.30)

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5.5.8 Finally, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to ensure that there is a reasonable prospect that planned infrastructure is deliverable in a timely fashion, although it also requires the consideration of viability and costs associated with such infrastructure.^(5.31) National planning policy guidance highlights the need to identify the infrastructure necessary to support the first five years of the plan. Although timing and funding of major schemes may be unclear beyond this, the risks and contingencies also need to be identified. These are provided by the Council's implementation and delivery plan as set out in Chapter 8.



Picture 5.5.1 Primary school at Leysdown

Identifying Swale Infrastructure Needs

5.5.9 To meet the growth requirements for Swale, the Local Plan identifies land allocations for future development and growth to meet the needs of the community. The impacts of development on the built and natural environment, utilities and community services needs to be managed. This may involve protecting existing infrastructure, identifying where there is capacity and or securing the timely provision of new infrastructure, which in itself may require land allocations to be made to accommodate it. Infrastructure requirements typically fall into one of the following categories:^(5.32)

- physical infrastructure (such as highways, transport, utilities and public realm improvements);
- community infrastructure (such as schools, adult social services and cultural facilities);
- green infrastructure (such as play spaces, parks or nature and biodiversity conservation, enhancement or mitigation).

5.5.10 Statement 6 expands this list for Swale.

5.5.11 It is important that less obvious infrastructure needs are met. The expansion of digital infrastructure that enables high speed access to the Internet is especially critical for the Borough. Policy CP6 requires developers to provide this infrastructure within their new developments.

Statement 6

Definition of infrastructure

This list of infrastructure requirements is not exclusive, but includes:

- transport - ports, road network, car parking, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, rail and bus provision;
- health - local health facilities;
- social infrastructure - education facilities, supported accommodation and other social care facilities, social and community facilities, sports facilities, open spaces (including accessible natural space), arts and culture, parks and play space;

- green infrastructure - existing and proposed green grid network as identified in the Local Plan Green Infrastructure Plan;
- public services - waste management and disposal, libraries, emergency services, Council offices, Job Centre Plus offices, training facilities, cemeteries, places of worship, prisons and drug treatment centres;
- utility services - non-renewable and renewable energy infrastructure, water supply, waste water treatment, sewerage and telecommunications (including digital Internet) infrastructure; and
- Flood defence infrastructure - in the context of making new development safe on a site specific basis.

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5.5.12 The Council has worked with key stakeholders and service providers including KCC Services, Kent Highways, Highways Agency, health services and utilities to identify capacity in existing infrastructure and what would be needed to support the development strategy in the emerging Local Plan. The requirements for Swale have been assessed through the evidence base of the Plan, whilst key infrastructure needed to support implementation of particular site allocations have also been identified in the relevant allocation policy. A separately published implementation and delivery schedule (IDS) provides a comprehensive and an annually updatable list of infrastructure proposals for the Local Plan period that includes costs and likely delivery agencies. No significant national scale infrastructure requirements have been identified for Swale within the plan period, although improvements to the national road network at Junction 5 of the M2 will be required and, potentially at to a lesser degree Junctions 6 and 7 are likely to be required in the later parts of the plan period.

5.5.13 Chapter 8 of the Local Plan states that provision sufficient to meet the development needs for the first five-year period can be met, with the IDS indicating that infrastructure needs are concentrated at the growth areas of Sittingbourne, Isle of Sheppey, and to a lesser degree at Faversham. It is the subsequent periods of the Local Plan where the most significant levels of infrastructure will be required and where gaps between the cost of infrastructure and available funding may occur, not assisted by poor viability for the first years of the plan. There are past examples in Swale of infrastructure that has not kept pace with growth and co-ordinated efforts will be needed to ensure that early deficits in provision do not intensify.

The funding of infrastructure

5.5.14 Our [viability assessment](#) has examined the capacity of development (after policy requirements are met) to fund infrastructure via payment of the Community Infrastructure Levy (when a schedule is in place) or Section 106 agreements. The evidence shows that developers' financial ability to support infrastructure provision varies considerably across the Borough and because it is not possible to confirm the extent to which public funding will be available, it is unlikely that overall levels of funding will be sufficient (a requirement for the setting of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in any event).

5.5.15 From April 2015, no more than five separate site Section 106 contributions are able to be 'pooled' for any one item of infrastructure and this will place additional pressures on funding infrastructure ahead of the introduction of any CIL tariff. However, until such time as a CIL tariff can be adopted, the Council will, where appropriate, continue its current practise of seeking developer contributions for infrastructure on development proposals for ten or more dwellings.

5.5.16 Across significant areas of the Borough, the current viability situation indicates financial limits to the amount of CIL (and Section 106 Agreements) that can be charged and this means some prioritising of infrastructure provision. For CIL, such priorities can be reflected through what is called a Regulation 123

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list that can help ensure provision in a timely manner and assist in leveraging in other sources of funding. The setting of this 123 list is not resolved through the Local Plan, but the infrastructure delivery schedule sets out the 'long-list' of infrastructure that will provide the starting point for it.

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5.5.17 Our viability evidence has required us to reduce policy requirements in key areas such as affordable housing. As a result, developments should normally be able to meet the remaining contributions necessary arising from the development. In cases where developer contributions may need to be reduced for viability reasons, the Council will only agree to this where the advantages of proceeding with the development would significantly outweigh the disadvantages and, provided the Council's ability to comply with statutory duties would not be compromised. Ahead of the publication of the Regulation 123 list, in cases where abnormal costs or other issues significantly challenge the ability of development to contribute to these matters via Section 106 Agreements, the implementation and delivery plan in Chapter 8 indicates the priorities for developer contributions for the first five years of the Local Plan. They include:

- transport - given those matters needed to unlock the growth for the remaining period of the Local Plan;
- education - given the forecast need for Sittingbourne, Queenborough-Rushenden and Faversham;
- social care - given the forecast rising proportion of older persons and demands arising from forecast increases in those with specialist needs. These issues have additional concerns for Swale given that parts of the Borough are among the most deprived in England.
- ~~protecting European biodiversity habitats – A significant proportion of the Borough is covered by such habitats and evidence confirms the need to mitigate the recreational pressures on these areas arising from future growth. Once the mechanism is in place, it will necessary to address the issue via a tariff of developments, probably within a 6 km buffer of access points to such habitats.~~

5.5.18 Where the viability of a site could be shown to be at risk, an open book assessment by the Council, at the developers cost, will confirm whether priorities will need to be set. Where this occurs and there is the likelihood of a gap between growth and infrastructure provision, the Council will, where it can, build into legal agreements the mechanism by which, should development values rise during the course of the development phase, an ability to 'claw-back' contributions at a later date will be included within a Section 106 Agreement.

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Policy CP 6

Community facilities and services to meet local needs

The Council will work with developers and other public agencies to identify deficiencies in infrastructure. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Deliver timely infrastructure ~~delivery~~, especially those forming part of the Local Plan implementation and delivery schedule;
2. Safeguard existing community services and facilities where they are viable or can be made so unless replacement facilities can be provided without leading to any shortfall in provision;

3. Provide for utility provision, including digital infrastructure to enable fast Internet accessibility;
4. Where the viability of development may be threatened as a result of requirements arising from the Local Plan:
 - a. demonstrate their financial position via an open book assessment by the Council (at the developers' cost); and where this position is demonstrated:
 - b. prioritise developer contributions in accordance with the Local Plan implementation and delivery plan; and
 - c. agree mechanisms within a Section 106 Agreement to enable the position to be reviewed should development values rise during the course of the development phase. Where demonstrated, additional contributions will be made to ensure that infrastructure provision to meet the needs arising from the development is made.

5.6 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure

5.6.1 Our diverse and outstanding natural assets are the defining characteristics of Swale. **Could not findcopy_3721912_ID_4132** considers how natural assets should be considered across a range of issues; more specifically how together their protection, enhancement and management can contribute to our own quality of life, as well as benefiting the natural environment.

5.6.2 The NPPF looks to the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural environment by:

- protecting and enhancing it;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services in supporting society's needs;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in places affected by development proposals;
- establishing coherent and resilient ecological networks; and
- preventing and mitigating pollution.^(5.33)

5.6.3 The NPPF defines green infrastructure as a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.^(5.34) It expects local planning authorities to set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans which should plan positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure, including those at the coast.^(5.35)

5.6.4 As well as providing the attractive environments within which people will want to live, work and invest, green infrastructure has the following multiple benefits to the health and wellbeing of both people and nature:^(5.36)

- new open space and facilities to increase participation in sport and recreation;
- connections with our natural environment;
- new and enhanced habitats for biodiversity, including when the mitigation of adverse development impacts arising from development becomes necessary;
- resilience and adaptation of species and habitats to climate change;
- the opportunity to manage the risks to those in vulnerable areas such as from flooding;
- the conservation and enhancement of valued landscapes, spaces and heritage;
- counters to the effects of noise and pollution; and
- a safe network of car free routes linking home, work, school and areas of recreation.

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5.6.5 These multiple benefits of green infrastructure can attract new investment, raise land and property values by enhancing their amenity value, as well as helping businesses to retain a skilled and highly motivated workforce because of the attractive living and working environment created. This, in turn, supports Swale's economic ambitions.

5.6.6 Conserving and enhancing the Borough's outstanding natural environment is at the heart of a Local Plan strategy which seeks to create more robust ecological and landscape structures and reverse the decline in the quality and diversity of our landscapes and biodiversity. In assessing the impacts of development upon the natural environment, the Council will recognise and value our ecosystems for the wider services they provide to society, such as for food, water, flood mitigation, disease control, recreation and, importantly, health and well-being. Whilst it will safeguard the network of national and natural asset designations in the Borough, across all areas, designated or not, we will expect the use of landscape character and biodiversity assessments to drive natural asset focused developments. Where possible, all development proposals should seek to achieve a net-gain in biodiversity.



Picture 5.6.1 Elmley Marshes

mitigation and compensation of development schemes elsewhere in Kent and further afield when such actions cannot be taken closer to the point of impact and where such measures are not detrimental to the integrity of the Borough's own natural assets.

The Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy

5.6.9 Creating a natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy draws upon a considerable number of sources of evidence. These are outlined in Appendix 1. As well as informing the strategy, use of these documents in the preparation of development proposals and in partnership working is strongly encouraged.

5.6.10 A natural assets and green infrastructure network for Swale has been defined and mapped from this evidence base, comprising two main broad elements. These are:

1. The existing network: comprising open space, the principal public footpath network and landscape and biodiversity designations. This forms the basis of maintaining and enhancing the existing level of assets in the face of future change; and
2. The future network: shows where the network might be extended on a strategic scale, for example:
 - as a result of an assessment of sports or open space needs;
 - where biodiversity may need to change and migrate as a result of future climate change;

5.6.7 Part of avoiding impacts and achieving net gains for biodiversity is mitigation and, as a last resort, compensation. Development proposals must safeguard what is important, introduce new features and mitigate the remaining impacts, including use of compensation where unacceptable harm remains or where a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved. In such cases the Council will use existing, and develop new mechanisms to ensure adequate compensation.

5.6.8 The Council also considers that Swale has the potential to become a centre for habitat creation as part of co-operation with other Councils. We will encourage the use of land here to potentially act as a receptor for

- where habitats and landscapes are lost as a result of development that may need to be mitigated or compensated for in locations such as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; and
- where there are obvious gaps that can be filled to make for a more comprehensive and cohesive network.

5.6.11 As a result of identifying the network, a Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy has been created as a basis for both protecting and enhancing the existing network and for its future expansion over the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond (see Map 5.6.1). It highlights locations where there is either existing planned long term strategic activity or where it is expected that future strategic initiatives and emphasis will be placed. It is intended to be a strategy to guide both the consideration of development proposals and partnership working. It should be noted that the Strategy Map serves only to illustrate the broad approach to the protection and enhancement of the network at a strategic scale and is not representative of the boundaries of actual land parcels or initiatives. Site specific proposals are therefore expected to refer to source material and undertake their own assessments in order to demonstrate the most appropriate contribution towards the overall strategy. At present, the strategy map is not a full representation of assets and opportunities within the main urban areas and the Council will undertake urban green infrastructure studies when resources permit.

5.6.12 To ensure the co-ordinated implementation of the strategy, **Could not findcopy_3721912_ID_4132** seeks to maintain the integrity of the green infrastructure network and co-ordinate its enhancement. It sets out the expectations for new provision to achieve benefits across the economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development.

Potential adverse impacts on European designated wildlife sites

5.6.13 A particular issue where the strategy and Policy CP7 will play a key part is where potential adverse impacts on European designated wildlife sites are identified, for example, as a result of increased recreational pressures on bird habitats on the North Kent Marshes. These are matters affecting both the preparation of the Local Plan and for relevant development projects, both of which are required to comply with the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

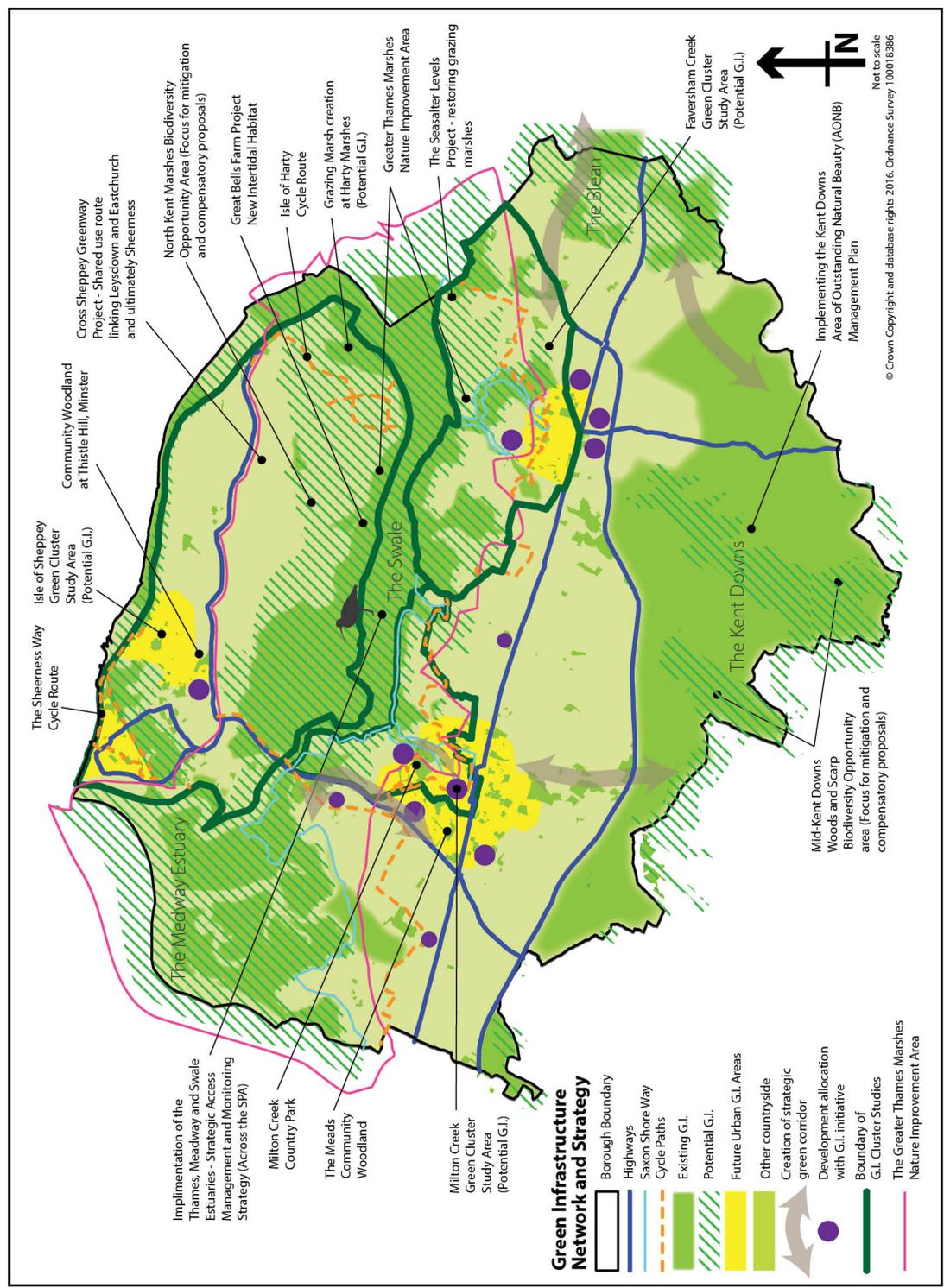
5.6.14 As explained in Chapter 4 and Policy DM28, partners are putting in place a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) that shall include the measures needed to mitigate growth. This shall also include a mechanism to ensure that development financially contributes toward mitigation measures, such as wardening, management or habitat creation that shall, in turn, be informed by the Green Infrastructure Strategy Map. The SAMMS will be used to support the determination of planning applications and inform any Local Plan review and the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

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5.6.15 To address the issue in both the short and longer terms, Policy CP7 requires management and containment of pressures. Where mitigation and/or compensation is required, it must be provided in an appropriate way either as a result of the cumulative impact of Plan proposals or individual development proposals. An integral part of the SAMM will be the monitoring of the effectiveness of the measures put in place through the tariff payments. If this monitoring highlights areas where changes to the mitigation measures are required, these will be implemented by the Partnership.

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Main Modification 111



Map 5.6.1 Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Network and Strategy (modification shows additional housing allocations with GI initiatives)

Main Modification 112

Policy CP 7

Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure

The Council will work with partners and developers to ensure the protection, enhancement and delivery, as appropriate, of the Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and its associated strategy. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Recognise and value ecosystems for the wider services they provide, such as for food, water, flood mitigation, disease control, recreation, health and well-being;
2. Protect the integrity of the existing green infrastructure network as illustrated by the Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy Map, having regard to the status of those designated for their importance as set out by Policy DM25 and Policy DM29;
3. Where assessment indicates that it is necessary to enhance and extend the network (including when management, mitigation and/or compensatory actions are required to address adverse harm), be guided by the Green Infrastructure Network and Strategy Map, prioritising actions toward identified Biodiversity Opportunity Areas;
4. ~~Minimise and mitigate impacts on European designated wildlife habitats, including, in the case of habitats across the North Kent Marshes, contributing to its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS);~~
5. Ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plan and projects, as it would not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of this Local Plan;
6. ~~Require the completion of project-specific Habitats Regulation Assessment, in accordance with Policy DM8, to ensure no likely significant effect upon any European designated site;~~
7. Require the completion of project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment, in accordance with Policy DM28, to ensure there are no likely significant effects upon any European designated site. For sites within 6km of the North Kent Marshes development must contribute to its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
8. Contribute to the objectives of the Nature Partnerships and Nature Improvement Areas in Kent;
9. Make the enhancement of biodiversity and landscape as their primary purpose;
10. Promote the expansion of Swale's natural assets and green infrastructure, including within new and existing developments, by:
 - a. delivering a high standard of design quality to maximise the social, economic, health and environmental benefits of green infrastructure;
 - b. providing a focus for social inclusion, community development and lifelong learning;
 - c. taking into account the guidelines and recommendations of relevant management plans and guidance, Biodiversity Action Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents;
 - d. contributing to the protection, conservation and management of historic landscapes, archaeological and built heritage assets;
 - e. achieving, where possible, a net gain of biodiversity;
 - f. providing new recreational facilities in accordance with Policy DM17, exploiting opportunities to link urban and countryside areas and to create new footpath and cycle links;

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- g. taking account of and integrating with natural processes, such as flood risk and utilising sustainable urban drainage; and
- h. including proposals to 'green' existing and proposed developed areas by increasing opportunities for nature in domestic gardens, streets and buildings, including street trees and in and around formal open spaces and sports provision.

5.7 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

5.7.1 Swale's built heritage is one of its greatest assets. The Borough has a wealth of historic areas, buildings, and features reflecting its Roman and medieval legacy, its naval and maritime history and its industrial and agricultural past. There are also historic and outstanding parks and gardens within the wider historic landscapes of the central North Downs, The Blean, the northern fruit belt, the northern coast and marsh and the Isle of Sheppey.^(5.37)

5.7.2 Whilst the NPPF and development management policies are likely to be sufficient to deal with detailed proposals affecting heritage assets, this section sets out the significance of our assets at the strategic level and how our Local Plan strategy for heritage is integrated across a range of issues.

5.7.3 Heritage assets are defined by the NPPF as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. They include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority during the process of decision making or through the plan-making process (including local listing).^(5.38)

5.7.4 One of the NPPF's core planning principles is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of current and future generations.^(5.39) It requires local plans to provide a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:^(5.40)

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

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5.7.5 Following completion of its Heritage Asset Review, June 2015, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy which shall:

1. Create a unified online database of all the designated heritage assets in the Borough;
2. Identify general areas with potential for future conservation area designation or extension, for example Minster and the Kemsley estate, and set out a programme for their formal designation;
3. Provide a list of areas of designed landscape which are of historic interest;
4. Identify areas which have archaeological or other heritage potential on a map;
5. Include a realistic programme for the preparation of conservation area appraisal documents for those conservation areas which do not have appraisal documents;

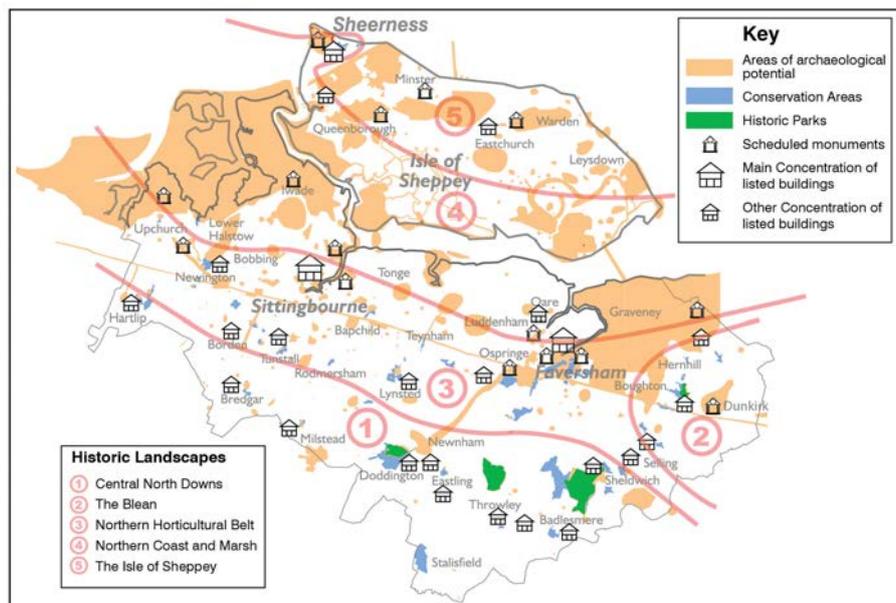
6. Review the need for additional Article 4 Directions in existing conservation areas;
7. Set out a methodology for compiling a local heritage list, potentially involving local amenity groups and civic societies;
8. Identify buildings of high value, not currently on the national list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, and propose additions to the list;
9. Provide action plans for dealing with heritage sites associated with the aviation pioneers and with defence;
10. Identify and prioritise conservation areas which would benefit from grant programmes to support their preservation and enhancement, and the re-use of vacant floorspace;
11. Provide an Action Plan for the preservation and enhancement of Sittingbourne Conservation Area;
12. Provide an Action Plan and continue to pursue bids for heritage-led regeneration in Sheerness to deal with redundant, underused and inaccessible heritage assets, in order to ensure they are integrated into future development proposals, such as the Sheerness Port Master Plan, and are enabled where possible to make an economically or culturally positive contribution to the future of the area;
13. Make provision for a survey of all the Grade II listed buildings in Swale, potentially involving local civic and amenity groups, to establish which are at risk, once every 5 years;
14. Produce an Action Plan for dealing with Heritage At Risk in Swale;
15. Produce proposals for involving local amenity groups, preservation trusts, civic societies and other third sector bodies more actively in the identification, assessment and preservation of the Borough's built heritage; and
16. Define criteria to identify those areas where new development would be inappropriate because of their historic significance.

5.7.6 When considering the impact of a proposed development on a designated heritage asset, the NPPF states that considerable importance and weight should be given to its conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.^(5.41) As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification and substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional.^(5.42)

5.7.7 The Local Plan strategy ensures that the historic environment is central within decision-making. Within each Core Policy, allocation or development management policy, there will rarely be a situation where there is not a relationship with heritage in some form, whether from green infrastructure, landscape, regeneration, economic development, transport, infrastructure planning, tourism, town centres and climate change. Policy CP8 recognises this interrelationship.

5.7.8 The Borough's rich legacy of heritage assets, both designated and non-designated, allows a broad strategic overview of their significance to be outlined in terms of their importance to the character and distinctiveness of the Borough. This is illustrated by Map 5.7.1 and Statement 7. Such assets act as drivers for regeneration and tourism within the Borough and can give developments an identity and character specific to the area. Heritage assets may offer opportunities for potential partnership working for the Council with amenity groups, building preservation trusts and/or civic societies.

5 Core planning policies



Map 5.7.1 Indicative location of main heritage assets in Swale

Statement 7

Strategic overview of Swale's heritage assets

The numbers: 1,856 listed buildings in Swale, 22 Scheduled Monuments and 4,818 sites on the Kent Historic Environment Record. There are also 50 designated conservation areas in the Borough. There are 4 Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, 41 listed buildings on the Council's Local Buildings at Risk Register, and 13 on the English Heritage register. Broadly, our assets comprise:

- historic landscapes - the central North Downs, The Blean, the northern fruit belt, the northern coast and marsh and the Isle of Sheppey;
- early settlements around Roman Watling Street and coastal creeks;
- Saxon and Norman settlements evidenced by e.g. defensive sites and churches;
- former monastic establishments at Faversham and Minster;
- medieval farmsteads with attendant barns, oast houses and outbuildings;
- time-span (of buildings present) and urban form/morphology of Faversham;
- rural lanes and droving tracks;
- the array of coaching inns focused at Sittingbourne, together with other features e.g. milestones, associated with its travelling past;
- the legacy of the industries of e.g. gunpowder production, milling, brewing, brick making, barge building, paper production and maritime trading;
- structures and features relating to pioneer aviators and the establishment of Great War and WW2 airfields at Eastchurch, Sheppey;
- centuries of Naval history at the former Royal Naval Dockyard at Sheerness;
- Great War defences to the west of Sittingbourne and along the Sheppey coast;
- World War II defensive structures, including those of strategic importance in the Battle of Britain;
- remnants of prehistoric activity in Swale, particularly across Sheppey and at Milton Creek, Sittingbourne;
- numerous villages, hamlets and parkland estates; and
- Swale's currently unknown archaeological sites.

5.7.9 The overview in Statement 7 is not intended to be a replacement for establishing the presence and value of heritage assets when considering new development. However, given the importance of many such assets, full weight to their preservation and enhancement will be given. In order to further assist the identification of heritage assets, in due course, the Council will produce a list of Swale's non-designated local heritage assets as soon as resources permit.

5.7.10 Parts of Swale's heritage are at risk, usually from neglect. For its part, the Council will aim to reduce this over time, but will be especially supportive of proposals that bring them back into viable and appropriate use, especially where they can contribute to our regeneration aspirations.

5.7.11 Within historic landscapes, historic patterns of land use define the 'grain' of existing patterns of settlement and landscape. As with urban development, new development is more likely to be successfully integrated into the Borough if it complements what has gone before. Its layout should take account of the historic landscape of the area. Existing patterns of roads, lanes, paths, hedgerow networks and field boundaries should help to shape new development, allowing the older landscape to show through the modern development. Historic landscape analysis will enable judgements to be made about the relative importance of different components of the landscape so that priorities can be set for preservation and enhancement.

5.7.12 Overall, development proposals will be informed by the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes within our settlement strategy, using these assets as a strong starting place for planning change. They will also consider the broad heritage issues identified by the settlement strategy (Policy ST3), within the area strategies (Policies ST5-ST7) and within development management policies, notably DM30-DM34. When bringing forward development proposals, a continuous assessment of considering heritage assets should be demonstrated from site and heritage assessment, master planning and development briefs through to design and access statements. The fruits of this work will be apparent in the design, layout and detail of the proposals.

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Policy CP 8

Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

To support the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will prepare a Heritage Strategy. Development will ~~preserve or enhance~~ sustain and enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets to sustain the historic environment whilst creating for all areas a sense of place and special identity. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Accord with national planning policy in respect of heritage matters, together with any heritage strategy adopted by the Council;
2. ~~Preserve and enhance~~ Sustain and enhance the significance of Swale's designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance and, where appropriate, in accordance with ~~Policy DM30 to Policy DM34~~ Policies DM30-DM34;
3. Respond to the integrity, form and character of settlements and historic landscapes;
4. Bring heritage assets into sensitive and sustainable use within allocations, neighbourhood plans, regeneration areas and town centres, especially for assets identified as being at risk on national or local registers;
5. Respond positively to the conservation area appraisals and management strategies prepared by the Council;
6. Respect the integrity of heritage assets, whilst meeting the challenges of a low carbon future; and

5 Core planning policies

7. ~~Support the appropriate use of heritage assets especially for employment and tourism uses where these represent the most appropriate way to preserve or enhance the heritage asset and~~
8. Promote the enjoyment of heritage assets through education, accessibility, interpretation and improved access.

End Notes

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para.18
- 5.2 SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013. NLP for SBC. Paras 4.31-32
- 5.3 Employment Land Review 2010, SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013. NLP for SBC, Planning Statement from National Farmers Union 2009 and The Feasibility of Developing Cultural Infrastructure as part of Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration Scheme, August 2009
- 5.4 The Future of Farming in Kent 2010. NFU, Agricultural Land in Swale (2015)
- 5.5 Policy WT11 Kent Downs AONB Management Plan 2004-29. Page 91
- 5.6 2011 Census
- 5.7 SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013, NLP for SBC para. 2.7
- 5.8 SHMA Update and Development Needs 2013, NLP for SBC para. 2.9 and Fig. 2.6.
- 5.9 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment for SBC Feb 2013. Para. 6.25.
- 5.10 Table 6.6 Analysis Using KCC Demographic Modelling for SNPP Interim 2011 Scenario
- 5.11 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 5.31
- 5.12 East Kent SHMA 2009. Table 12.22
- 5.13 2011-based SNPP scenario for 2013 SHMA update
- 5.14 2011-based SNPP scenario for 2013 SHMA update
- 5.15 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 7.13-14
- 5.16 SHMA Update and Development Needs Assessment 2013. NLP for SBC. Para. 7.19
- 5.17 Detailed Property Market Review 2011. CBRE for SBC
- 5.18 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 56
- 5.19 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 17
- 5.20 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 7
- 5.21 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 69
- 5.22 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Paras. 69-77
- 5.23 The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning 2011. Page 4
- 5.24 The Marmot Review: Implications for Spatial Planning 2011. Pages 29-30
- 5.25 Rapid Health Impact Assessment 2010. NHS for SBC. Page 7
- 5.26 Health Profile 2012, Swale, Swale Borough Council Core Strategy, Rapid Health Impact Assessment, September 2010
- 5.27 Rapid Health Impact Assessment 2010. NHS for SBC. Page 41
- 5.28 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Para. 156.
- 5.29 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Para. 17
- 5.30 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Paras. 157 and 162
- 5.31 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Paras. 173 and 177
- 5.32 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Para. 162
- 5.33 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 109
- 5.34 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Annex 2, Page 51
- 5.35 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 114
- 5.36 South East Green Infrastructure Framework: From Policy into Practice 2009
- 5.37 Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation 2001. Kent County Council
- 5.38 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Page 52
- 5.39 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 17
- 5.40 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 126
- 5.41 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 132
- 5.42 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 132

6 Land allocations for new development

6 Land allocations for new development

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This chapter deals with the land allocations that are necessary to meet our development targets. These are covered by the following sub-sections:

- **Section 6.2 Existing committed employment allocations:** Long-standing existing development areas, usually benefiting from an historic outline planning permission.
- **Section 6.3 Proposed employment allocations:** A mix of sites allocated for the first time and sites reviewed from the 2008 Local Plan.
- **Section 6.4 Existing committed housing allocations:** Long-standing existing development areas, usually benefiting from an historic outline planning permission.
- **Section 6.5 Proposed housing allocations:** A mix of sites allocated for the first time and sites reviewed from the 2008 Local Plan.
- **Section 6.6 Mixed use allocations:** Larger sites which contain other uses in addition to new housing.
- **Section 6.7 Regeneration areas:** Broad areas within which development is expected to come forward.
- **Section 6.8 Neighbourhood Plans:** As well as highlighting emerging neighbourhood plans, a guiding policy is provided for the most advanced of these at Faversham Creek.

6.2 Existing committed employment locations

6.2.1 Two major locations have formed part of the strategy for employment in Swale since the 1990s. Both benefit from an outline planning permission, with significant areas remaining to be developed.

Ridham and Kemsley, Sittingbourne

6.2.2 Situated on the northern edge of Sittingbourne, this site is suitable for B2 and B8 uses of the Use Class Order, which often require large amounts of land, although planning permission for B1 and a limited range of A3 Classes have been additionally granted. Some 149,200 sq m remains available for 'B' class uses. There is an approved development brief for the site.

6.2.3 Given its closeness to the Swale Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, a Habitats Regulations Assessment may be required and development will need to be carried out with reference to Policy DM 28. Planning applications would therefore need to include an assessment of disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion and other adverse effects on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues. Adequate space for the existing high voltage power lines will also need to be maintained. An archaeological assessment will determine the importance of the area and, if necessary, make proposals for mitigation.

Neatscourt, Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey

6.2.4 Situated on the A249 to the east of Queenborough and forming part of the Queenborough and Rushenden regeneration area (Policy Regen 2), there remains 137,000 sq. m available for 'B' Use Class Order uses. Recent development has seen the emergence of the area as a retail centre to complement Sheerness town centre, but it is important that any further proposals for retail uses do not undermine the role and retail functioning of the town and other local centres or the role of this site in meeting the Island's (and Swale's) industrial floorspace needs for the plan period.

6.2.5 Development is expected to accord with the Development Framework prepared for the Queenborough and Rushenden Master Plan adopted in 2010 (as amended). Planning applications will address their impacts on landscape, any necessary mitigation and compensation for loss of grazing marsh (some of which has already been implemented), protection of neighbouring residential uses and the retention and protection of existing flood defences. An archaeological assessment will determine the importance of the site, for instance its counter-wall, and propose mitigation if needed.

Policy A 1

Existing committed employment locations

Planning permission will be granted for land allocated for 'B' class employment uses, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), at:

1. Ridham and Kemsley, Sittingbourne; and
2. Neatscourt, Isle of Sheppey.

Development proposals will accord with the approved development briefs for the sites and satisfactorily address landscape, biodiversity, archaeological and existing power line issues.

6.3 Proposed employment allocations

Land south of Kemsley Mill, Sittingbourne

6.3.1 Located to the south of Kemsley Paper Mill and to the east of Swale Way, some 3.3 ha of land is allocated for a mix of 'B' use class employment uses to achieve up to about 8,000 sq m of floorspace. The site's main strengths are its good local road access to the A249 and proximity to existing employment activities. Access can be gained from Swale Way, but a transport assessment will determine the extent of contributions needed for improvements to the junction at the Grovehurst Interchange.

6.3.2 Due to the open and exposed landscape across Milton Creek and the Church Marshes country park, this is a highly visible landscape with distinctive landscape features with nearby land also of international, national and local importance to biodiversity. Visual impacts are lessened to some degree by the backdrop of the imposing mill complex, but with the allocation located on a slope leading down toward Milton Creek, a poorly executed scheme could result in adverse landscape and heritage impacts due to the site's prominent position and elevation.

6.3.3 At the foot of the slope, a short distance from the allocation, is the Castle Rough Scheduled Monument, a medieval moated settlement site, consisting of a waterlogged moat defining an island on which the buildings of a manor would have stood. The site is of particular importance because although its medieval buildings no longer exist above ground, most of the remainder of the site survives to a great extent intact and has preserved a wide range of features. Its significance is also informed by the physical evidence within the immediate area and the wider landscape with its interface between higher ground, the marshes, and estuary beyond.

6.3.4 Development of the site will need to be led by its landscape and heritage context with its siting, massing, design (inc. external lighting) and landscaping needing to minimise and mitigate visual impacts as far as possible, alongside the preservation and enhancement of the setting of the monument. The site is also crossed by National Grid's high voltage overhead power lines, the location of which should be fully considered. Together these matters will ultimately determine the amount of employment floorspace that is able to be brought forward.

6.3.5 Although separated by a road, visual impacts, and potentially, noise could adversely affect nearby residents and the design, layout, landscaping and uses proposed will seek to minimise these to acceptable levels.

6.3.6 Policies DM19-DM21 encourage the use of sustainable design and construction, renewable energy and sustainable urban drainage, all of which appear particularly appropriate to this location and proposal.

6.3.7 It is likely that it will not be possible to remove all adverse impacts on landscape and heritage, but there are opportunities for adjacent land in the same ownership to form a 15.5 ha extension to the Church

6 Land allocations for new development

Marshes country park which could offer wider landscape and biodiversity enhancements and increase natural and semi-natural greenspace for the town. It should also enable heritage assets to be improved with better management, access and interpretation to Castle Rough, leading to an enhancement in the condition and appearance of the monument itself. This might be achieved through clearance of vegetation, and better access to it (signage and paths) so that the monument is better revealed, appreciated and understood. Given the proximity of the allocation to the monument, there is also potential for associated archaeological deposits to be revealed and therefore archaeological investigation to precede development should take place in accordance with relevant guidance and Policy DM34.

6.3.8 Provided that development is able to facilitate the transfer of this land, alongside any physical improvements necessary to secure access and enhancements to landscape, heritage and biodiversity, the overall benefits of the proposals should outweigh any remaining adverse impacts. However, it will not be possible to determine this without further assessment at the planning application stage. A Habitats Regulations Assessment may also be required to determine any impacts arising to the Special Protection Area.

6.3.9 Given the context of the site and the issues arising, use of the Council's Design Panel is strongly advocated as a means to ensure a development that is successfully integrated with its surroundings.

Policy A 2

Land south of Kemsley Mill

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses (use classes B1, B2 or B8) on land to the south of Kemsley Mill, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Bring forward proposals to minimise the potential visual, heritage and residential amenity impacts of development through high quality integrated landscape-led design, including the use of the Council's Design Panel;
2. Facilitate an extension to the Church Marshes country park to bring about enhancements to the significance, condition, appearance and appreciation of the wider landscape, biodiversity and heritage of the area;
3. Achieve the preservation and enhancement of the Scheduled Monument (including its setting) and undertake archaeological evaluation of the site in accordance with Policy DM34 and respond accordingly;
4. Contribute toward improvements to highway infrastructure where identified by a transport assessment; and
5. Bring forward sustainable design and construction, renewable energy and sustainable urban drainage measures in accordance with Policies DM19-DM21.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Land at West Minster, Sheerness

6.3.10 This 2.5 ha site at West Minster Sheerness is allocated for 7,500 sq m of 'B' use class employment uses. The site occupies an important location on the A249 Trunk Road and on the approach to Sheerness. The site has been reviewed since its allocation in the 2008 Local Plan and it remains the Council's view that this site is suitable for a range of employment uses. However, its size has been reduced to avoid biodiversity and archaeological concerns and to limit its visual intrusion into the open countryside. The standard of layout/design and landscaping associated with the proposal will be required to respond to and reflect its prominent location on the approaches to Sheerness. The archaeological potential of the site should be assessed and any impacts arising mitigated.

Policy A 3

Land at West Minster, Sheerness

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses (use classes B1, B2 or B8) on land at West Minster, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Achieve a high standard of design and landscaping in recognition of the site's prominent location;
2. Financially contribute toward improvements to infrastructure where identified by a transport assessment;
3. Assess, minimise and mitigate impacts upon biodiversity and archaeology.

Land at Cowstead Corner, Queenborough

6.3.11 Located between the A249, Cowstead Corner and the Neatscourt employment allocations to the west are two sites of 1.36 ha and 1.6 ha respectively. The sites form part of the wider regeneration area for Queenborough-Rushenden identified by Policy Regen 2. They present an opportunity to modestly extend and round off the existing Neatscourt employment allocation.

6.3.12 The northern site could be appropriate for hotel use (use class C1), perhaps for around 20 bedrooms. In addition to meeting a need for accommodation on the Island, the design of the building would need to reflect this prominent gateway 'first impressions' location on the rising ground at the edge of the marshes. The high quality design needed for this location will point to a better quality hotel being provided in a high quality landscaped environment, as opposed to that which would normally be achieved by the budget hotel sector. The limited size of the site may present challenges to achieving this and as such, the Council will encourage use of its Design Panel process. Archaeological evaluation and mitigation of impacts should also be undertaken at this site.

6.3.13 Planning permission will not be granted for roadside services such as truck stop facilities, refuelling facilities and similar services in this prominent location.

6.3.14 To achieve the maximum developable area, access to the site should ideally be achieved from the existing employment allocation to the west. Should that not be possible, then a transport assessment will need to additionally demonstrate that a safe access can be achieved in what would be a location close to the roundabout.

6.3.15 For the land to the south of the A249, there is likely to be only limited potential to extend the employment allocation for 'B' use class uses for up to 5,600 sq m. Other than potentially being able to provide some additional capacity for the existing building plot to the west, it is likely that the majority of the site would be required for landscaping, given its prominent location.

6.3.16 Although these sites lie outside the current extent of Neatscourt employment area, they will closely relate both physically and visually to development which is planned there. As such, developers bringing forward proposals are advised to have regard to the 2010 approved Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document (as amended) to ensure that complementary schemes are proposed.

6 Land allocations for new development

Policy A 4

Land at Cowstead Corner, Queenborough

Planning permission will be granted for employment uses on sites north and south of the A249 at Cowstead Corner, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). The northern site is allocated for an hotel (use class C1), whilst the southern site for use classes B1, B2 or B8. Development proposals will:

1. North of the A249, satisfy the Council that the design and landscape framework for the site and buildings reflect their prominent gateway location and does not include facilities associated with roadside services;
2. South of the A249, secure vehicle access from the adjacent employment land and achieve significant landscaping reflecting the site's prominent gateway location;
3. Undertake archaeological evaluation and mitigation of impacts prior to development of either site; and
4. Be complementary to the provisions of the Queenborough/Rushenden Masterplan SPD.

Land at Whiteway Road, Queenborough

6.3.17 The 2008 Local Plan allocated two parcels of land amounting to 14.1 hectares, both within the ownership of Aesica Pharmaceuticals and capable of accommodating about 49,350 sq m for the expansion of the company. The larger site is located immediately east of Whiteway Road, and the other is south of West Minster. Both sites, which consist of wet grazing marsh, are included as part of the Diggs and Sheppey Court Marshes Local Wildlife Site. On the larger site, the grazing marsh was previously considered by Natural England to be of equivalent value to similar habitat within Sites of Special Scientific Interest elsewhere in the North Kent Marshes. The land also falls within a Local Landscape Designation and the important local countryside gap between Sheerness, Queenborough and Minster-Halfway. It is also subject to tidal flooding.

6.3.18 A 2002 detailed development brief was approved by the Council following the preparation of considerable evidence to show that environmental impacts could be minimised to acceptable levels and this supported the allocation of the site specifically and solely for development in conjunction with Aesica's operations. Given the importance of this company to the local economy, these matters were considered to represent an overriding need at that time.

6.3.19 For this Local Plan to support the continuation of this allocation, the previous evidence would need to have been updated, including that necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Habitat Regulations Assessment. This has not been provided.

6.3.20 Should the landowners wish to progress development of the site, depending on its timing, this would be a matter for a future Local Plan. However, given that this is a multi-national pharmaceutical company, expansion needs may arise unexpectedly. If this occurs ahead of a Local Plan review, prompting the need for a planning application, the Council will consider the proposals in the context of updated evidence, having full regard to national planning policy, local plan policies CP1, ST1, ST3 and ST6, together with development management policies for the natural and historic environments (inc. the separation of settlements).

Land at Selling Road, Faversham

6.3.21 This site comprises 1.8 ha for employment purposes of land and buildings situated on the western side of Selling Road and to the south of the vacant Macknade Garden Centre. The site is a unique and attractive opportunity for a range of small-scale employment uses appropriate to this semi-rural location. These could complement the uses already established on the eastern side of Selling Road, though new

retail would need to be very carefully scrutinised given the site's location relative to the town centre. Given the modest scale of the employment envisaged, the site could achieve some 6,300 sq m of new 'B' use class employment floorspace.

6.3.22 Development will mainly comprise conversion of the existing buildings on the site, although where considered appropriate, the Council will permit some new build. Any such development will need to be of the highest design standard and respect the traditional vernacular of the existing buildings, especially those identified as heritage assets. Likewise, the site's current relationship with the open countryside to the south would benefit from the creation of a new landscaped boundary. Future planning applications should also include an archaeological assessment, which, if required, will lead to proposals for mitigation. The conversion of buildings will also require an assessment of any wildlife that may be occupying them.

6.3.23 Current access to the site is restricted, so uses that attract high volumes of traffic would not be appropriate without improvements of the type planned for in connection with nearby proposed development which will secure a safe junction with the A2 (unless such improvements have already been made).

Policy A 5

Land at Selling Road, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for employment ('B' use class) on land and buildings to the west of Selling Road, Faversham, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Comprise uses appropriate in scale to a semi-rural location;
2. Predominantly comprise the sensitive conversion and re-use of existing buildings;
3. Achieve a high built and integrated landscape design standard, respecting and reflecting the traditional vernacular of existing buildings and by securing a new landscaped edge to open countryside;
4. Prepare a Transport Assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements necessary; and
5. Assess, minimise and mitigate potential adverse impacts upon biodiversity and archaeology.

Land at Graveney Road, east of Faversham

6.3.24 A 2.0 ha site north of Graveney Road and adjoining an existing employment area is allocated for employment purposes. The site could provide some 7,000 sq m of floorspace suitable for B1, B8, or possibly B2 use class uses.

6.3.25 There are constraints to development here arising from its topography and the resulting need to place new buildings below existing site levels so as to reduce visual impacts on the wider open landscape around it. This will be possible through access to the site being secured via the existing entrance from Graveney Road, which will also service the adjoining existing employment area subject to Policy New AX 3. Any remaining visual impacts will be mitigated by the retention and significant enhancement of existing vegetation, which may require use of some adjacent land.

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6.3.26 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.3.27 Achieving these objectives is likely to be best secured through a comprehensive approach with the redevelopment of the adjacent area subject to Policy New AX 3. A Transport Assessment is likely to be required and some localised improvements could be required.

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Policy A 6

Land at Graveney Road, east of Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for employment 'B' use class uses on land at Graveney Road Faversham, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

1. Secure access for both the site and the allocation to the west, subject to Policy MU6;
2. Undertake a Transport Assessment and undertake any highway and other transportation improvements necessary;
3. Undertake archaeological evaluation and mitigation of impacts prior to development; and
4. Minimise adverse impacts upon the landscape and surrounding countryside to acceptable levels and landscape the site, using, if required, adjacent land to form an appropriate and attractive urban edge to the town.

6.4 Existing committed housing location

Thistle Hill, Minster, Isle of Sheppey

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6.4.1 This site, on the southern side of Minster, has an outline planning permission, with development having come forward in detailed phases since the 1990s. The site has been through a number of development brief and Local Plan reviews which have led to a steady increase in the number of dwellings expected to come forward. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2014/15 indicates that the undeveloped area still has sufficient capacity to accommodate ~~426~~ 473 dwellings, bringing the total completed at this location to around 1,800.

6.4.2 Development will proceed in accordance with the approved development brief and applications for the remaining phases will include an archaeological assessment to determine the site's importance and, if needed, proposals for mitigation. Subject to confirmation by a Transport Assessment, financial contributions will also be sought to improve traffic conditions on the A2500 through to the A249.

6.4.3 Of the remaining developable area some 4.3 ha of open space is required that includes 0.8 ha of parks and gardens, 0.3 ha of amenity greenspace, 3 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace, 0.02 ha of space for children and young people and 0.1 ha of allotments. Actual amounts will be determined at planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development.

Policy A 7

Thistle Hill, Minster, Isle of Sheppey

Planning permission will be granted for land allocated for housing, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), at Thistle Hill, Minster, Isle of Sheppey. Development proposals will accord with the approved development briefs and satisfactorily address archaeological issues. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

6.5 Proposed housing allocations

Stones Farm, Sittingbourne

6.5.1 Approximately 18ha of land is allocated at Stones Farm for residential development comprising 550 dwellings and open space, as an eastward extension to the built confines of Sittingbourne. The site is located on sloping farmland between the railway line and the A2, part of a shallow valley with the Tonge Mill and stream conservation area (also proposed as Local Green Space by Policy DM 18).

6.5.2 A Development Brief for the site was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in 2011 following the earlier allocation of the site in 2008. An adjacent area of 15ha of open space was also allocated at that time, in recognition of the character and sensitivity of the shallow valley between Sittingbourne and Bapchild/Tonge and the need to safeguard the separation between Sittingbourne and Bapchild. These allocations have been combined to form a single allocation for the whole site, with the eastern part of the site forming part of an important local countryside gap subject to Policy DM 25. Part of the allocation is included within Policy AS 1 which provides for a safeguarded search area for the proposed Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. This is so that all future potential options for completing this road to the A2 can be considered.

Main Modification 118

6.5.3 A mix of dwellings will be sought in accordance with Policy CP 3, including those for affordable housing, and Gypsies and Travellers. ~~As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 550 dwellings, land will be made available for six pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These shall be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be provided in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

Main Modification 119

6.5.4 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.5.1 Development concepts at Stones Farm, Sittingbourne (modification to reflect approved development brief)

6.5.5 A transport assessment with any planning application will determine the need and timing for any improvements to the transport network and the phasing of development relative to completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. A financial contribution toward this road will be sought if confirmed by the transport assessment.

6.5.6 Development will take place in accordance with the adopted Supplementary Planning Document, which sets out design principles, the point of access from the A2 and the distribution of open space, demonstrating how the development will be integrated with the landscape buffer and the proposed public open space beyond. As well as limiting the impact of development on the landscape, the proposed landscape buffer will form a significant soft edge to the new eastern edge of Sittingbourne that provides the opportunity to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and an increase in the natural and semi-natural greenspace overall for the town and Bapchild. This form of open space will also be required to offset potential recreational pressures on European Wildlife Habitats. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace

opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.5.7 In accordance with Policy DM17, the amount of open space provided will be sufficient to meet generated need for 1.5ha of parks and gardens, 0.6ha of amenity greenspace, 5.7ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace and 0.1ha of space for children and young people. In terms of sports and formal play space, contributions will be required to enhance existing provision in the area. Actual amounts will be determined at planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development.

Main Modification 120

Policy A 8

Stones Farm, Canterbury Road, Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for 550 dwellings, together with open space and landscaping at Stones Farm, Sittingbourne, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Accord with the adopted Development Brief Supplementary Planning Document;
2. Achieve a design and layout reflecting the prominent and sensitive position of the site as the new eastern edge of Sittingbourne;
3. Provide open space to meet the needs of residents, including the provision of 15 ha of land to the east of the developed area so as to maintain the separation between Sittingbourne and Bapchild;
4. Achieve pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas;
5. Provide for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10 Policy DM8;
6. Through an integrated landscape strategy achieve a green buffer to the development and through landscaping and the management of open space, provide natural and semi-natural greenspace and achieve a net gain in biodiversity overall;
7. Provide the infrastructure needs arising from the development, including those identified by the Local Plan Infrastructure and Delivery Schedule (including, if justified by a transport assessment, a financial contribution toward the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road); and
8. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

Land at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne

Main Modification 121

6.5.8 Extending to 19.3 ha, land is allocated at Crown Quay Lane for residential development, with a significant area of open space so as to achieve land for recreation and provide for mitigation arising from the site's constraints:

6 Land allocations for new development

6.5.9 The site predominantly comprises a cleared former industrial estate, with some land and buildings still in use. Its northern boundary is an important frontage to Milton Creek, whilst its southern boundary adjoins Eurolink Way and other employment uses. Sittingbourne Retail Park and the Eurolink Industrial estate borders the site to the west and east.

6.5.10 It is Milton Creek that provides the most significant opportunity here. It is one of Sittingbourne's greatest assets – a green corridor of water, reeds open spaces and pathways linking the town to the wider Swale estuary marshes. With imagination and innovation, the landscape toward the head of the creek offers a potentially stunning waterfront setting for a new district close to the town centre.

6.5.11 Development will be led by an integrated landscape strategy to achieve a framework for the site. This will be informed by the [CLG and Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway Green Cluster Study for Milton Creek](#). It will create public access to the creek side and enhance connectivity between the site and the northern bank of the creek by providing a landmark footbridge to the Saxon Shore Way footpath. Tree lined pedestrian/cycle links to this bridge should be secured through the development and to adjacent roads at Crown Quay Lane, Eurolink Way and Milton Road/Mill Way. The Council will also expect the developer to use its endeavours to secure pedestrian access to the west of the site into the Sittingbourne Retail Park.

Concept diagram to be deleted.

6.5.12 The frontage appearance of the new development and spaces provided at the creek are important, given the strong views of the site from Gransdens Wharf, Craft Marsh and Milton Creek Country Park on the opposite bank. Development of the site should recognise the role it will play in creating a new regenerated approach to the town from the north with architectural statements that create landmark views of the site and achieve a high quality foreground to the south of the town centre. Street tree planting in Crown Quay Lane and Eurolink Way will also significantly raise the standard of the environment on its approaches from the town centre. At all stages, use of the Council's Design Panel will be strongly recommended.

6.5.13 The northern and eastern parts of the site are at risk of flooding and are not suitable for development. Land comprising 8.7ha will fulfil a number of roles, including for public open space and flood mitigation, but also for biodiversity enhancements. These will also be required to offset possible recreational impacts on the Swale Special Protection Area (subject to an Appropriate Assessment) and those at a nearby designated local wildlife site. Development will restore the land to a natural condition so that new habitat and greenspace can be created. Here and across the site, 7.2 ha of open space will be required, including 1.3 ha for parks and gardens, 5.1 ha of natural & semi-natural greenspace and 0.16ha for allotments. Contributions will also be required to enhance sport and formal play facilities in the area. Together these measures will minimise recreational impacts on European Wildlife Habitats and create additional habitat away from it. A Habitat Regulations Assessment may be required to further examine these issues and may require a financial contribution toward wider initiatives across the North Kent Marshes as required by Policy GP7 and Policy DM29.

6.5.14 A site flood risk assessment will be required in accordance with Policy DM 21 that will also examine the scope to open up historic tributaries, including the Bourne stream. Opportunities should be taken to bring the qualities of the creek (views, vegetation and water) back into the development area. The use of sustainable urban drainage within the development will also be sought.

6.5.15 The above constraints leave a site area that can potentially accommodate 474 dwellings with a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy GP 3, including those for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 474 dwellings, land will be made available for five pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.

6.5.16 A Transport Assessment will be required to confirm housing numbers ahead of the completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (together with any financial contribution toward it if required), as well as other transport improvements. This will also inform an assessment of impacts upon air quality objectives in St. Paul's and East Street, both of which are declared Air Quality Management Areas:

6.5.17 Within central Sittingbourne there is a need for new health facilities arising from new housing growth. It is likely that these needs can be met from within the regeneration of the town centre, however, should this not be achievable then it is likely that this site would need to make land available for this facility.

6.5.18 Potential contamination arising from historic industrial activities will need to be made safe for residential development to take place. Where existing industrial uses are to be retained or adjoin the site, a high standard of residential amenity will be achieved.

6.5.19 An assessment of local non-designated heritage assets will be required, including that associated with former barge and sea-plane construction. Where possible, they should be incorporated into the development, perhaps as part of any community facilities that may be needed. An archaeological assessment is also likely to be required.

6.5.20 The developer will prepare a development brief that can be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to address the above issues in order to provide guidance to planning applications.

Main Modification 122

6.5.21 Extending to 18.2 ha, land is allocated at Crown Quay Lane for residential development, with a significant area of open space so as to achieve land for recreation and provide for mitigation arising from the site's constraints.

6.5.22 The site predominantly comprises a cleared former industrial estate, with some land and buildings still in use. Its northern boundary is an important frontage to Milton Creek, whilst its southern boundary adjoins Eurolink Way and other employment uses. Sittingbourne Retail Park and the Eurolink Industrial estate border the site to the west and east.

6.5.23 It is Milton Creek that provides the most significant opportunity here. It is one of Sittingbourne's greatest assets – a green corridor of water, reeds, open spaces and pathways linking the town to the wider Swale estuary marshes. With imagination and innovation, the landscape toward the head of the creek offers a potentially stunning waterfront setting for a new neighbourhood close to the town centre.

6.5.24 Development will incorporate an integrated landscape strategy to achieve a framework for the site. This will be informed by the CLG and Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway Green Cluster Study for Milton Creek. It will create public access to the creek side and enhance connectivity between the site and the northern bank of the creek by providing a landmark footbridge to the Saxon Shore Way footpath. Tree lined pedestrian/cycle links to this bridge should be secured through the development and to adjacent roads at Crown Quay Lane, Eurolink Way and Milton Road/Mill Way. The Council will also expect the developer to use its endeavours to secure pedestrian access to the west of the site into the Sittingbourne Retail Park.

6.5.25 The frontage appearance of the new development and spaces provided at the creek are important, given the strong views of the site from Gransdens Wharf, Craft Marsh and Milton Creek Country Park on the opposite bank. Development of the site should recognise the role it will play in creating a new regenerated approach to the town from the north with architectural statements that create landmark views of the site and achieve a high quality foreground in views of the town centre.

6 Land allocations for new development

Whilst some taller buildings may be appropriate, these will need careful location and design as the prevailing backdrop to Sittingbourne is generally of lower rise buildings. Care will be needed not to obscure this backdrop and important views, including those of St. Michael's Church. Street tree planting in Crown Quay Lane and Eurolink Way will also significantly raise the standard of the environment on its approaches from the town centre. At all stages, including during preparation of the Masterplan/development brief, use of the Council's Design Panel will be strongly recommended.

6.5.26 The northern and eastern parts of the site are at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency have agreed that land raising could take place to enable residential development to be above the 1:200 year flood risk level, taking into account climate change and freeboard. A site flood risk assessment will be required in accordance with Policy DM21 in order to ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere at adjacent sites. The assessment should also examine the scope to open up historic tributaries, including the Bourne stream. Opportunities should also be taken to bring the qualities of the creek (views, vegetation and water) back into the development area. The use of sustainable urban drainage within the development will also be sought.

6.5.27 Given the desirability, in terms of urban design, public access, open space and biodiversity, of maintaining and creating a green and restored frontage to the creek, a future planning application/development brief will need to ensure sufficient space is made available to fulfil these roles with development set back from the creek frontage. This will need to include a 15m access corridor for the Environment Agency along the Creekside. Within this 'set back' area and elsewhere across the site, open space will be required, comprising parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspace and allotments. Contributions will also be required to enhance sport and formal play facilities in the area. Actual amounts will be determined at the development brief/planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development.

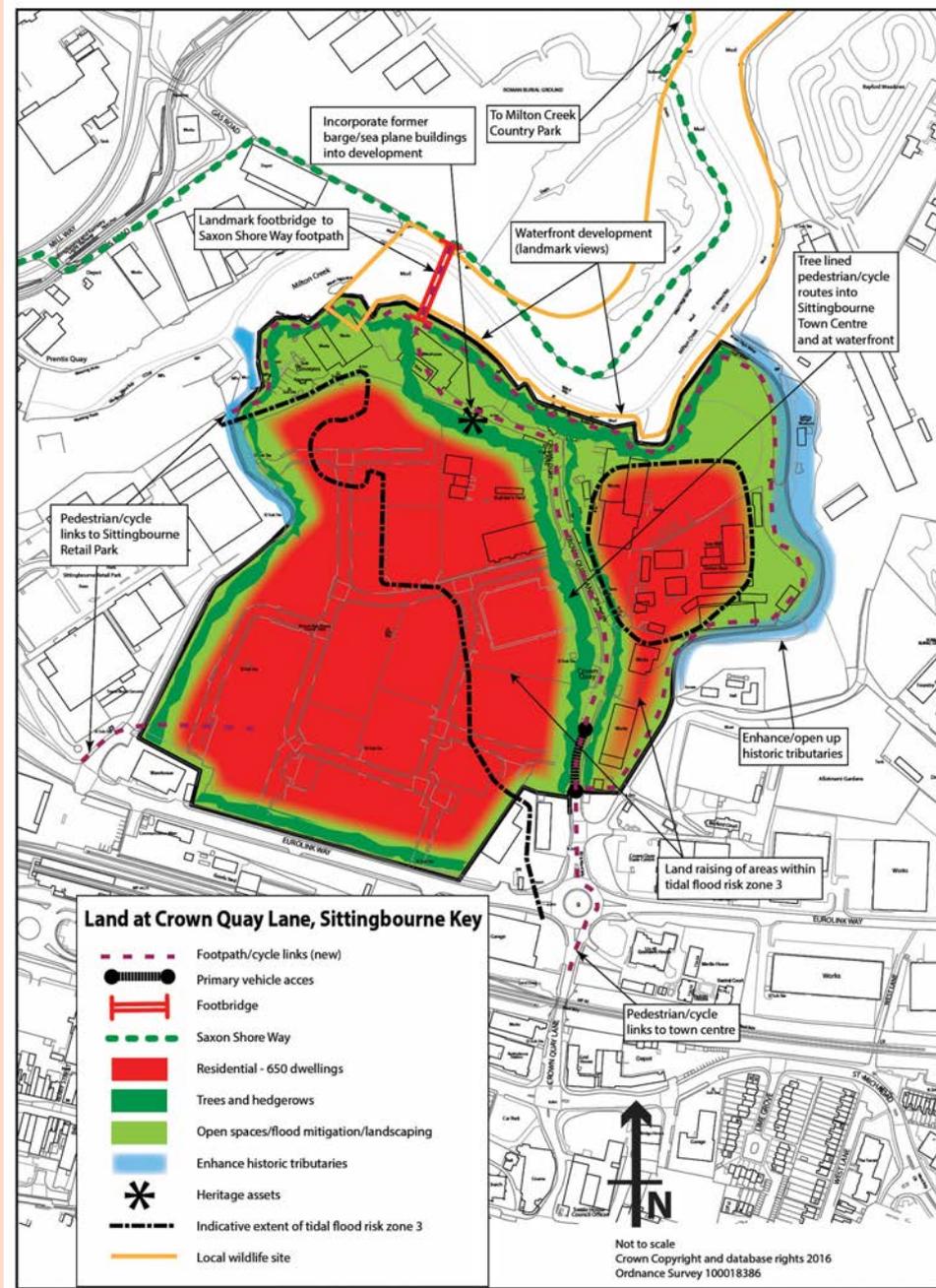
6.5.28 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. The proposed allocation is located to the south of the Milton Creek Local Wildlife Site. Development proposals should also assess the likely impact upon the site and, if necessary, propose mitigation.

6.5.29 Taking into account the above components, a site area of some 15 ha is potentially available for development across several ownerships which through use of medium to higher densities could potentially accommodate a minimum of 650 dwellings (subject to securing high quality design and an appropriate mix) with a range of housing types and an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing.

6.5.30 Alongside new housing, the Council will also give consideration to other mixed uses, provided that they are in accordance with Policies DM1 and DM2 and that their contribution does not reduce the amount of housing for the site to levels below that indicated by the Local Plan.

6.5.31 With several owners, including a number with currently occupied sites, it will be important that an overall Masterplan/development brief for the site is prepared, following consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the Council and other landowners within the allocation. This document shall also indicate the phasing of development in recognition that some parts of the site will come forward earlier than others.

6.5.32 A Transport Assessment will be required to determine transport impacts and the improvements necessary to address them. This will also inform an assessment of impacts upon air quality objectives in St. Paul's and East Street, both of which are declared Air Quality Management Areas.



Map 6.5.2 Development concepts at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne
(modification showing changes to site area and increased development area)

6.5.33 Potential contamination arising from historic industrial activities will need to be made safe for residential development to take place. Where existing industrial uses are to be retained or adjoin the site, a high standard of residential amenity will be achieved.

6.5.34 An assessment of local non-designated heritage assets will be required, including that associated with former barge and sea-plane construction. Where possible, they should be incorporated into the development, perhaps as part of any community facilities that may be needed. An archaeological assessment is also likely to be required.

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 123

Policy A 9

Land at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for 474 dwellings, open space and habitat creation at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Accord with a Development Brief SPD that will be adopted by the Borough Council;
2. Achieve high quality design befitting the prominent position of the site on Milton Creek and in important views;
3. Restore land and provide open space to meet the needs of residents, mitigate flood risk and create creekside biodiversity habitats;
4. Be led by an integrated landscape strategy that will create a strong landscaped framework of open spaces, habitat retention and creation and planting, including the use of tree lined streets within the development and at Crown Quay Lane and Eurolink Way;
5. Achieve pedestrian/cycle links to the town centre and pedestrian links to the Sittingbourne Retail Park, Milton Creek and its Country Park (via a landmark bridge);
6. Mitigate adverse impacts on biodiversity, including those arising from any Habitat Regulations Assessment so as to achieve a net gain in biodiversity overall. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
7. Undertake flood risk assessment in accordance with Policy DM21 and bring forward proposals that create and utilise water features (inc. use of sustainable urban drainage) within the development;
8. Achieve for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10;
9. Assess and respond to and mitigate impacts on any heritage assets;
10. Undertake a transport assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed development;
11. Assess impacts upon and ensure that air quality objectives are not compromised; and
12. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including, if required, health facilities.

Subject to securing high quality design and an appropriate mix, planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 650 dwellings, open space and habitat creation at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

1. Accord with a Masterplan/Development Brief (developed through stakeholder consultation, including the Borough Council and Swale Design Panel);
2. Achieve high quality design befitting the prominent position of the site on Milton Creek and in important views;
3. Restore and enhance land on the creek frontage to provide open space and a creekside path to meet the needs of residents, mitigate flood risk (if required) and create creekside biodiversity habitats;
4. Incorporate an integrated landscape strategy that will create a strong landscaped framework of open spaces, habitat retention and creation and planting, including the use of tree lined streets within the development and at Crown Quay Lane and Eurolink Way;

5. Achieve pedestrian/cycle links to the town centre and pedestrian links to the Sittingbourne Retail Park, Milton Creek and its Country Park (via a landmark bridge);
6. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on local wildlife sites are mitigated in accordance with Policy DM28. In the case of such impacts upon European designated sites, these will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
7. Undertake flood risk assessment in accordance with Policy DM21 to ensure that flood risk is not increased at adjacent sites and to bring forward proposals that create and utilise water features (inc. use of sustainable urban drainage) within the development;
8. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
9. Be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP5 which shall also include an assessment of the impacts on residential areas from adjacent commercial uses;
10. Assess and respond to and mitigate impacts on any heritage assets;
11. Undertake a transport assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed development;
12. Assess impacts upon and ensure that air quality objectives are not compromised; and
13. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including, if required, health facilities.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Milton Pipes, Mill Way, Sittingbourne

6.5.35 At the Milton Pipes industrial site in Mill Way, 4 ha of land is allocated for residential development which will come forward once the current occupier has relocated to its second site within the town. The site fronts Mill Way, St. Paul's Street and Cooks Lane and is set behind Milton Regis High Street, a conservation area. This historic area occupies an elevated position, with a significant change in levels down to the western boundary of the Milton Pipes site. This is a prominent site on one of the main routes to and from the town centre. The environment here is compromised by traffic and poor quality frontages to development.

Main Modification 124

6.5.36 Given the site's prominent location on the approaches to the town centre, high quality development that enhances the frontage will be required, whilst respecting the adjacent conservation area, including views of the roof-scape of the buildings there. Development will be led by an integrated landscape strategy which will provide a structure for the site that will include open space and street tree planting that will require development to be set back from Mill Way. Given the current previously developed state of the site, through use of landscaping and open space, it should be possible to achieve a net gain in biodiversity overall. The site could yield 240 dwellings, with a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3.

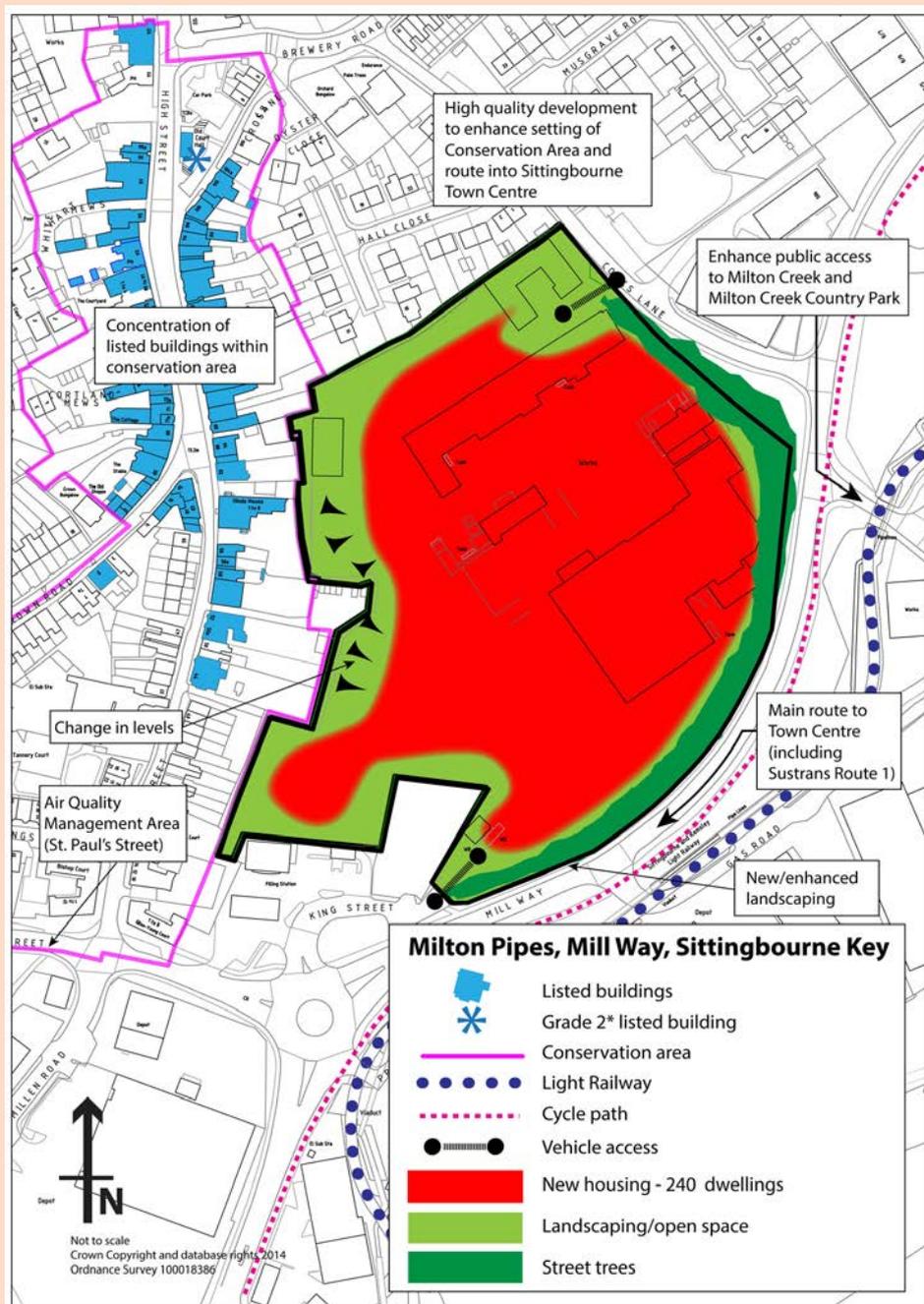
6.5.37 ~~The site could yield 190 dwellings, with a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 190 dwellings, land will be made available for two~~

6 Land allocations for new development

pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.

6.5.38 As a consequence of this busy location, nearby St. Paul's Street has been designated an Air Quality Management Area and an assessment of the scheme's impacts on air quality objectives will be required. A Transport Assessment will also confirm housing numbers ahead of the completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (together with any financial contribution toward it if required), as well as other transport improvements that may be necessary.

Main Modification 125



Map 6.5.3 Development concepts at Milton Pipes (modification shows increased development yield)

6.5.39 In accordance with Policy DM17, some 2.8 ha of open space is required – to include, 0.5 ha of parks and gardens, 0.2 ha of amenity greenspace, 2 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace and 0.1 ha of allotments. Contributions will be required to enhance sport and formal play facilities in the area. Actual amounts will be determined at planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development. Contributions will be required to enhance sport and formal play facilities in the area. As this site lies close to Milton Creek, the Saxon Shore Way and the Country Park, linkages should be made to these important assets in accordance with the [CLG and Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway Green Cluster Study for Milton Creek](#). For example, public access to the creek side should be enhanced and further connectivity provided by a contribution toward the proposed landmark footbridge from the northern bank of the creek to the development site at Crown Quay Lane (Policy A9). Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

Main Modification 126

Policy A 10

Milton Pipes, Mill Way, Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 190 240 dwellings at Milton Pipes, Mill Way, Sittingbourne, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Be led by an integrated landscape strategy that will include a substantial landscaped edge to Mill Way that will include street trees and open space with the objective overall of achieving a net gain in biodiversity and minimising impacts on European wildlife habitats;
2. Achieve a design and layout that enhances the quality of the environment in Mill Way and St. Paul's Street and safeguards the views and setting of the Milton Regis Conservation Area;
3. Enhance pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, adjoining residential areas and to Milton Creek, including making a contribution toward the provision of the proposed landmark footbridge to the Crown Quay Lane housing allocation (Policy A9);
4. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
5. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with ~~Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
6. Undertake a transport assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed development;
7. Assess impacts upon and ensure that air quality objectives are not compromised; and
8. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

6 Land allocations for new development

Plover Road, Minster, Isle of Sheppey

Main Modification 127

6.5.40 Although adjacent to the wider Thistle Hill community, the Plover Road site does not form part of that development. Extending to 3 ha, it is located well within the built-up area of Minster close to existing facilities and is envisaged as providing ~~130~~ 97 dwellings, with a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3. ~~including those for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 130 dwellings, land will be made available for one pitch for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. Pitches will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

6.5.41 There will be a need to create an attractive landscaped frontage to Parish Road, whilst an archaeological assessment will determine the site's importance and, if needed, proposals for mitigation.

Main Modification 128

Policy A 11

Land at Plover Road, Minster

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 130 97 dwellings at Plover Road, Minster, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Create an attractive landscaped frontage to Parish Road;
2. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with ~~Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
3. Assess and undertake any mitigation needed for impacts upon archaeology;
4. Prepare a Transport Assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed developments implemented;
5. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development; and
6. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Main Modification 129

Land to the west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster

6.5.42 This 25 ha site is located on the western edge of the built up area of Minster. The northern boundary adjoins the Isle of Sheppey Academy and part of Parsonage Chase, the eastern boundary adjoins Barton Hill Drive, and the southern part of the site adjoins the A2500 Lower Road. The site comprises open arable farmland with a ~~very~~ exposed and undulating landform which gently rises

from Lower Road, before steepening to more of a crest at the north western boundary of the site (close to the Sheppey Academy). Although much of the existing residential urban edge is mostly hidden by this landform, the western urban edge of Minster is fairly prominent, whilst the land along Lower Road is very open arable farmland.

6.5.43 The site is in a relatively sustainable location to the south-west of the centre of Minster and within walking distance of most of its services and has the potential to help meet the Borough's future growth needs close to the strategic road network, public transport choices and the other services at the western end of the Island. The site is allocated for some 620 dwellings, together with open space, landscaping and transport improvements.

6.5.44 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, as well as bringing forward affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8.

6.5.45 Landscape evidence notes the area as having a moderate sensitivity, with a moderate capacity to accommodate change. It notes the landscape is mostly rural, with an element of scenic quality because of the open, panoramic views available from and across the land (some of which are far reaching to the Kent mainland across the sensitive marshland landscapes to the south). There are, though, some urbanising influences from infrastructure routes and existing development. Given these issues, the Council will require the preparation and approval of a Masterplan/development brief for the site, whilst at all stages, use of the Council's Design Panel will be strongly recommended.

6.5.46 Given these landscape and visual sensitivities, it is important that the extent, form and scale of development respects the existing landscape character of the site and for it to be contained by and integrated into the wider landscape. This should be achieved by substantial woodland and strengthened hedgerow planting along the southern and western boundaries (including if necessary adjoining land) and by provision of broad green corridors and other natural green space within the development. It would also be important that the development respects the existing contours.

6.5.47 Steps should also be taken to safeguard and appropriately manage an area of overgrown orchard to the rear of Parsonage Chase, which may be important for biodiversity. An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.5.48 The development in the eastern part of the site could be a moderate to high density neighbourhood, with distinct identity, focused around a network of green spaces and streets, open spaces and enclosed streets. The development in the southern and western parts of the site should be at a lower density with a more rural feel.

6.5.49 Opportunities should be taken to link the site with the wider footpath network and to establish pedestrian and cycle links between the existing and new residential areas; this may require third party land.

6.5.50 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. Any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA.

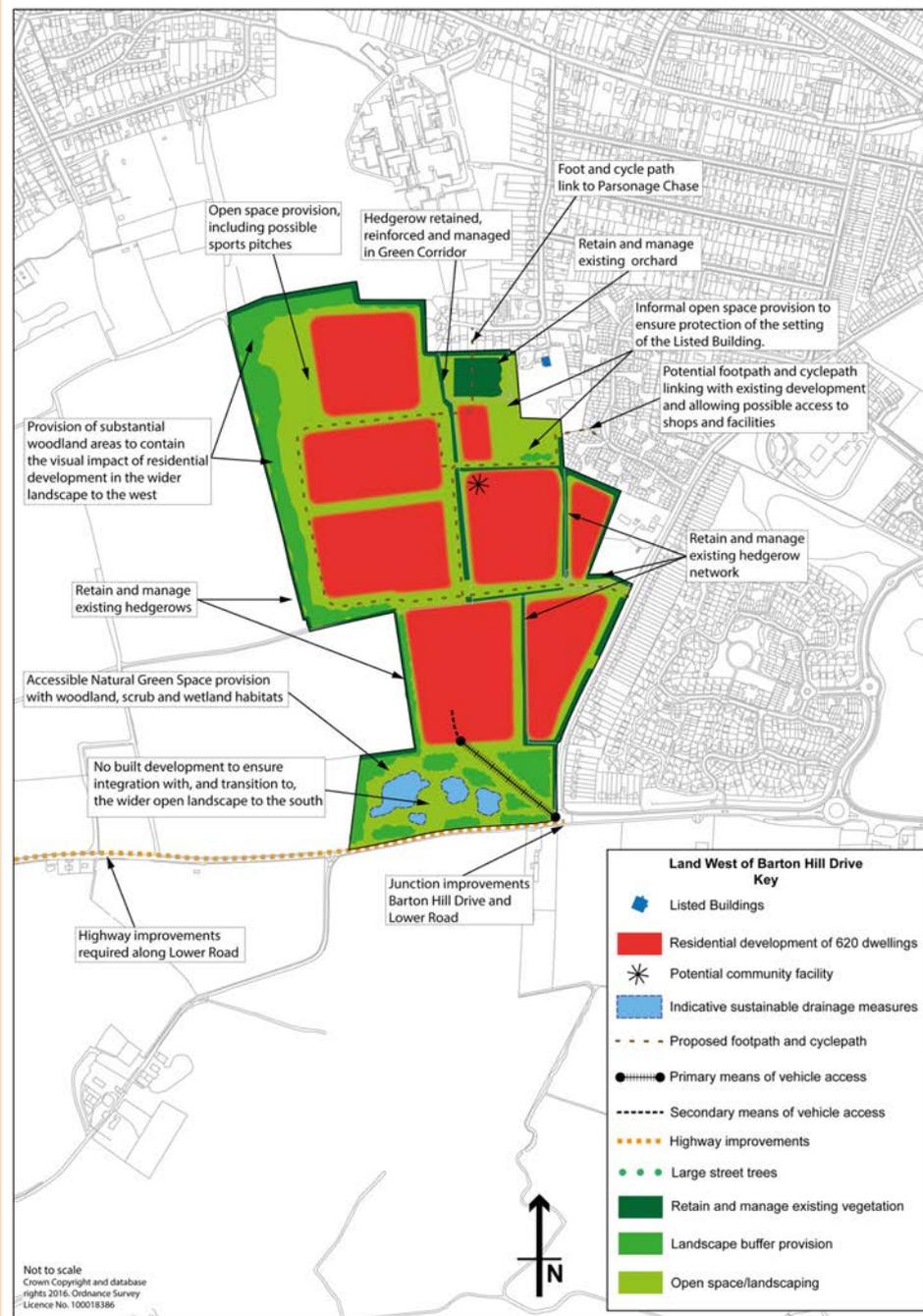
6.5.51 Adjoining the site is Parsonage Farm, a listed building, the setting of which should be conserved through use of landscaping and open space.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.5.52 Primary vehicle access to the site would be from Barton Hill Drive at its junction with the Lower Road where a junction improvement will be necessary, whilst a secondary access will also be required from Barton Hill Drive further north. In order to bring this site forward, improvements would need to be made to the A2500 between the roundabout at Cowstead Corner and Barton Hill Drive, so as to address peak time queueing. Furthermore, a transport assessment will also consider the likely impact on the Minster and Halfway Roads. This assessment should also consider the link capacity of the A249 and any improvement required here, and elsewhere as appropriate, will also need to be funded by development.

6.5.53 Community facilities may also need to be provided, as identified by the Council's Implementation and Delivery Schedule. Although there is a bus stop adjacent to the east of the site, its frequency could be improved and development may need to support this with appropriate funding.

6.5.54 Parts of the west side of Barton Hill Drive do not have a footway, whilst there are currently also no pedestrian crossings to enable pedestrians to cross safely to access the site. These should be provided, whilst cycle and walking links to and from the site would additionally be required. There is also scope to link the site to Parsonage Chase, which would provide more appropriate pedestrian/cycle connectivity to nearby educational establishments. Cycle/pedestrian facilities on Lower Road will also need to be improved to Cowsted Corner with associated pedestrian crossing facilities.



Map 6.5.4 Development concepts for land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster

Main Modification 130

Policy New AX 1

Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 620 dwellings, including landscape, open space and transport improvements on land to the west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster, as shown on the Proposals Map. Proposals shall accord with a Masterplan/development brief and these, together with planning applications will:

6 Land allocations for new development

1. Accord with Policy CP4, in particular provide a strong landscape framework (shown by a submitted Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) to integrate the development into the wider landscape and achieve a net gain in biodiversity, including the provision of:
 - a. substantial woodland buffers on the southern and western boundaries of the development and, if necessary, on adjoining land, to be provided as advance planting;
 - b. open space to serve the needs of the development, including a significant proportion of Accessible Natural Greenspace, and green corridors incorporating existing and new footpath routes;
 - c. retention of existing site features, including existing hedgerows and the overgrown orchard to the rear of Parsonage Chase, which shall be positively managed;
 - d. a site wide landform parameter plan, showing how the existing landform will be respected and how the extent of cut and fill associated with roads and developable parcels will be minimised; and
 - e. conserve the setting of the listed building at Parsonage Farm and undertake a Heritage Assessment, assessing any potential impact on heritage assets.
2. Achieve high quality design, responding to local landscape character and distinctiveness as identified by the the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011. Building heights should reflect the scale and form of existing surrounding development. Individual reserve matters planning applications will be governed by an agreed design code;
3. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure shall be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
4. Provide a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
5. Be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP5;
6. Provide a footpath and cycle path links to the surrounding area;
7. Deliver a scheme of transport improvements to address capacity issues in the area including the A2500 between Cowstead Corner and Barton Hill Drive, the junction of the A2500 with Barton Hill Drive and provisions for cyclist and public transport; and
8. Provision of infrastructure needs arising from the development, particularly health and other needs identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Main Modification 131

Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway

6.5.55 Land at Belgrave Road, Minster is located on the edge of the built up area of Halfway. This site is generally flat, rising gently to the south at the base of Furze Hill, which masks the site from wider views. The land is currently being used for agricultural purposes.

6.5.56 The 5 ha site adjoins existing residential development to the north-west and the north-east, together with an area of open space to the north-east at Rosemary Avenue. The south-east and south-west boundaries of the site adjoin open fields.

6.5.57 The site is bounded by discontinuous lines of hedgerow and trees. The poplar tree line extending along the north of the site are subject to a tree preservation order.

6.5.58 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing.

6.5.59 An Archaeological Assessment will be required which the development will need to respond to at planning application stage.

6.5.60 Although enclosed on the northern and eastern sides by an existing urban edge and contained by the higher landform of Furze Hill, it will nonetheless be important to ensure the landscape character and visual impact of development is carefully mitigated. This shall be achieved by substantially enhanced hedgerows, with large size trees on the southern and western boundaries of the site and with appropriate planting within the development. These measures are also proposed to address impacts arising from the prominence of the site in short distance views from the public footpath on Furze Hill to the south.

6.5.61 The potential for impacts on protected species would need to be specifically assessed through the submission of an Ecological Assessment at planning application stage, and mitigation provided, as appropriate.

6.5.62 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. Any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA .

6.5.63 Open space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17, to include accessible natural green space.

6.5.64 Vehicle access would be provided from Belgrave Road, however it may be necessary to provide an alternative access route from Rosemary Avenue to increase connectivity and permeability with the surrounding built form and to provide an alternative emergency vehicle access route. This will be further assessed at the planning application stage. Should the access be required to cross part of the existing adjacent playing field, the applicant will need to demonstrate that the playing field is either no longer required, or a suitable alternative will need to be provided as part of the application and safeguarded by a legal agreement.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.5.5 Development concepts at Belgrave Road, Halfway

Main Modification 132

Policy New AX 2

Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 140 dwellings, together with open space and landscaping on land at Belgrave Road, Halfway, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

1. Be in accordance with Policy CP4 and, in particular, demonstrate and provide a strong landscape framework (shown by a submitted Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) to include:
 - a. enhanced hedgerow and woodland planting on the southern and western boundaries to form a new, attractive urban edge; and
 - b. green corridors with footpath and cycle path routes through the site.
2. Be of a high quality of design and of predominantly two storeys in height, demonstrating any higher development will not breach the skyline of Furze Hill in views from the south. The southern edge of the development should face outwards onto the countryside;
3. Provide open space to meet the needs of residents in accordance with Policy DM17;
4. Through both on and off site measures, that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure shall be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
5. Provide for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
6. Provide appropriate vehicle access, including a separate emergency access point off Rosemary Avenue, if required, subject to demonstrating that the playing field is either no longer required, or provision of suitable alternative as part of the application and safeguarded by a legal agreement; and
7. Provide the infrastructure needs arising from the development, particularly health and other needs identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Land at the Western Link, Faversham

6.5.65 This 8.3 ha site, located at the western edge of Faversham, but within the urban area, comprises a brickworks and vacant vegetated land. Previously allocated for employment in the 2008 Local Plan, this is now unlikely to be realised as more accessible and attractive locations are available elsewhere. The site is now proposed for housing to meet wider housing needs at the town and contribute to the Borough's overall housing land supply.

6.5.66 The site is a natural extension to the housing to the west of Faversham that can be achieved without encroachment onto the wider countryside and Area of High Landscape Value designation beyond the town's compact boundaries. With the site situated on the main approach to Faversham, development design should be led by an integrated landscape strategy to achieve landscaping, habitat retention and creation and open space. Additionally, a strong landscaped belt to the western boundary will be required to achieve minimal visual impacts in views from the west. This is important both because the site could be prominent in views from the Area of High Landscape Value and due to the need to create an attractive edge to the town.

6.5.67 Part of the landscape strategy will be the objective to achieve a net gain overall for biodiversity. An ecological assessment will be required to determine the biodiversity interests on the site and bring forward proposals for mitigation if adverse impacts cannot be avoided. The assessment of potential impacts should include those on the designated roadside nature reserve adjacent the site and the designated Bysing Wood local wildlife site. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated

Main Modification 134

6.5.69 The site could yield ~~240~~ 250 dwellings, with a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing. ~~and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 240 dwellings, land will be made available for two pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration with the wider community.~~ **In accordance with Policy DM17, some 4.3 ha of open space is required – the majority to provide natural and semi-natural greenspace, plus financial contributions to existing provision for sports pitch and play areas. Actual amounts will be determined at planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development.**

6.5.70 A new vehicular access to the site will be needed off the Western Link. Cycling and walking routes will be secured between the site and the existing established residential areas to the east. The development will need to achieve a nil-detriment in air quality within the Air Quality Management Area on the the A2 at Ospringe. Transport and air quality assessments prepared by the developer will inform this.

Main Modification 135

6.5.71 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.5.72 Current and former industrial uses in the area suggest that contamination and mitigation will need to be considered as part of any planning application. Undesignated heritage assets, such as those associated with former brick making should be assessed and, if appropriate, integrated into the development.

Main Modification 136

Policy A 12

Land at the Western Link, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 240 250 dwellings on land at the Western Link, Faversham, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Provide a design and layout which responds to the prominent position of the site on the western approach to Faversham. Development will be led by an integrated landscape strategy that will provide landscaping and habitat creation to achieve a substantial landscaped western boundary to the site to additionally minimise visual impacts;
2. Improve the quality of the environment and housing choice to strengthen the housing market area of the adjacent deprived neighbourhood;
3. Produce a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with ~~Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
4. Undertake a transport assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed development;

6 Land allocations for new development

5. Achieve pedestrian and cycle links to existing residential areas;
6. Assess impacts upon and ensure that air quality objectives are not compromised;
7. Assess and respond to any undesignated heritage assets on and adjoining the site in accordance with Policy CP8;
8. Achieve a net gain for biodiversity overall by:
 - a. preparation of an ecological assessment to determine the site's interests (inc. the adjacent roadside nature reserve) and to bring forward proposals for mitigation if adverse impacts cannot be avoided, having considered the retention of existing vegetation/habitats as far as possible;
 - b. using appropriate landscaping and open space to encourage biodiversity and to offset any recreational impacts that may arise;
 - c. making an assessment of potential impacts upon the Bysing Wood local wildlife site and providing such measures for their mitigation; and
 - d. ensuring that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.
9. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

Main Modification 137

Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham

6.5.73 Approximately 4 ha of land is allocated at Graveney Road ~~predominantly for employment use for housing~~. The site lies on the eastern edge of Faversham and comprises land and buildings previously associated with a garden furniture manufacturer (approx 2.7 ha), together with a number of existing uses. ~~The 2008 Local Plan sought to enable the redevelopment of the majority of the site to form a headquarters for the garden furniture manufacturer. The allocation at that time was for a mixed use development (employment/residential) tied to the specific needs of the then occupier.~~

6.5.74 ~~Now that the garden furniture manufacturer has ceased trading this approach has been reviewed. The site is no longer suitable to meet modern employment needs and its good location relative to local services provides an opportunity to redevelop the site for housing. The poor quality of the buildings on site will necessitate a redevelopment of a significant part of the site, although existing businesses are not envisaged as being affected. With the site located close to the strategic road network, it is well placed to meet the town's future employment needs, but in so doing, this location on the approaches to the town demands a high quality design, both in terms of the built development but also through the creation of a substantial landscaped frontage.~~

6.5.75 ~~In considering the wider issue of employment in Faversham, the Council acknowledges that achieving employment uses here may require consideration of a range of uses to support the vitality and delivery of employment land. In considering the merits of other supporting uses, the primary objective for the site is that it should be predominantly for employment.~~

6.5.76 The site is allocated for a minimum of 90 dwellings with a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3. A noise assessment will also consider the relationship of the site with the adjacent railway line.

6.5.77 A Habitats Regulations Assessment may need to be undertaken, given the location of the site relative to the Swale Special Protection Area. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. The proposed allocation is also located to the south of a Local Wildlife Site at Abbey Fields. Development proposals should assess the likely impact upon the site and, if necessary, propose mitigation.

6.5.78 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.5.79 The site adjoins a second employment allocation (Policy A6) and the development of the site should provide the means of access to allow both sites to be accessed from a single point, whilst facilitating an internal access to the adjacent site.

Main Modification 138

Policy New AX 3

Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 90 dwellings on land at Graveney Road, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Remove poor quality buildings and achieve a high quality built and landscape design befitting the prominent position of the site;
2. Provide a shared means of access with land subject to Policy A6;
3. Prepare a transport assessment, having regard to any proposals for the land to the east, and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed developments;
4. Improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to the town centre and other locations;
5. Assess the noise impacts arising from the nearby railway line;
6. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
7. Assess the likely impact upon the Abbey Fields Local Wildlife Site, and if, necessary bring forward mitigation proposals;
8. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8; and
9. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including health provision, and as identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 139

Preston Fields, Faversham

6.5.80 This site is 14 ha and extends from the A2 Canterbury Road in the north to the M2 in the south. The western boundary adjoins the rear gardens of dwellings on Ashford Road, while to the east, the boundary adjoins a highway depot, a waste recycling facility and, further to the south, Salters Lane. The site is located at the edge of town, it is relatively well connected in terms of access to services, although the A2 represents a barrier for pedestrians and cyclists.

6.5.81 The site is used for agriculture and comprises a shallow, dry valley, which is mostly rural in character, despite the presence of the M2 and urban fringe influences in the northern part of the site. The valley has a gentle slope rising to Ashford Road, with a steeper slope rising to Salters Lane.

6.5.82 Heritage evidence indicates that the site makes a high positive contribution to heritage setting of the town, due to the proximity of the Preston Next conservation area, its rural setting and views. Landscape evidence indicates the site as having a moderate capacity to accommodate change.

6.5.83 Given this landscape and heritage context, residential development should be located in the centre of the valley where there is existing residential development to the west and other urban fringe uses to the east. Development should not be located directly adjacent to the Conservation Area in the northernmost part of the site and should retain the more undeveloped rural character of the land to the south, including the rural character of the southern section of Salters Lane in accordance with Policy DM26. Land to the south of the Ashford Road access and west of Salter's Lane should be retained in open use in perpetuity, whilst an urban park should be provided fronting the A2, bounding the Conservation Area on its western side.

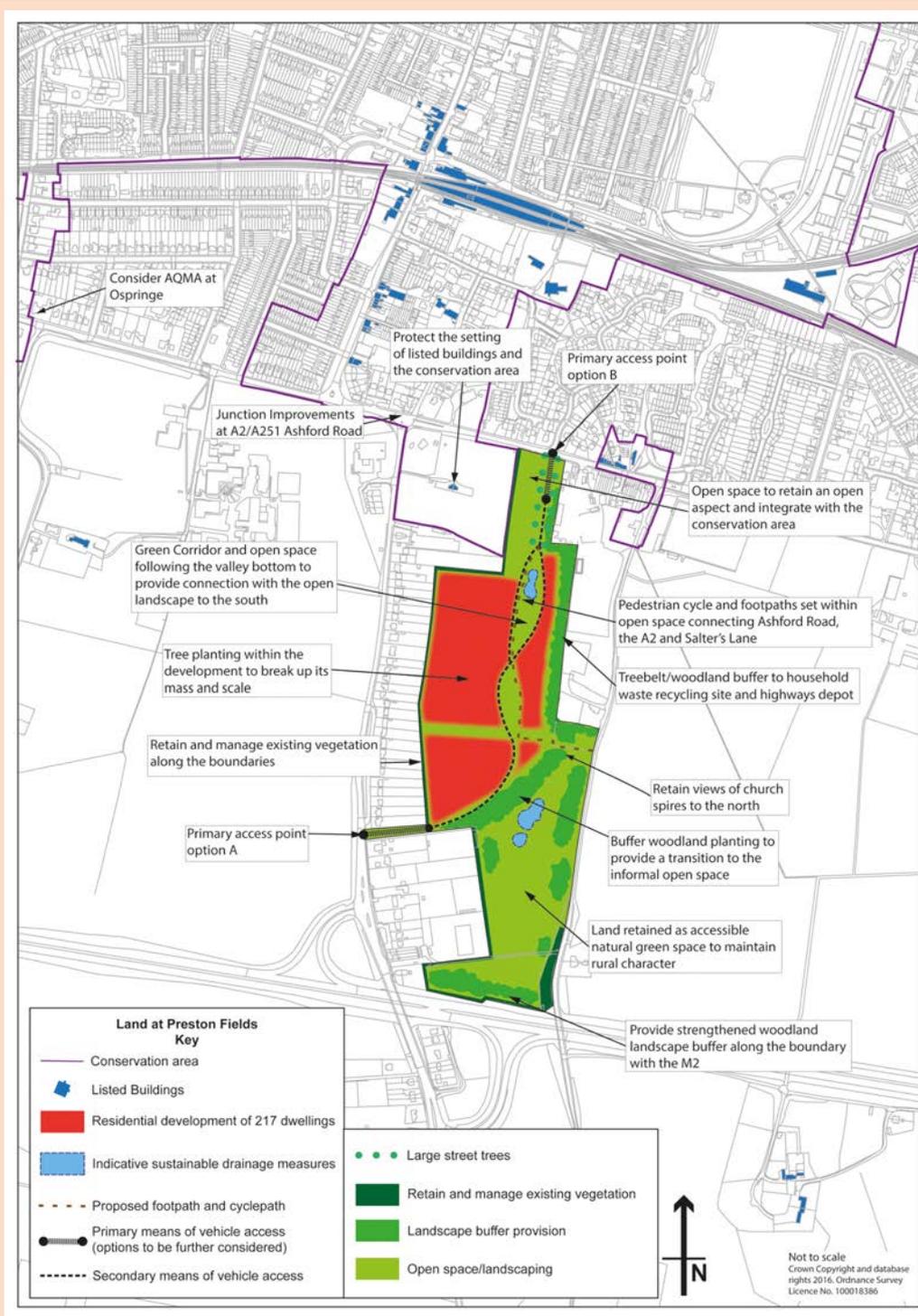
6.5.84 It is anticipated that residential development should be of medium density of no more than 2 storeys in height. There may though be scope for some higher density terraces and town houses toward the north of the site, with a tighter urban form, focused around a network of green streets. The residential development to the south should demonstrate a transition to a lower density and have a leafy character and more rural feel. A central green corridor running north to south should be provided, following the valley bottom and substantial tree belt/woodland planting will be required separating the development from the highway depot and the recycling centre. At all stages, use of the Council's Design Panel will be strongly recommended.

6.5.85 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing.

6.5.86 An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.5.87 Open Space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents in accordance with Policy DM17.

6.5.88 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.



Map 6.5.7 Development concepts for Preston Fields, Faversham

6.5.89 A heritage assessment will be required which shall consider such matters as the contribution of the site to the setting of heritage assets and, given its location close to Watling Street, the potential for archaeology. Mitigation will be required to address any matters arising.

6.5.90 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.5.91 There are two potential vehicle accesses to the site; from the A2 and from the A251. A transport assessment will need to determine the most appropriate location for the primary access to the site and whether the site should include a direct road link from the A2 to the A251 to bypass the current A2/A251 junction. The assessment will also need to consider the need for highway improvements, including works to the junction of Ashford Road and the A2 and the A2 junction with the Mall. In addition, the need for any mitigation works at Junction 7 of the M2 will need to be determined in conjunction with Highways England. Provision will also need to be made for footpaths and cyclists.

6.5.92 Planning applications may be required to submit a noise assessment to consider the impact of traffic on the M2 on new residents. An air quality assessment shall also ensure that the Air Quality Management Area in the centre of Ospringe is not compromised. Innovative mitigation measures may be required to address any impacts.

Main Modification 140

Policy New AX 4

Land at Preston Fields, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 217 dwellings, landscape and open space on land at Preston Fields, Faversham, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

1. Accord with Policy CP4, in particular, demonstrating an integrated Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan that shall include:
 - a. a large area of Accessible Natural Greenspace in the southern part of the site, including a substantial area of woodland, orchard and meadow planting to help absorb the development into the wider landscape;
 - b. a green corridor running through the centre of the development along the valley bottom;
 - c. retention of a corridor view to Faversham and Preston Parish Church towers;
 - d. a large green space adjoining Canterbury Road and the Conservation Area; and
 - e. woodland/tree belt buffer on the north eastern boundary.
2. Be of a high quality design, of mostly two storeys in height responding appropriately to the local character and distinctiveness of the Preston Next Conservation Area;
3. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure shall be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
4. Provide pedestrian and cycle links within the development and to the adjacent network;
5. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
6. Submit a detailed heritage assessment to consider the significance of the impact of development at the local level on the heritage setting of the town and other heritage assets in accordance with policies DM32-DM33. An archaeological assessment should consider the importance of the site and, if necessary propose mitigation;
7. Submit a noise assessment and implement any mitigation arising;
8. Address air quality impacts arising in the Ospringe AQMA, including the implementation of innovative mitigation measures;

9. Be supported by a transport assessment, to determine the need and timing for any improvements to the transport network, the phasing of development, the options for accessing the site and any transport improvements arising which shall be subject to developer contributions/provision; and
10. Provide for infrastructure needs arising from the development, including health provision and as identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Main Modification 141

Iwade Expansion

6.5.93 The village of Iwade has expanded considerably since it was first identified as a growth point in the 1990s, with some 1,200 new homes completed since that time, bringing with them benefits to the community in terms of new facilities, open space and traffic management.

6.5.94 Iwade is identified for a further phase of growth in recognition of its location close to Sittingbourne and the strategic road network and because, outside the Isle of Sheppey, it remains one of the few areas with land of lower agricultural quality (i.e. not best and most versatile). There are though a number of strategic issues needing to be addressed if the village is to expand further:

1. **Maintaining the separation of Iwade from Sittingbourne:** This is most keenly felt on its southern and eastern sides, especially given the growth proposed at Sittingbourne.
2. **Minimising visual impacts on the exposed character of much of the surrounding landscape:** This affects the whole of the village, but more so in some locations on the northern, western and south-western sides.
3. **The relationship with nearby environmental designations:** The North Kent Marshes Area of High Landscape Value and the Swale and Medway Special Protection Areas, Ramsar and SSSIs are close to the northern edge of the village where increased populations could increase recreational and other impacts. Iwade is also known for its populations of Great Crested Newt, a protected species.
4. **Improving the overall self-containment and reliance of the village:** Development has brought new facilities for the village and whilst further growth will need to meet any further needs arising, the availability of facilities at nearby Sittingbourne will place limits on the ability of the village to become more self-contained as a result of new facilities. Choices for public transport are not as well developed as other Rural Local Service Centres and need to be improved.
5. **Minimising flood risk:** This is associated with the Iwade stream that runs through the centre of the village, and especially the impact upon any growth to the west of the village.
6. **The ability of the transport network to accommodate further growth:** The capacity of the Grovehurst Interchange and, further afield, J5 of the M2 will be impacted by growth at this location, although in the case of Grovehurst Interchange, the Council and Highway Authorities will be reliant upon the financial contributions for improvements that development will bring. The timing of the J5 improvements may also limit the amount of development able to come forward in advance of it. Whilst transport modelling for the Local Plan has confirmed that these constraints are not insurmountable, detailed development proposals will need to further assess these issues at the local level.

6.5.95 There are a number of options to expand the village; however, the Council's assessment is that sites within an eastern arc running from the north of the village, clockwise through to the south, represent the most suitable relative to the above objectives and constraints. Alternatives not progressed

6 Land allocations for new development

involve land less accessible to village facilities and the transport network and/or involve land with more significant to major adverse landscape and visual impacts and/or substantial adverse impact upon heritage assets.

6.5.96 Within the proposed eastern arc for expansion, some 572 dwellings, with open space and landscaping, are envisaged across three areas:

1. To the north where 62 dwellings are proposed;
2. To the east of the village where 440 dwellings are proposed across two sites to the north-east and south-east; and
3. To the south, at Pond Farm, where 70 dwellings are proposed.

6.5.97 Common issues for these three areas together is the need to address landscape and visual impacts, including those associated with the settlement gap with Sittingbourne and the management and mitigation of impacts upon the nearby Special Protection Area.

6.5.98 In the case of ecological interests, access close to the site onto the wider marshes could result in increased disturbance to birds if not managed. Whilst evidence indicates that this risk can be managed, much will depend upon the master planning and detailed stages of development and the role the location plays in supporting species using the SPA. Further expansion of the village will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution for the residual impacts further afield will be required in accordance with the strategy for North Kent, agreed by Councils and included within the Local Plan within policies CP7 and DM28. To inform the HRA assessment, wintering bird surveys should be conducted to determine if significant populations of designated birds use the site as functionally supporting habitat. This will enable appropriate avoidance measures to be identified and implemented.

6.5.99 In addition to recreational pressure considerations, the HRA will also need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, surface water run-off, lighting or visual intrusion on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues.

6.5.100 These requirements present the village with a considerable opportunity by which major and strategic new open space, in the form of a country park in excess of 42 ha, could be provided so as to form a secure and permanent green buffer between the village and the A249 with links to existing greenspace. To achieve these outcomes, this provision should be secured and managed by an appropriate body in accordance with an approved management plan. Overall, it should be possible to achieve a net gain in biodiversity

6.5.101 This opportunity brings with it the ability to establish a strategic scale level of green infrastructure for the town and village by linking with major open space being provided as part of the NW Sittingbourne allocation (Policy MU1) creating a major open space corridor in excess of 60 ha from Quinton Road in Sittingbourne to the north of Iwade.

6.5.102 Open space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17, to include accessible natural green space.

6.5.103 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, as well as bringing forward affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8.

6.5.104 Whilst further assessment will determine whether new and/or improved facilities are required, it is anticipated that a site will need to be made available and this will be undertaken via the Masterplan/development brief.

6.5.105 A heritage assessment will be required to consider such matters as the setting of the Parish Church and any potential for archaeology, especially given recent neolithic discoveries and World War I researches.

6.5.106 Development should not exacerbate existing flood risk in the village and will require the submission of a site flood risk assessment in accordance with Policy DM21.

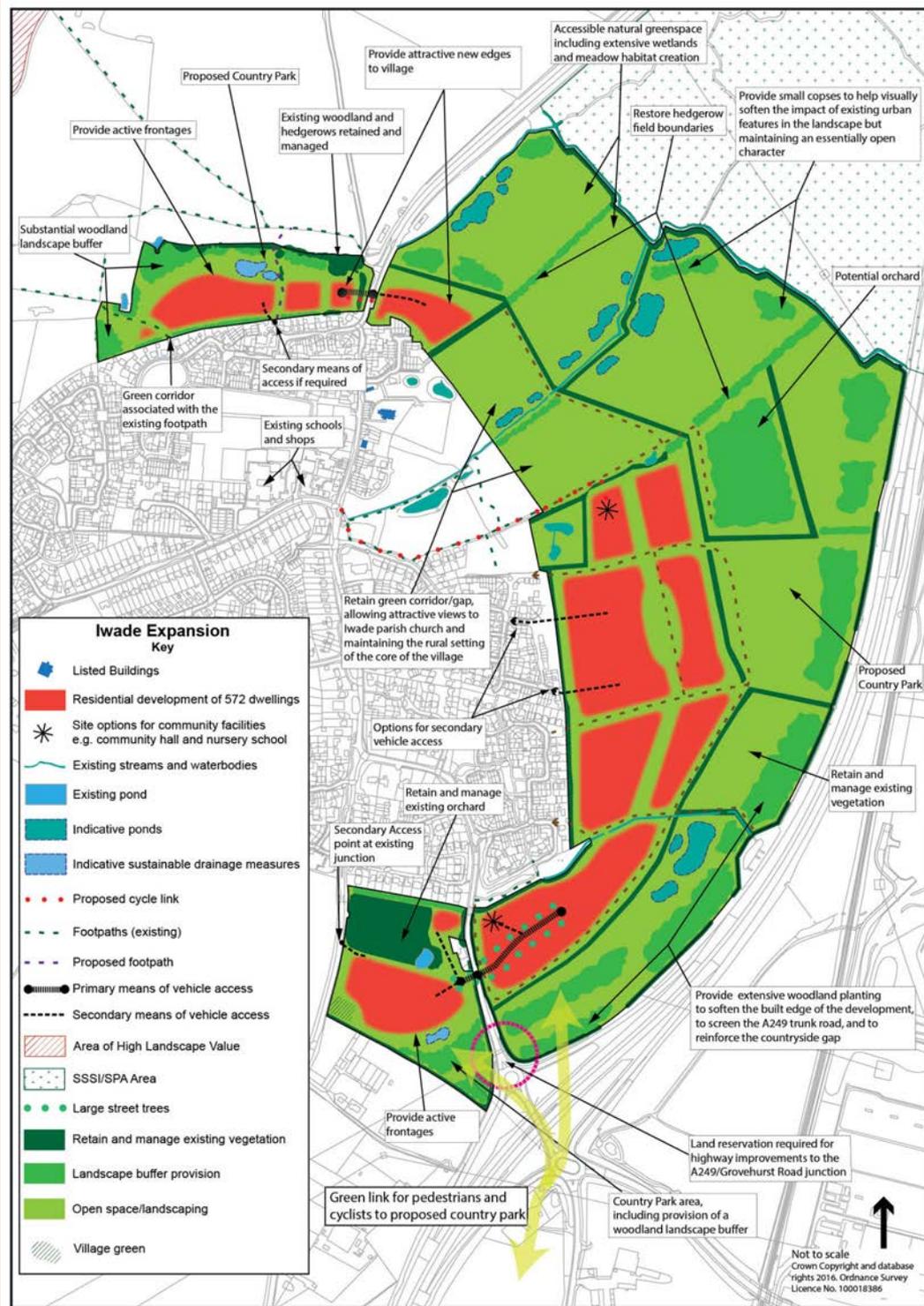
6.5.107 The sites are in relatively sustainable locations on the edge of the settlement and within walking distance of the services that the village has to offer. They are also well placed in terms of their proximity to local distributor roads, although development will cumulatively impact the Grovehurst Road junction (A249) where mitigation would be necessary and land reserved within development sites for its improvement. A transport assessment will be required to consider both this and the other improvements necessary to achieve an acceptable development, including the phasing of development relative to any improvement to the interchange and at junction 5 of the M2 further afield. Consultation with Highways England will be necessary.

6.5.108 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at these sites (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.5.109 If the population of Iwade is to grow further, it must be accompanied by improvements to non-car travel choices, with a focus on bus and/or rail journey connections between Iwade and principal areas of employment. One specific measure to be supported should be increased rail patronage via Kemsley railway station, whilst measures to improve the frequency of bus services that call at Kemsley railway station should be explored.

6.5.110 Due to the scale of the growth proposed and the need for three land owners to work together, a Masterplan/development brief should be prepared, consulted upon and agreed by the Council. This should consider such matters as the phasing of development relative to transport improvements and the need to secure a coordinated approach to the country park site and its linkages between development sites. At all stages, use of the Council's Design Panel will be strongly recommended.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.5.8 Development concepts for Iwade expansion

6.5.111 Within the above overall context, the individual development areas are considered below.

Land to the north of Iwade

6.5.112 This 4.4 ha site is generally flat pasture, with fragmented hedgerow boundaries. Beyond the ditch at the northern boundary the topography rises north westwards to a range of low hills (an Area of High Landscape Value) which have open south easterly views of the site. To the north-west is open marshland. The southern boundary of the site is an existing, visually prominent and abrupt residential development edge.

6.5.113 Landscape evidence advises that the landscape in this part of the village borrows a considerable degree of its sense of place from neighbouring marshland, such as the flat, exposed nature of the landscape and the big skies. There is a low capacity to accommodate change, but a small amount of residential expansion would be acceptable, providing that the new urban edge does not become visible in sensitive views from the marshes. Given this, it is anticipated that the proposed development will be of two storeys height only and of low density at the northern edge.

6.5.114 A substantial landscape and green space buffer will be required in the northern part of the site and the potential for this area of land to be incorporated into and managed as part of the larger country Park proposal for the village.

6.5.115 The site is accessible via an existing residential development through roads such as Sanderling Way. This is likely to affect the junctions at Sanderling Way with Sheppey Way/The Street which will need to be considered.

Land east of Iwade

6.5.116 This 15.4 ha site to the eastern side of the village, comprises large arable and pasture fields, its topography being mostly flat to gently sloping. Despite there being some mature hedgerow and Poplar shelterbelt field boundaries, supplemented by more recent landscape restoration. This is an open, visually exposed site; prominent in views from the A249 and from the northern part of Sittingbourne. The existing southern and western urban edges are visually harsh with very little planting, whilst the wider landscape is influenced by the A249 and industrial backdrop.

6.5.117 The Swale Urban Extensions Landscape Capacity Study identifies the area as having a high capacity to accommodate change, with the maintenance of a countryside gap between Iwade and Sittingbourne and the need for substantial landscape mitigation, key issues needing to be addressed. As a result, it is essential that a significant, broad swathe of green space of some 39 ha be established between any development and the A249, together with the creation of a new, attractive urban edge, integrated with the green space. The design of development should respond to the local character and distinctiveness of the Iwade Arable Farmlands Landscape Character Area (Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011).

6.5.118 There are two proposed development areas within the site. The first comprises a small area in the north east, located adjacent to The Street/Sheppey Way on gently rising land. This shall be of lower density development, of no more than two storeys in height on this sensitive edge. The second, much larger area, is located to the north east of Grovehurst Road where building densities and heights should have regard to the scale and form of existing development within the settlement. It will be expected that the design and appearance of the new urban edge here will be of a high quality, providing active built frontages facing onto the open space with green corridors and leafy streets within the development.

6.5.119 The site lies within 300m of an SSSI, SPA and Ramsar site and as such the provision and management of the country park in this location will be an important component of the mitigation necessary to address any potential significant impacts. This will include ensuring that there is no access for people or dogs onto the designation in the north-east of the county park.

6.5.120 Extensive woodland planting and landscaping works will be necessary between the built edge to the south and the A249. This will help achieve a wider strategic landscape corridor around the A249 and enhance biodiversity. Within the landscaped buffer, opportunities will be taken to restore landscape features and create habitat, such as meadows and wetland habitat.

6.5.121 Although the southern end of the site is accessible via existing residential development through roads such as Redwing Avenue and Swallow Avenue, these streets are not suitable to serve

6 Land allocations for new development

the full level of development proposed. Therefore, the primary access will need to be provided from a new junction at Grovehurst Road. Land will also need to be reserved for any improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange.

Land south east of Iwade (Pond Farm)

6.5.122 This 2.7 ha site comprises mainly rough pasture and is located between the B2005 and the old Sheppey Way. It includes the curtilage of Pond Farm in the north eastern part, together with an old orchard near the northern boundary. The other site boundaries are characterised by fragmented hedgerows or Poplar trees. There are strong urban influences, from a pylon line that crosses the site, nearby industrial style buildings, as well as from existing housing visible at the northern and western boundaries and from highway roundabouts and overbridges.

6.5.123 Whilst development of the site would produce some erosion of the settlement separation between Iwade and Sittingbourne, some residential development could be accommodated on the northern part of site in landscape and visual terms. This would be subject to the opportunity being taken to provide a significantly enhanced green space buffer of undeveloped land in the southern part of the site (as part of the wider country park initiative) down to where it adjoins the Grovehurst Interchange (where a land reservation for the improvement will need to be made). This would need to be accompanied by a high quality new urban edge, providing a natural rounding off of the settlement.

6.5.124 Within the old orchard (a UK BAP priority habitat), there is the possibility of impacts upon protected species which will need to be assessed. As far as possible the old orchard should be retained, managed and enhanced within the development site, perhaps as a community orchard for the village. An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.5.125 The primary vehicle access to the site would be from Grovehurst Road, with the possibility of a secondary access from the old Sheppey Way. The desirability of linking these two points would need to be assessed as part of a transport assessment, although the possibility of it being used as a busy link between the old Sheppey Way and the A249 should be avoided. There is a footway connecting the site to Iwade via Grovehurst Road, however there are no footways along part of Sheppey Way and as such, additional walking/cycle routes would be required. Land will also need to be reserved for any improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange.

Main Modification 142

Policy New AX 5

Iwade expansion

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 572 dwellings at Iwade, as shown on the Proposals Map, together with a new country park, landscape and ecological enhancements and community facilities. Landowners and developers will be required to co-ordinate on the preparation, consultation and approval of a Masterplan/development brief. The Masterplan/development brief and planning applications will:

1. Be in accordance with Policy CP4 and in particular, demonstrate and provide a strong landscape framework (shown by a submitted Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan), which shall:

Land allocations for new development

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- a. assess biodiversity interests, including, preparation of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to demonstrate that development is not likely to have a significant effect on a Special Protection Area (SPA);
 - b. ensure appropriate opportunities for use of the site by residents and visitors (particularly for dog walking) and to establish such land as a country park so as to meet site mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). Overall, proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites arising from recreational pressure and other impacts will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
 - c. within the HRA, assess impact pathways from disturbance on the integrity of the European designated SPA during construction and operation of the site and recommend mitigation as appropriate;
 - d. assess and make appropriate provisions for protected species and habitats;
 - e. secure the agreement and implementation of a management plan for the whole country park to clarify the proposals for various habitats across the site, the extent of public access, and to provide proposals for the sustainable and financially secure management of the area through the development process and in the long term;
 - f. achieve a net gain in the biodiversity of the site itself, including protecting and enhancing on-site habitats to provide for (at least) current levels of use by key species, including enhancing any existing role the site plays as supporting habitat for the SPA;
 - g. manage the area to maintain and enhance the biodiversity associated with fields, hedgerow, orchards, boundaries and water features;
 - h. where compatible with 1a.-g., include proposals for green corridors, incorporating existing/new footpath and cycle routes; and
 - i. in agreed locations, provide strategic planting and open space in advance of new development.
2. Be of high quality design, respecting the settlement form/pattern, character and rural landscape setting of the village as identified by the the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011;
 3. Be informed by an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment to include on for protected habitats species and off-site contributions for residual impacts further afield, in accordance with Policy CP7 and DM28;
 4. Be informed by an ecological assessment detailing the impacts upon protected species and habitats and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation;
 5. Submit a site flood risk assessment in accordance with Policy DM21 which shall additionally consider the sustainable drainage and land management measures that should be undertaken within the developed areas and open space;
 6. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
 7. Undertake a detailed heritage assessment (including for archaeology) and mitigate any impacts identified;
 8. Be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP5;
 9. Be supported by a transport assessment to determine the need and timing for improvements to the transport network and the phasing of development, together which matters relating to:
 - a. improvements to the public transport network between Iwade and Sittingbourne;
 - b. increasing rail use from Kemsley;

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- c. securing pedestrian and cycle links within the development and to the adjacent network; and
 - d. the reservation and gifting of land within relevant allocations for any improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange.
10. Provide appropriate community facilities within the site to meet the needs of future residents, including health provision and those within the Implementation and Delivery Schedule; and
11. For individual development areas, additionally:
- For north Iwade:
12. As part of the landscape strategy and ecological management plan:
- a. provide a substantial natural green space with copse planting, enhanced hedgerow boundaries and wetlands at the northern and eastern boundaries of the site to form a new, attractive northern village edge and integrate development, particularly in wider marshland environment;
 - b. retain the existing mature vegetation and hedgerows on the Old Ferry Road boundary;
 - c. safeguard, create and manage ponds for biodiversity;
 - d. provide green corridors to interrupt the mass of the development and provide additional softening in longer views from localised higher overlooking ground; and
 - e. use low density housing to respond to the local character and distinctiveness of the village, marshlands and the local landscape character area.
13. Provide a primary access off The Street/Sheppey Way.
- For east Iwade:
14. As part of the landscape strategy and ecological management plan:
- a. provide a substantial natural green space, including significant woodland buffers on the southern and eastern boundaries of the development; and
 - b. retain, create and manage, as appropriate, site features and habitats, including existing shelterbelts, hedgerows, wetlands, ponds, meadows and views to the open marshes.
15. Respond to the local landscape character area and distinctiveness, with housing that shall be of two storeys in the north east of the site, whilst respecting the scale and form of adjoining existing residential development to the west; and
16. Provide a primary access from Grovehurst Road, and secondary access points connecting with existing development to the west; and
17. Reserve land for community facilities where identified as appropriate.
- For south Iwade at Pond Farm:
18. As part of the landscape strategy and ecological management plan:
- a. provide a substantial natural green space, including woodland/copse planting to maintain an appropriate countryside gap and to minimise and mitigate visual impacts;
 - b. enhance hedgerow boundaries and retain and management existing ponds; and
 - c. retain, enhance and manage the existing orchard to provide accessible natural green space, potentially for use as a community orchard;

19. Use building heights and form to generally reflect the character of the existing settlement; and
20. Provide a primary access off Grovehurst Lane, with consideration as to the appropriateness of a linked secondary access from the old Sheppey Way.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Main Modification 143

Land Off High Street, Newington

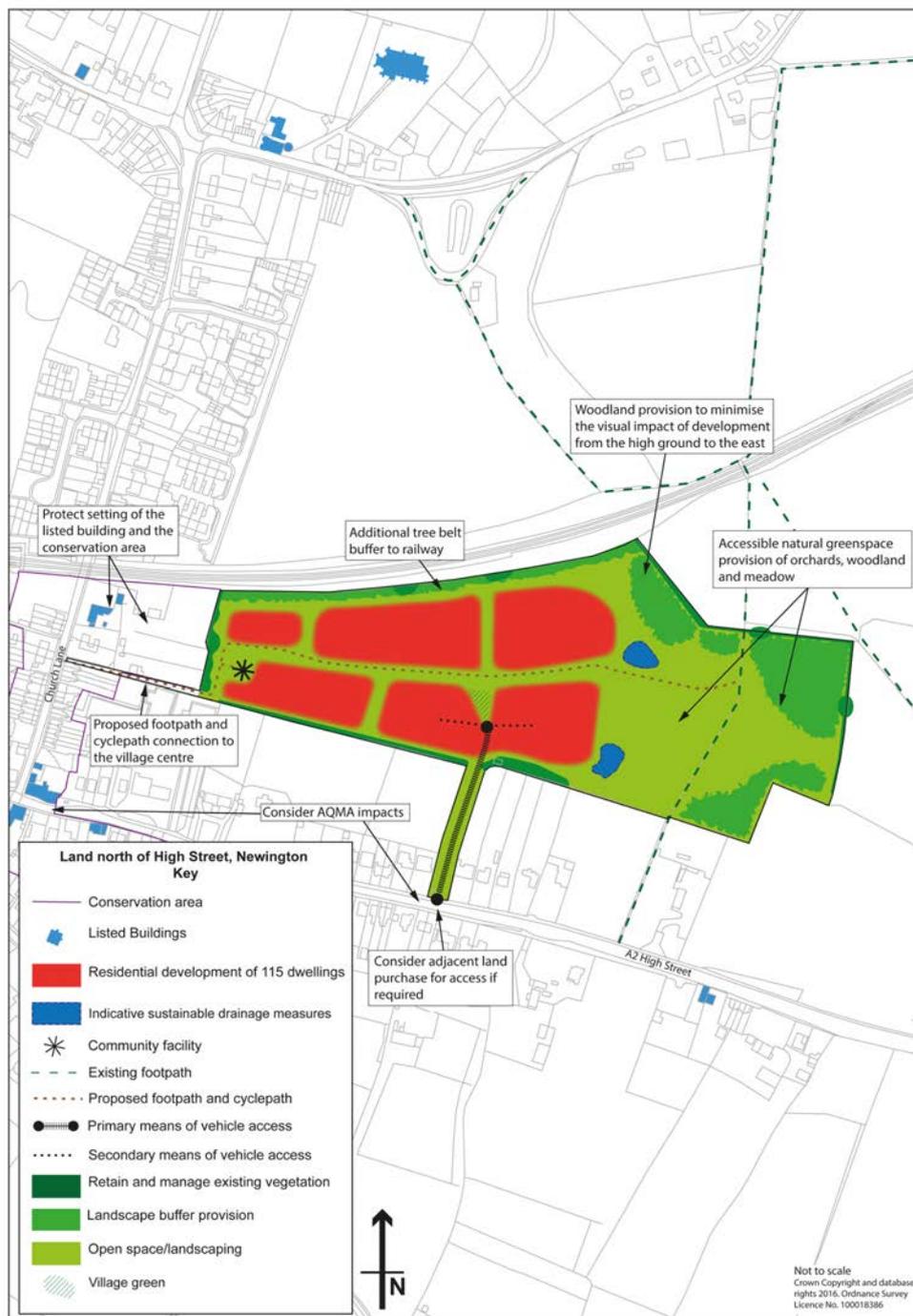
6.5.126 This site lies between the High Street and the railway line and comprises 6.9 ha of flat to gently undulating arable farmland, bounded by hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The eastern boundary is visually contained within the landscape by rising land up to an existing eastern hedgerow boundary. There is a drain that runs north to south across the site. The Newington Conservation Area boundary coincides with the western site boundary, whilst existing residential premises back onto its southern boundary. The site lies within walking distance of Newington train station, a convenience store and primary school.

6.5.127 Vehicular access to the High Street (A2) will be provided from an access road, located between the properties of 99 and 103 High Street. However, if necessary to achieve the required width for such an access, adjacent land may be required. A separate pedestrian and cycle access will also be provided on land between 38 and 40 Church Lane.

6.5.128 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing.

6.5.129 A listed building on Church Lane lies within 60m of the eastern site boundary and appropriate regard will need to be given to the protection of its setting, as well as that of the Conservation Area. A heritage assessment will be required to address these issues, together with, given the sites location close to Watling Street, the archaeological potential of the site. If necessary, mitigation will be required.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.5.9 Development concepts for land north of Newington High Street

6.5.130 The most visually exposed land shall be excluded from built development, although it is likely to remain visible both from the footpath network on nearby, higher ground to the north and east, and from the railway.

6.5.131 To address likely wider visual impacts from development, to conserve and enhance the local landscape character of the area, and achieve appropriate biodiversity enhancements, it is considered the eastern third of the site area should be excluded from built development, with provision of substantial woodland buffer planting (advance planted), a wildflower meadow and an orchard. Green corridors and open space within the residential area will also help to provide a rural character and feel to the development. In addition the northern and southern site boundaries should be reinforced by hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting

6.5.132 The development should generally be of a relatively low to medium density, with the potential for some very low density development at the sensitive, eastern rural edge. The development form, pattern, design and materials should respond to the local character and distinctiveness of the Newington Conservation Area and the Newington Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area, as identified by the Swale Landscape Character Assessment and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011. Use of the Council's Design Panel is recommended.

6.5.133 An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.5.134 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.5.135 Open space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17, to include accessible natural green space.

6.5.136 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.5.137 Subject to further assessment and confirmation by service providers, there is the potential for provision of a new community building on the site.

6.5.138 Newington experiences pressures on the local road network outside the usual peak hours. As a result, a transport assessment will need to consider the need for, and funding of, off-site infrastructure improvements. This shall include the junction with the High Street, the A2/Church Lane junction and the Key Street roundabout (A2/A249). In the case of improvements in the centre of the village, the potential here will be limited due to the impact on listed buildings. The Transport Assessment should also inform impacts upon air quality, ensuring the development does not compromise the centre of Newington which is an Air Quality Management Area. Innovative mitigation measures may be required to address any impacts.

6.5.139 The impact of noise from the railway on the proposed development should be addressed in the form of a Noise Assessment.

Main Modification 144

Policy New AX 6

Land rear of High Street, Newington

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 115 dwellings, landscape and open space on land to the rear of High Street, Newington, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

6 Land allocations for new development

1. Be in accordance with Policy CP4 and in particular demonstrate an integrated Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to include:
 - a. a large area of green space in the eastern third of the site, including a substantial area of woodland, orchard and meadow planting to help absorb the development into the wider landscape;
 - b. green corridors within the development; and
 - c. reinforced boundary hedgerow planting.
2. Be of high quality design, respecting the settlement form/pattern, character and rural landscape setting of the village as identified by the the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011;
3. Provide for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
4. Provide open space within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17;
5. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure shall be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
6. Submit a detailed heritage assessment to consider the significance of the impact of development on the setting of the conservation and other heritage assets in accordance with policies DM32-DM33. An archaeological assessment should consider the importance of the site and, if necessary propose mitigation;
7. Address air quality impacts arising in the Newington AQMA, including the implementation of innovative mitigation measures;
8. Address any issues arising from a noise assessment;
9. Secure pedestrian and cycle access to Church Lane and a footpath connection east to west; and
10. Be supported by a Transport Assessment, to be submitted with any planning application, to determine the need and timing for any improvements to the transport network and the phasing of development. A financial contribution toward any such improvements will be sought; and
11. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including that identified by the Implementation and Delivery Plan and land for a new community building.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

Main Modification 145

Land east of Station Road, Teynham

6.5.140 This 4.4 ha site, is located to the east of the properties on Station Road, and to the south of the rear gardens of the properties at Bradfield Avenue. To the south of the site are properties fronting the A2. The site has good accessibility to a good range of village services and public transport choices.

6.5.141 The site comprises unimproved grassland and an old orchard and is bounded to the east and divided into two fields by existing mature hedgerows, whilst the boundaries to existing residential properties are more open and stark.

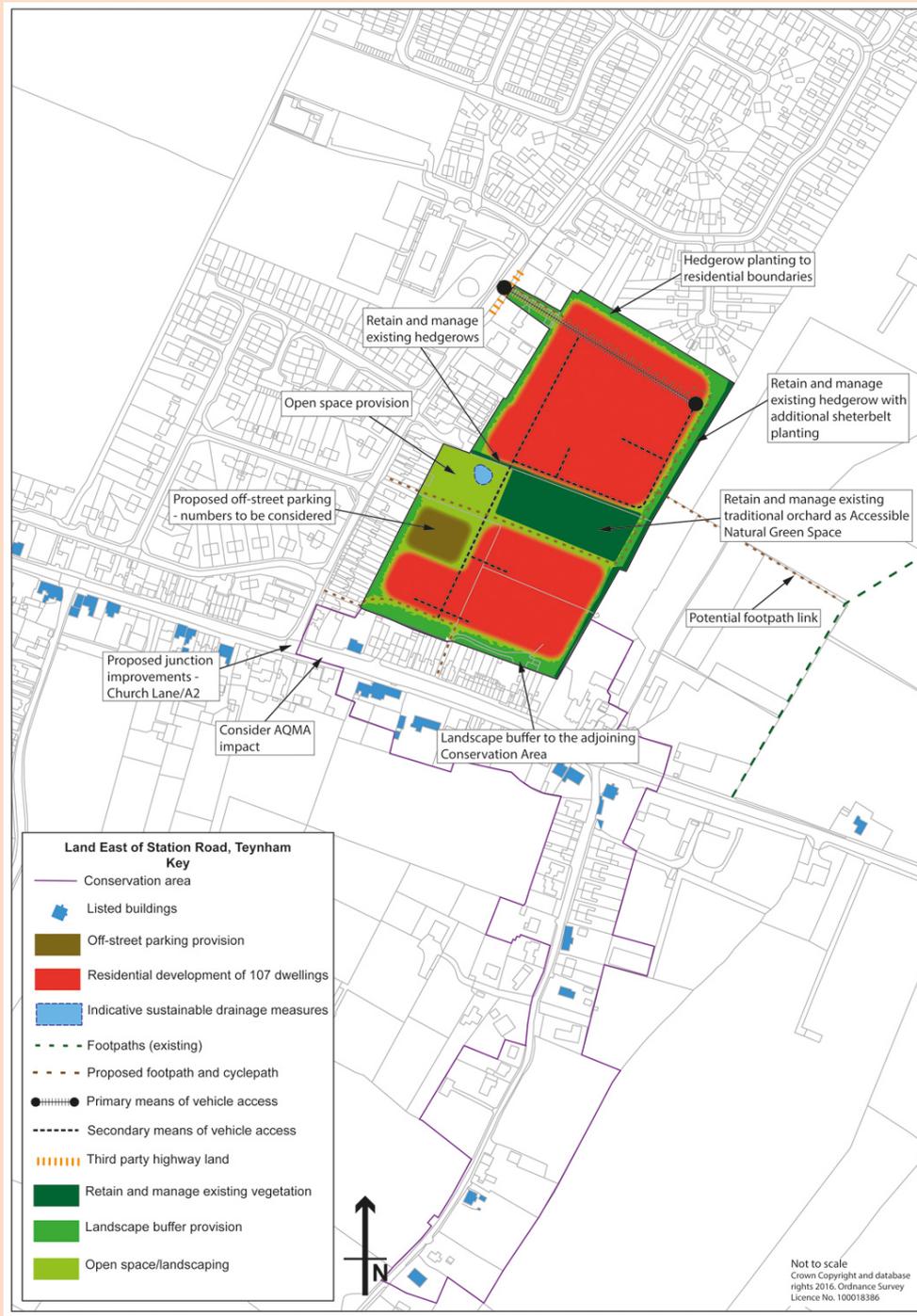
6.5.142 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing.

6.5.143 Whilst the site is relatively well contained in views in the wider landscape to the east, an integrated landscape strategy will be required to provide a new attractive eastern edge to the settlement where it adjoins the wider countryside. The views of development from the east should be minimised by use of development density and heights, together with re-enforcement of existing landscape structure. Use of the Council's Design Panel is recommended.

6.5.144 With the existing traditional orchard area on the site a UK BAP priority habitat, this should be retained and supplemented with new orchard planting as necessary. An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.5.145 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

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Map 6.5.10 Concept diagram for east of Station Road, Teynham

6.5.146 Open space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17, to include accessible natural green space.

6.5.147 The site adjoins a Conservation Area and the development will need to respect its setting in accordance with Policy DM33. An archaeological assessment will determine the interests present on the site, especially given its location close to Watling Street and propose mitigation if necessary.

6.5.148 The site will require a new access road off of Station Road (between No's 76 and 80), as well as a separate emergency access; pedestrian access onto Station Road and the A2 will also be required. To achieve the required visibility splays for the new access, third party land could be needed. Access to the site could be compromised by on-street parking in association with the school and

therefore restrictions on the kerbside opposite the proposed access might be required. Appropriate traffic management measures, including improvements at the junction of Station Road and the A2 are also required to facilitate the development.

6.5.149 On street parking is currently a problem on Station Road and off-street provision should be made at the southern end of the site for existing residents. The precise number of spaces will be determined as part of a planning application.

6.5.150 A transport assessment will also need to consider the requirement for off-site contributions toward to highway improvements elsewhere on the A2. This should also inform preparation of an air quality assessment, which shall consider impacts and implement mitigation within the Teynham Air Quality Management Area.

Main Modification 146

Policy New AX 7

Land east of Station Road, Teynham

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 107 dwellings, together with landscape and open space on Land east of Station Road, Teynham, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will:

1. Accord with Policy CP4, in particular demonstrate and provide a strong landscape framework (shown by a submitted Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) that includes:
 - a. retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows;
 - b. provision of new hedgerow planting;
 - c. retention, enhancement and appropriate management of the existing traditional orchard; and
 - d. new orchard planting for the landscaped areas of the new development.
2. Be of high quality design, of two storeys height, adjacent to the existing residential development and the countryside edge, and respond appropriately to the character, setting, design and materials of the Teynham Conservation Area in accordance with Policy DM33;
3. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
4. Provide open space to meet the needs of residents in accordance with Policy DM17;
5. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure is mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
6. Provide an off-street car park to address on-street car parking problems on Station Road;
7. Provide an archaeological assessment to consider the importance of the site and, if necessary propose mitigation;
8. Provide a new access road from Station Road, a separate emergency access onto Station Road and pedestrian and cycle access onto Station Road and the A2;
9. Address air quality impacts arising in the Teynham AQMA, including the implementation of innovative mitigation measures;

6 Land allocations for new development

10. Be supported by a Transport Assessment and provide appropriate traffic improvements and management measures, including at the junction of Station Road and the A2 and at other locations as appropriate; and
11. Provide the infrastructure needs arising from the development, including those identified by the Local Plan infrastructure and delivery schedule.

New allocations on sites within existing settlements

6.5.151 The sites, as outlined in Main Modification 148 and shown on the Proposals Map, have been identified as being suitable to provide additional residential development within existing settlements. All sites will have issues that will require consideration in further detail at the planning application stage in accordance with policies of the Local Plan. These matters are not repeated here. However, some allocations have specific issues that are highlighted by Table 6.5.1.

Main Modification 147

Allocation	Commentary with specific reference to relevant allocations
Orbital, Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measures will need to be included to mitigate against the rail and road noise for the new residents. • The existing poor access will need to be addressed. • Provision for Gypsies and Travellers required.
152 Staplehurst Road, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential contamination requiring investigation. A plan of remedial actions shall accompany any planning application. • The impact on existing residents will need to be taken into account. • The existing poor access will need to be addressed. • Provision for Gypsies and Travellers required.
Lydbrook Close, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has potential contamination requiring investigation. A plan of remedial actions will accompany any planning application. • Provision for Gypsies and Travellers required.
35 High Street, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential contamination and the removal of chrysotile asbestos. A plan of remedial actions will accompany any planning application. • The impact on existing residents will need to be taken into account. • The impact on nearby listed buildings, on the conservation area and on areas of archaeological potential will need to be taken into account.
Bysingwood Primary School, Faversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature trees/woodland will be retained and incorporated through an integrated landscape strategy for the site. • Ecological assessment required that will also consider the presence of protected species with a view to achieving a net gain in biodiversity. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will also be required to address matters in accordance with Policy CP7 and Policy DM28.
Faversham Police Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within a conservation area. The existing Police Station should be retained. Archaeological remains are likely to be present on the site. Medieval and Roman remains have been found nearby. Any new development must take into account the setting of the adjacent listed building. • Within a Source Protection Zone and a surface water drainage scheme will need to be agreed with the Environment Agency.

Land allocations for new development 6

Allocation	Commentary with specific reference to relevant allocations
Preston Skreens, Minster Road, Minster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need to ensure that the existing playing field is no longer needed or a suitable alternative provided. Contains mature trees and dense hedgerows which will need to be incorporated through an integrated landscape strategy for the site. Will need to undertake ecological assessments that will also consider the presence of protected species. Proposed access will need to consider current congestion on Minster Road.
Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on existing residents will need to be taken into account. Will need to ensure that the existing playing field is no longer needed or a suitable alternative is provided. Contains mature trees and dense hedgerows which will need to be incorporated through an integrated landscape strategy for the site. Will need to undertake ecological assessments that will also consider the presence of protected species. Will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site. Provision for Gypsies and Travellers required.
Manor Road, Queenborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning applications will assess whether there is any potential flood risk (tidal) as a result of development.
The Foundry, Rushenden Road, Queenborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has potential contamination requiring investigation. A plan of remedial actions will accompany any planning application. Planning application will assess whether there is any potential flood risk (tidal) as a result of development.
The Old Bus Depot, Leysdown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential contamination requiring further investigation. A plan of remedial actions will accompany any planning application.
Iwade Fruit and Produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on existing residents will need to be taken into account.
Iwade Village Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on existing residents will need to be taken into account.

Table 6.5.1 Matters to be considered by allocations

Main Modification 148

Policy A 13

New allocations on sites within existing settlements

Planning permission will be granted for residential development at the following locations, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#):

Location of allocation	Site Area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings
Sittingbourne	1. Orbital, Staplehurst Road	1.5 60
	2. 52 Staplehurst Road	1.8 75
	3. Lydbrook Close	1.7 70

6 Land allocations for new development

Location of allocation		Site Area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings
	4. 35 High Street, Milton Regis	0.2	10
	5. Freesia, Grovehurst Road	0.3	15
Faversham	6. Bysingwood Primary School	0.7	15
	7. Faversham Police Station	0.2	12
Minster and Halfway	8. Preston Skreens, Minster Road	0.6	24
	9. Halfway Houses Primary School, Halfway	1.5	60
Queenborough	10. Manor Road	0.1	6
	11. The Foundry, Rushenden Road	0.4	37
Leysdown	12. Former Bus Depot, Shellness Road	0.2	10
Iwade	13. Iwade Fruit and Produce	0.5	21
	14. Iwade Village Centre	0.2	10
TOTAL		9.9	425

Table 6.5.2 Table showing dwelling numbers on new allocations within existing settlements

Development proposals will:

1. Address the matters listed in Table 6.5.1;
2. Assess whether existing open space should be retained and make new provision as required;
3. Achieve design, layout, density and landscaping appropriate to the context of the site and in accordance with Policy CP4;
4. Avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity where possible, mitigate adverse impacts to acceptable levels and achieve a net gain where possible. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off-site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
5. Accord with any approved development briefs;
6. Through use of integrated landscape strategies, retain existing trees and vegetation where possible and enhance through appropriate landscaping;
7. Provide safe access to the site and respond to issues highlighted by an appropriate transport assessment;
8. Make the site safe from contamination and flood risk;
9. Safeguard as far as appropriate, the amenities of existing and new residents;
10. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10 Policy DM8; and
11. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements

6.5.152 These sites have been identified as being suitable to provide additional residential development at the edge of existing settlements. All sites will have issues that will require consideration in further detail at the planning application stage in accordance with Policies of the Local Plan. These matters are not repeated here. However, some allocations have specific issues that are highlighted by Table 6.5.3.

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Allocation	Commentary with specific reference to relevant allocations
North of Key Street, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies close to the A2 Watling Street. Any planning application for development proposals on these sites will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site. • Through an integrated landscape strategy consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scrub and grassland habitats and trees with a Tree Preservation Order. Determine such matters as the presence of protected species, whilst retention of habitat as far as possible and mitigation will secure a net gain in biodiversity. ○ The creation of a new attractive urban edge to Sittingbourne, with substantial landscaping to achieve the integration of development in a fashion that minimises its impact upon the separation of Sittingbourne with Bobbing. • Although the Environment Agency has raised no particular questions in respect of this allocation, planning applications for all of the allocations would need to assess whether there is any potential flood risk (fluvial) as a result of development.
Manor Farm, Sittingbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies close to the A2 Watling Street. Any planning application for development proposals on these sites will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site. • Through an integrated landscape strategy consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The creation of a new attractive urban edge to Sittingbourne, with substantial landscaping to achieve the integration of development in a fashion that minimises its impact upon the separation of Sittingbourne with Bobbing. ○ The assessment and, where possible, the retention of remaining orchard trees (a UK BAP priority habitat). ○ Determine such matters as the presence of protected species, whilst retention of habitat as far as possible and mitigation will secure a net gain in biodiversity.
Minster Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have some biodiversity interest on site. Will need to undertake ecological assessments that will also consider the presence of protected species. • Has surface water drainage issues which a planning application would need to address through a connection to school network. • Any planning application for development on these sites would need to be accompanied by a flood risk assessment with appropriate mitigation measures.
Nil Desperandum, Queenborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any planning application for development proposals on these sites will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site. • Through an integrated landscape strategy consider the creation of a new attractive urban edge to Rushenden with substantial landscaping and, having regard to its topography, achieve the sensitive integration of development within adjacent open landscapes. • An international wildlife site adjoins the site where access onto the wider marshes may need to be managed as part of the wider Queenborough/Rushenden proposals. The site may also require its own Habitats Regulations Assessment at

6 Land allocations for new development

Allocation	Commentary with specific reference to relevant allocations
	<p>the planning application stage. Planning applications would therefore need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion and other adverse effects on the integrity of the international wildlife site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided to ensure no change in lux levels within the SPA and no significant change in noise levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the site is affected by tidal flooding to a limited degree and a dry means of escape to Well Road is likely to be the main issue.
Ham Road, Faversham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through an integrated landscape strategy consider the creation of a new attractive urban edge to Faversham, with substantial landscaping, achieve the sensitive integration within adjacent open landscapes in a fashion that minimises its impact. • Consider the rural amenities and appearance of Ham Road. • Site is located within close proximity to a former landfill site and further investigation of any methane gas transmission will be required. • <u>Mineral Safeguarding will need to be addressed via a Minerals Assessment</u>
Parsonage Farm, Newington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of access will require careful consideration on narrow lane close to school. • Should assess any protected species using existing buildings. • Aim to provide attractive semi-rural edge and setting to village.
<u>Land at The Tracies, Newington</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Achieve lower density in recognition of surrounding development, restricted access and remnant orchard.</u> • <u>Retain remaining orchard trees where appropriate.</u> • <u>Provide landscape mitigation to rural facing boundaries to integrate development within wider views.</u>
North of High Street, Eastchurch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any planning application for development proposals on this site will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains being on site.
Colonel's Lane sites, Boughton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through an integrated landscape strategy achieve a high standard of substantial landscaping and built design to create attractive views of the site from the A2.
Bull Lane, Boughton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could require a new access adjacent to Chestnut Cottage, which is located in Boughton Street conservation area. Development will need to consider the impact of the development upon the setting of the conservation area and ensure the development preserves or enhances its setting. • Lying close to the A2 Watling Street, a planning application for development proposals on this site will need to have considered the possibility of archaeological remains. • Through an integrated landscape strategy, create a new attractive village edge and achieve its integration within adjacent open landscapes with substantial landscape and good built design that minimises visual impact on local landscape designation.
Mayfield, Teynham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrub habitat needs assessment to determine such matters as the presence of protected species. Retention of habitat as far as possible and mitigation will secure a net gain in biodiversity. • <u>Impacts upon air quality need to be addressed, ensuring the development does not compromise the centre of Teynham which is an Air Quality Management Area. Innovative mitigation measures may be required to address any impacts.</u>
Land East of Station Road, Teynham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will require a new access road off Station Road, a separate emergency access onto Station Road and pedestrian access onto Station Road and the A2. • Will require appropriate traffic management measures including improvements at the junction of Station Road and the A2.

Land allocations for new development 6

Allocation	Commentary with specific reference to relevant allocations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-street parking will be provided at the southern end of the site for existing residents of Station Road. Through an integrated landscape strategy consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention and enhancement of mature trees and hedgerows, especially on the eastern boundary to form a new attractive edge to the village that is integrated into the wider landscape to the east. Assess and, where possible retain remaining orchard trees (a UK BAP priority habitat) and grassland habitat and supplement with new orchard planting to secure net gains in biodiversity overall. The presence of protected species: Will require on-site open space provision. Provision for Gypsies and Travellers will be required.
Land at Barrow Green Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could require a new access or alterations to the existing access for both vehicles and pedestrians. Through an integrated landscape strategy consider the creation of an attractive new village edge through substantial landscaping, especially on the eastern and southern boundaries to integrate development into the wider landscape and achieve a net gain in biodiversity. Contamination may need to be addressed. Off-street car parking required to assist with existing on-street parking problem.
<u>West of Brogdale Road, Faversham</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Provide strong landscape buffer to rural facing boundaries.</u> <u>Maintain rural character of Brogdale Road.</u> <u>Mineral Safeguarding will need to be addressed via a Minerals Assessment</u>
<u>Junction of Scocles Road and Elm Lane, Minster</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Maintain and enhance boundary vegetation.</u> <u>Consider widening of Elm Lane frontage across the site.</u> <u>Consider a proportion of plots for self-builders.</u>
<u>Land at Chequers Road, Minster</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Maintain and enhance boundary vegetation</u> <u>Create attractive frontage to Chequers Road</u>

Table 6.5.3 Matters to be considered by allocations

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Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements

Planning permission will be granted for residential development at the following locations listed below and as shown on the [Proposals Map](#):

Location of allocation	Site area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings
Sittingbourne	1. Land North of Key Street	1.6 30
	2. Manor Farm	2.3 20 30

6 Land allocations for new development

Location of allocation		Site area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings
Minster and Halfway	3. Junction of Scocles Road and Elm Lane	2.8	50
	4. Land at Chequers Road	0.4	10
	5. Minster Academy	1.2	20
Queenborough and Rushenden	6. Nil Desperandum, Alsager Avenue	0.8	22
Faversham	7. Land at Ham Road	1.1	35
	8. West of Brogdale Road	3.6	66
Newington	9. Parsonage Farm, School Lane	0.5	14
	10. Land at The Tracies	0.3	5
Eastchurch	11. North of High Street	0.8	15
Boughton	12. Land off Colonels Lane	0.8	15
	13. Land south of Colonels Lane	0.3	6
	14. Bull Lane	0.5	16
Teynham	15. Land adj Mayfield, London Road	0.3	13
	16. Land East of Station Road	4.3	120
	17. Land at Barrow Green Farm, Lower Road	1.1	30
TOTALS		18.4	377

Table 6.5.4 Table showing smaller allocations as extensions to settlements

Development proposals will:

1. Address the matters listed in Table 6.5.3;
2. Achieve design, layout, density and landscaping appropriate to the context of the site and in accordance with Policy CP4;
3. Avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity where possible, mitigate adverse impacts to acceptable levels and achieve a net gain where possible. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
4. Through an integrated landscape strategy and the scale and location of development, retain existing trees and vegetation where possible and enhance through appropriate landscaping, mitigate visual impacts upon landscapes and the integrity of settlements;
5. Provide safe access to the site and respond to issues highlighted by an appropriate transport assessment;
6. Assess whether existing open space should be retained and make new provision as required;
7. Make the site safe from contamination and flood risk;
8. Safeguard as far as appropriate, the amenities of existing and new residents;

9. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10 Policy DM8; and
10. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

6.6 Mixed-use allocations

Land at north-west Sittingbourne

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6.6.1 North-West Sittingbourne is the largest of the allocation sites outside of Sittingbourne main urban area. It comprises ~~four~~ three main parcels of land (currently in several ownerships), some ~~83.7~~ 75.0 ha in total, which are located between the edge of Sittingbourne at the railway line to Sheerness close to Kemsley station extending out to the A249 trunk road.

6.6.2 The site has been identified as having significant potential to meet the Borough's future growth needs in a sustainable location that minimises impacts on the wider countryside due to its relative self-containment.

Site proposals

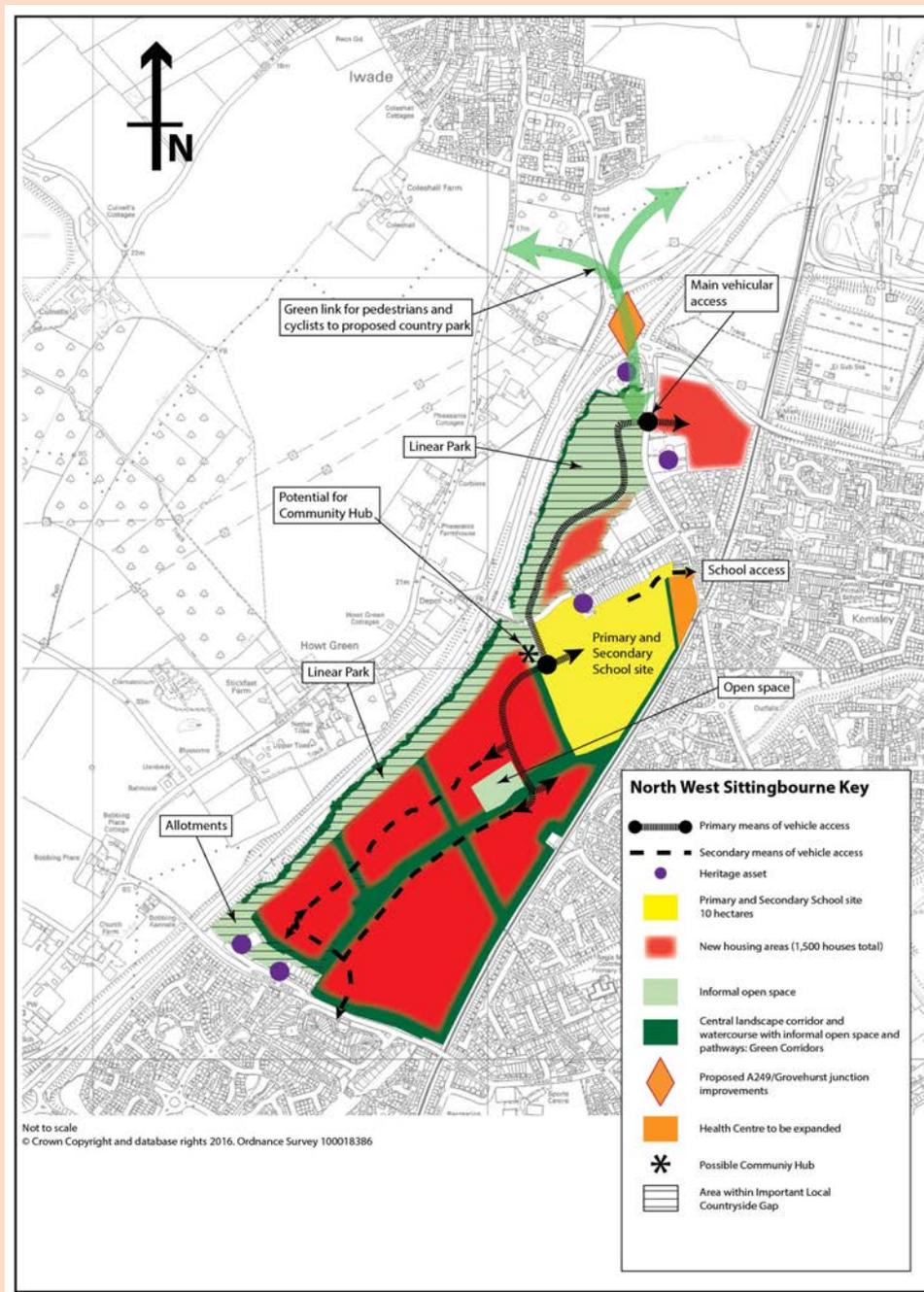
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6.6.3 The site is suitable for development comprising a new residential community and ~~some commercial development~~ supporting community facilities:

- ~~a minimum 1,390~~ up to 1,500 dwellings (comprised of three sites);^(6.1)
- ~~'B' Class employment use (comprising one site);~~
- at least 22 ha of major strategic open space/landscape across three sites to serve all open space needs and is also required to offset potential impacts on European wildlife habitats and those to settlement separation, and link to open space provision at Policy New AX6 (Iwade);
- proposed primary and secondary schools;
- enhancement to local health care facilities; and
- enhancement to bus and rail facilities.

6 Land allocations for new development

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Map 6.6.1 Development concepts at NW Sittingbourne (modification to reflect increased development yield, implementation of employment elements, highlighting transport improvement and linkages with Iwade expansion proposals)

6.6.4 There are several landowners involved in the development of this strategic allocation. The Council will expect these landowners to come together in the preparation of a joint development brief for the site in order to ensure the proper co-ordination of development and necessary physical and social infrastructure.

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6.6.5 The site forms part of an important local countryside gap between Sittingbourne and the villages of Iwade and Bobbing. Whilst it is a sustainable choice for an extension to the Sittingbourne area, the landscape setting and separate identity of the settlements remains an important consideration for this development. The substantial area of natural and semi natural green space proposed for the western boundary of the site is therefore intended to enable the long term functioning of this land to continue to act as part of the countryside gap. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. Development proposals at Iwade (Policy New A6) will also include considerable areas of open space to maintain a gap between the settlements. Although separated by the A249, the provision being made at both locations will form part of a larger country park linking western Sittingbourne with Iwade.

6.6.6 In view of the presence of recent significant archaeological finds in close proximity to this site, past finds within the site and existing heritage assets on site, an archaeological assessment will be required which the development will need to respond to at planning application stage. Any Listed Buildings and their settings will also need to be responded to in development proposals.

Main Modification 155

6.6.7 A key issue affecting ~~all of the sites~~ the allocation is the need for a new junction ~~with Grovehurst Road, between Grovehurst Road and the A249~~ the need for which has been identified as necessary by the ~~Highway Authority as necessary~~ Highway Authorities. The main vehicular access into the allocation will need to have regard to the layout of this junction. There will also need to be pedestrian and cycle way links at the Grovehurst /A249 junction, both to facilitate use of the open space uses on either side and to enable a contiguous pedestrian and cycle route to Kemsley rail halt and the new schools at the Quinton Road site. ~~to ensure that the highway network can accommodate the impact of the development. This junction also serves wider regeneration and development in Sittingbourne town centre and the expansion of the Eurolink industrial estate. Detailed site modelling would be needed at the planning application stage to take this further, together with an assessment of the impact on existing junctions along the B2005. The quality of public transport also needs to be improved – both in terms of buses servicing the site and the enhancement of the rail facilities at Kemsley Halt.~~

Main Modification 156

6.6.8 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing. ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~. The site adjoins one of the town's most deprived areas and as such the purpose of development here should aim to improve the local housing market in terms of housing type and quality of environment. ~~As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 1,390 dwellings, land will be made available for 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 157

6.6.9 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 5 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.6.10 The Council's Renewable Energy Study concluded that in view of the scale and mix of uses originally proposed for the site, creation of a district heating network could be viable at this location and this should be further explored through preparation of a development brief. Although research undertaken by potential developers has indicated that measures such as orientation of road and building layout and use of solar based technologies could be more technically viable and cost effective for this site, the Council expects all alternatives to be evaluated and a solution compliant with Policy DM 19 to be clearly demonstrated in a development brief for this major allocation.

6.6.11 To meet open space standards at least 22 ha are required, and these should include 3.7 ha of parks and gardens, 1.5 ha of amenity greenspace, 14.4 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace, 0.1 ha of space for children and young people and 0.6 ha of allotments. However, future planning applications will examine open space matters in more detail in accordance with Policy DM17. Financial contributions towards improvements to existing sports pitch and formal play facilities will be required, whilst work with Sport England indicates that there will be a need for a swimming pool, sports hall and artificial pitch provision to serve increased demand from the north Sittingbourne area over the plan period. Provision of community facilities for dual use by pupils and the wider community will be sought. Accompanying of any development proposals with a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP 5 will be appropriate to demonstrate an integrated approach to service provision, open space, the design of development, the encouragement of healthy activities and the provision of green infrastructure.

6.6.12 The respective parcels of land making up the allocation are discussed below.

Land North of Quinton Road

6.6.13 This site comprises 60.9 ha of farm land, located to the north of Quinton Road between the A249 to the west and the railway line to the east. It is well related to existing residential development although the railway line provides a significant barrier limiting access between the site with residential development to the east. The western boundary of the site is formed by the A249 embankment and its northern boundary by Bramblefield Lane. Although the site has a rail halt, there is a need to improve links to it and for facilities at the station to be enhanced.

6.6.14 The Council's [Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study](#) concluded that this area had 'high' capacity to accommodate change. Although the existing urban edge (contained by the railway line) is a strong boundary to Sittingbourne, this boundary is repeated in effect by the A249. The site is visually contained from Bobbing and Howt Green by a combination of topography and tree screening and is largely not visible to drivers on the A249. Within the proposed allocation, it is proposed that a buffer of open land be secured along the A249. This would provide a number of benefits in terms of noise reduction and landscape enhancement. It would also reinforce a new urban edge for Sittingbourne and ensure that development would be set below what could otherwise be seen in views from the A249 or the 'old' road to the west.

6.6.15 The allocation of this site is undoubtedly a significant loss of countryside between the existing urban edge of Sittingbourne and the A249. However, given the benefits of development in terms of the amount of housing that can be built in a sustainable location, alongside other important facilities needed, a reduction in the openness of land beyond Sittingbourne is considered necessary. However, provided development is kept below the top of the ridge running roughly north-south along this site, with a strong

landscape/open space buffer achieved, the separation between Sittingbourne and Bobbing and Howt Green can be maintained. The extent of this buffer area is important to the mitigation of any impacts and approximately 14 ha has been identified alongside the A249 within this parcel of land for this purpose which will form part of an important local countryside gap as identified by Policy DM 25. As well as meeting other open space needs, it is anticipated that a significant proportion of this (and land north of Bramblefield Lane) will help meet the town's need for some 30 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace. Part of the town's need for allotment space can also be met at the site.

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A narrow drain runs centrally through the site which could flood in certain conditions. A site flood risk assessment will need to examine this issue further. The drain should form part of a strategic green corridor running through the site linking with similar provision further to the east.

6.6.16 Kent County Council has indicated that 10ha is required for a secondary school, together with a further 2.05 ha for a two-form entry primary school. The need for the facility has been confirmed through modelling work undertaken by KCC to determine the level of need for community services. However, the format of the school (for example whether it is two separate schools on one campus or a fully integrated 'through' school with shared services and facilities) and consequently the exact land take, is the subject of further investigation and discussion, but it now seems likely that the latter is favoured. Similarly the scope for provision of dual use sports facilities here will need to be explored, but offers a good opportunity to put the schools at the heart of the community and achieve the objectives for promoting healthy communities across a wider area. The land allocation therefore represents the maximum likely requirement.

6.6.17 The Clinical Commissioning Group have indicated that there is likely to be a need for further health care facilities in the area, which may be best provided for through an extension of the facility at Grovehurst Health Centre, through short term re-use of existing administration buildings on site and where a small addition of land to the overall allocation has been made available. Preparation of the development brief will also confirm whether a community hub will be required.

Main Modification 159

6.6.18 In total some ~~4,180~~ 1,300 dwellings are envisaged for this area.

Land at Pheasant Farm Grovehurst Road/Bramblefield Lane, Sittingbourne

6.6.19 This 10.4 ha site is located at the north western edge of Sittingbourne. The site generally rises from south to north, occupying a prominent elevated location overlooking Sittingbourne (this area previously received spoil from construction of the A249) and Iwade to the north. The site fronts Grovehurst Road to the north east and the ribbon of residential development extending along Bramblefield Lane to the south east. The A249, which is in a cutting, extends along the west boundary with the B2005 junction located to the north of the site. Here there is a listed building (outside the allocation). Beyond the A249 is the small hamlet of Howt Green and a number of farmsteads located along the old Sheppey Way, and Iwade village to the north.

6.6.20 The western and northern most parts of this site and the raised ground area is not considered suitable for development. The most important factors are the significant adverse landscape impacts that would accompany development on the higher parts of the site and the erosion of settlement separation between Sittingbourne and Iwade and the small settlements located along the old Sheppey Way. This view is endorsed in the Urban Extensions study, which advises that north of the footbridge crossing the A249 it would be appropriate to conserve the open character of the landscape between settlements. The housing allocation (and its access road) is confined to the south east of the site behind the sensitive high ground

6 Land allocations for new development

and should therefore be largely absent in views from Iwade. The remainder of the site (at least 7 ha) is added to the strategic level open space land to the south to create a continuous green corridor extending along the length of the allocation along the A249.

6.6.21 This use of topography and open space will maintain the separation of Sittingbourne and Iwade at this location and secure an open setting for the development allocation to the south and will form part of the important local countryside gap proposed by Policy DM25. This will prevent any further encroachment of the rural, open nature of the countryside to the west of the allocation and ensure separation of settlements at this location for the longer term.

6.6.22 The whole of the site is included within the allocation for purposes both of open space provision, but, critically because it meets the purpose of securing an access to the north of Quinton Road site to Grovehurst Road. The northern end of such an access would be located close to the A249 interchange, where vehicle speeds are reasonably high. Modelling would need to be undertaken to demonstrate that an acceptable access could be formed in this location, taking into account the traffic volumes and proximity to the existing junctions.

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6.6.23 To the south east of this road, some residential development would be acceptable, as it would be in the lower lying part of the site, and would not significantly compromise the separation of Sittingbourne and Iwade. ~~However, the remainder of the site (at least 7 ha) should be added to the strategic level open space of the land to the south in order to create a continuous green corridor with the Quinton Road site, extending the full length of the allocation alongside the A249.~~

6.6.24 In total some 80 dwellings are envisaged for this area.

Land at Great Grovehurst Farm, Sittingbourne

6.6.25 This flat area of land, located in the northern part of the allocation, is currently in agricultural use and includes a number of former agricultural buildings that have been converted for various retail/employment purposes. The western section of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (Swale Way) forms the northern boundary of this site, the B2005 extends along the west boundary and the Sittingbourne/Sheerness rail link is located immediately to the east, all of which act to enclose the site and detach it from the wider area. The site is well related to existing residential development to the south where a secondary means of access could be provided. Adjacent the site is Great Grovehurst Farm, a listed building.

6.6.26 This site is well located in terms of accessibility. Kent Highway Services advise that this site has the option to take access from Swale Way, Grovehurst Road and possibly Godwin Close and Danes Mead. Formation of any new residential road junctions directly onto Swale Way may prove difficult due to level differences, traffic volumes, and visibility issues. A more suitable alternative may be to achieve access opposite the main spine road serving the whole allocation (situated in the Pheasant Farm section of the allocation described above). It will be for the developer to demonstrate that acceptable accesses could be formed, given the traffic volumes and speeds, through the submission of a Traffic Impact Assessment.

6.6.27 Re-modelling of the A249/Grovehurst Road interchange is anticipated in the future, due to the increased use of Swale Way as further development in the centre of the town and at North East Sittingbourne commences, as well as from this allocation. It is likely that land will need to be made available to facilitate a new road layout. It is therefore essential that sufficient land is reserved for these works in any development brief or planning application for this site and/or the Great Grovehurst (North) site below.

6.6.28 In total some ~~430~~ 120 dwellings are envisaged for this area.

Great Grovehurst Farm (north of Swale Way), Kemsley

Main Modification 161

6.6.29 This large triangular greenfield site (12.4 ha) is located to the north of Sittingbourne/ Kemsley. It is bounded by the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (Swale Way) to the south, the A249 trunk road to the west and the Sittingbourne/Sheerness rail link to the east. The site is flat, occupying a prominent position alongside these strategic transport links. Beyond the eastern boundary of the site is the Morrison's distribution centre, electricity sub-station and the Ridham/Kemsley employment area. The Employment Land Review supports this site in terms of its proximity to existing employment allocations at Kemsley Fields and its appropriateness for industrial uses. This part of the allocation can make an important contribution to meeting employment needs in a sustainable manner. The site is well connected in terms of road infrastructure and in close proximity to existing development.

6.6.30 The site has some minor constraints with the northern part of the site being in an area of high flood risk, whilst overhead power lines will require a way-leave. It is allocated for B1(a), B1(b), B2 or B8 Use Class employment.

6.6.31 A landscape buffer along the A249 will form part of the wider landscape buffer which is proposed alongside the length of the other allocations to the A249. This will reinforce the separation between this new urban edge of Sittingbourne and Iwade and achieve a more open, foreground to the setting of Iwade from Sittingbourne. This buffer will form part of the important local countryside gap identified by Policy DM25.

The area of Great Grovehurst Farm to the north of Swale Way was previously included in this allocation for employment uses and as part of the continuous landscape buffer to the A249 and important countryside local gap under Policy DM25. The site now has the benefit of planning permission for a transport haulage depot which has been implemented, along with the landscaped buffer. The latter is now shown on the Proposals Map as part of Policy DM25. As part of the Section 106 agreement for this permission, an area of land immediately to the north of Swale Way has been reserved to help accommodate the expected improvements to the Grovehurst/A249 junction. The precise design of this has not yet been confirmed, so the area is retained as part of the Policy MU1 allocation and shown as an indicative symbol on the concept plan at Map 6.6.1.

Main Modification 162

Policy MU 1

Land at north-west Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for mixed uses on land at North West Sittingbourne, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#) and will comprise 'B' class employment uses on the Great Grovehurst Farm (north) site, a minimum of 1,390 up to 1,500 dwellings, community facilities and structural landscaping and open space adjacent the A249. Development proposals will:

1. Be in accordance with a development brief to be adopted by the Borough Council ~~as a Supplementary Planning Document~~ which reflects the requirements of this policy;
2. Be in accordance with Policy CP4 and in particular, achieve an integrated landscape strategy to provide a minimum of 22 ha natural and semi-natural greenspace and other open space as a continuous buffer along the A249 that will form part of the important local countryside gap between Sittingbourne and Bobbing/Iwade in accordance with Policy DM25 and Policy

6 Land allocations for new development

- New AX6 for Iwade, as well as contributing toward an appropriate link between the two. This area will link to a network of green spaces and corridors throughout the allocation to achieve the minimum open space provision, of 22 ha, plus excluding green corridors;
3. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
 4. Provide on site flood mitigation measures;
 5. Integrate heritage assets, having regard to their setting;
 6. Be accompanied by a Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP5;
 7. ~~Provide pedestrian and cycle links within the development and to the adjacent network;~~
 8. Secure the necessary main vehicular access to the sites via Grovehurst Road and land at Pheasant Farm, so as to respect landscape constraints and maximise the development potential for the uses indicated for the sites;
 9. ~~Make provision for adequate bus access to the site and improved links to and enhancement of rail facilities at Kemsley;~~
 10. Be supported by a transport assessment to determine the need and timing for improvements to the transport network and the phasing of development, together with matters relating to:
 - a. improvements to the public transport network between the site and Sittingbourne;
 - b. increasing rail use from Kemsley through enhancement of facilities there;
 - c. securing pedestrian and cycle links within the development and to the adjacent network including links to Iwade; and
 - d. to have regard within relevant allocations for the design of any improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange.
 11. Achieve for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with ~~Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
 12. Achieve suitable means of sustainable energy production and carbon reduction measures compliant with Policy DM20;
 13. Secure new primary and secondary schools on site, with dual public/school use facilities for swimming pool (including a land reservation for its provision), sports hall and artificial playing pitch; and
 14. ~~Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development. Provide appropriate community facilities and other infrastructure within the site to meet the needs of future residents, including those within the Implementation and Delivery Schedule~~

Land at north-east Sittingbourne

6.6.32 Land at north-east Sittingbourne occupies a key location at the eastern end of the current extent of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (Swale Way). It comprises land to the east and north of the roundabout junction that provides access to the housing development at East Hall Farm, down to the railway line to the south. The land is currently in agricultural use. Close to the northern boundary of the site is a wooded and wet area important to biodiversity and designated as a Ramsar site, Special Protection Area, Site of Special Scientific Interest and the locally designated North Kent Marshes Special Landscape Area.

Main Modification 163

6.6.33 This allocation, covering some 50 ha, is suitable for a mixed use development comprising:

1. employment – 43,000 sq m of B use class on 11.6 ha in the north western part of the site (outline planning permission obtained);
2. residential development – ~~a minimum of~~ approximately 106 dwellings on 3.4 ha in the south eastern part of the site; and
3. along the northern part of the site, forming some 31.1 ha, open space, mitigation, water attenuation, wildlife enhancement, landscaping etc.

Main Modification 164

6.6.34 The key strength of this site is that it would form a natural extension to the established Eurolink industrial area and East Hall Farm housing estate, both of which are proven locations for development and can contribute significantly to their success by creating a mixed use sustainable community. Outline planning permission has been granted for the employment element of the allocation, but Policy MU2 is retained in order to guide future planning applications for the area.

Main Modification 165

6.6.35 The site should achieve a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing. ~~As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 106 dwellings, land will be made available for one pitch for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

6.6.36 Landscape evidence shows the area as being able to accommodate change, but an integrated landscape strategy will be required to lead development of the area. Given its location, there is significant potential to create open space and new habitats, which will serve the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity and offsetting any impacts on European designated wildlife sites. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28. Given the amount of open space likely to be made available, it should be more than possible to achieve a net gain in biodiversity overall and meet a significant proportion of the town's needs for natural and semi-natural greenspace, alongside new allotments.

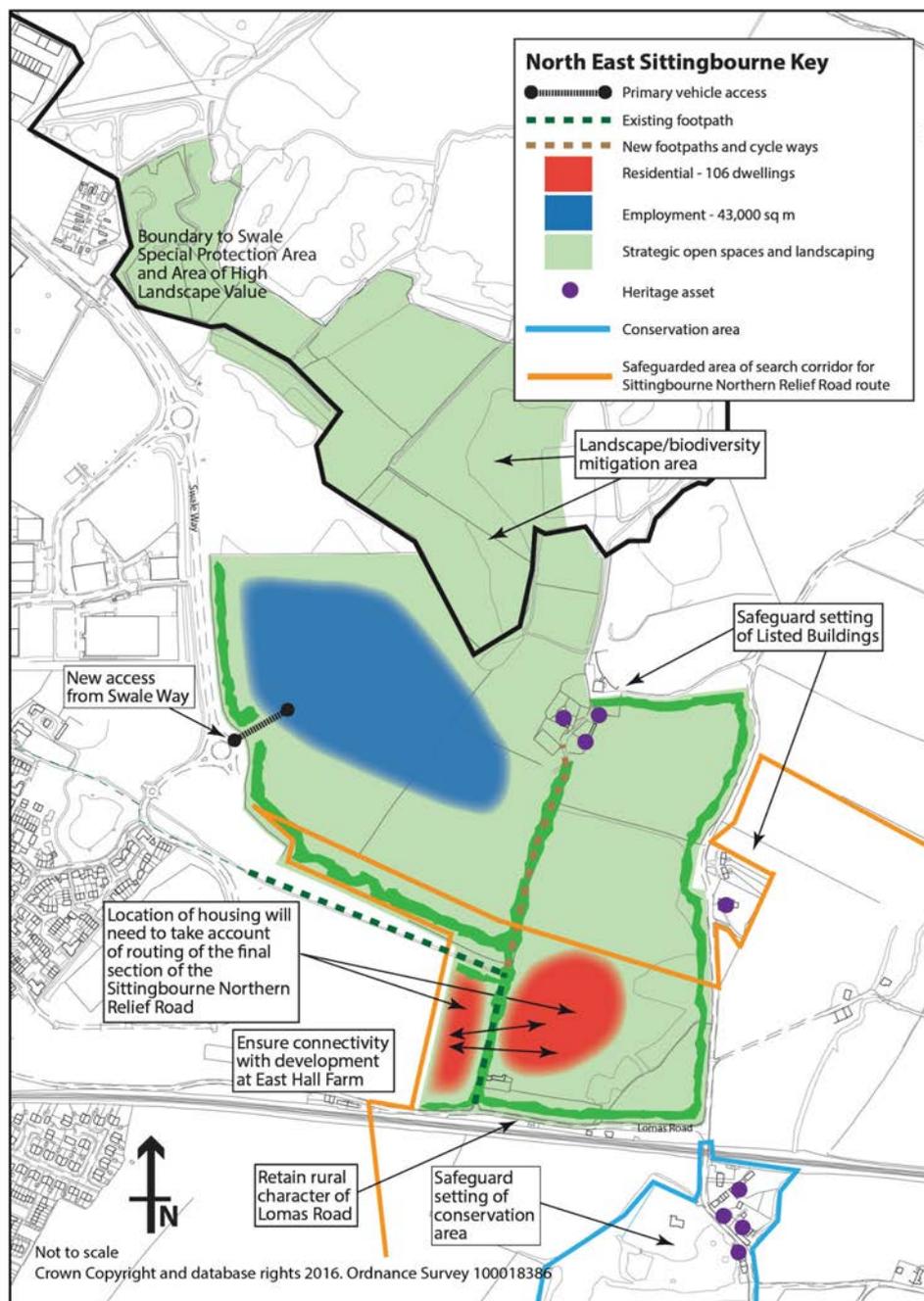
Main Modification 166

6.6.37 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.6.38 The position of this site within open countryside requires strong design principles and provision of open space and landscaping to settle the development into the landscape as well as providing a healthy environment for future employees and residents. ~~In particular,~~ in particular, the development should look to 'close' the

6 Land allocations for new development

expansion of this part of the town in a fashion that achieves an attractive urban edge and successfully integrates it within the wider landscape. Employment development will also be expected to mitigate against the impact of potential flooding through a flood risk assessment. A financial contribution will also be required toward improving existing sports and play facilities.



Map 6.6.2 Development concepts at NE Sittingbourne

Main Modification 167

6.6.39 Within the proposed open space area are a number of listed buildings, the settings of which will need to be safeguarded and, if possible enhanced. **Given its location, an archaeological assessment will be required which the development will need to respond to. This open space will also include provision for 0.3 ha of parks and gardens, 0.1 ha of amenity greenspace, 1.1 ha of natural and**

semi-natural greenspace. 0.1ha for children and young people and 0.1ha of allotments. However, future planning applications will examine open space matters in more detail in accordance with Policy DM17. Financial contributions will be sought to improve existing sports and play areas.

6.6.40 The Council's [Renewable Energy Study](#) has identified potential for a range of renewable energy measures - wind energy (feeding into the national grid), high energy efficiency standards, solar photovoltaic, solar water heaters and air source heat pumps to domestic and non-domestic properties. These will need further investigation at the development brief and planning application stages.

6.6.41 The site has good access to the strategic road network and would be directly accessed from the roundabout on Swale Way, which connects to the A249 and motorway network beyond. A transport assessment will need to examine the detailed effects on this junction with the A249 where a need for improvements may arise. A network of footpath and cycle links will also need to integrate the sites with adjacent areas, including the National Cycle Route network and development will facilitate the extension of the bus network into the area.

6.6.42 Critical to the shape and timing of the development of the area is its relationship to the existing Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (SNRR) and its proposed final stage linking to the A2 – the latter is identified as a safeguarding search area by Policy AS 1. Until a route for completion of the SNRR is finalised, it is important that development at north-east Sittingbourne does not prejudice its future implementation. If housing proposals were to come forward early, they will need to demonstrate that land has been reserved to enable all reasonable potential route options to be fully considered, as well as determining, via the Transport Assessment, whether a contribution toward the provision of the road will be required.

Main Modification 168

Policy MU 2

Land at north-east Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for mixed use development comprising 43,000 sq m of 'B' use class employment uses, ~~a minimum of~~ approximately 106 dwellings, together with 31.1 ha of open space, flooding, biodiversity and landscape enhancements on land in North-East Sittingbourne as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with Policies ~~Policy DM8 and DM10~~;
2. Through an integrated landscape strategy, achieve a net gain in biodiversity overall by making provision for significant levels of habitat creation, landscaping and open space to:
 - a. mitigate impacts upon and enhance the interests of the adjacent Special Protection Area and Area of High Landscape Value;
 - b. meet natural and semi natural greenspace needs at the town;
 - c. provide water attenuation;
 - d. allotments; and
 - e. successfully complete the long term expansion of the town within the wider landscape;
3. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;

6 Land allocations for new development

4. Provide a financial contribution toward the improvement of existing sports pitch and formal play facilities;
5. Undertake a transport assessment and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed development;
6. Secure pedestrian and cycle links to existing and proposed residential and employment areas and adequate bus access to the site;
7. Ensure development does not prejudice the safeguarded future alignment of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Bapchild section in accordance with Policy AS1 and make an appropriate contribution toward it, if required;
8. Address the risk of flooding in accordance with Policy DM21;
9. Provide renewable energy measures in accordance with an assessment of potential; and
10. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

Main Modification 169

Land at south-west Sittingbourne

6.6.43 Located to the east and west of Wises Lane and to the south of Brier Road and Westlands School, some 33.7 ha of farmland is identified for a major mixed use expansion of Sittingbourne comprising some 565 dwellings, together with commercial development, a new primary school, major open space and landscape enhancements. The site has been identified as having significant potential to meet the Borough and town's future growth needs in a sustainable location, close to existing services and the strategic road network.

6.6.44 The area is arable farmland and has a predominantly rural and open character, with a relatively flat to gently undulating landform. Beyond it, the landform rises more steeply southwards, climbing to the village of Borden which is located on a ridge overlooking the site. Wises Lane itself is a narrow road linking the village of Borden to Sittingbourne, with a junction at the A2, whilst Cryalls Lane, a narrow route again, runs eastward from Wises Lane back into the residential areas of Sittingbourne.

6.6.45 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8. A small area of commercial floorspace could also be appropriate to complement the existing business site at the junction of Wises Lane and Cryalls Lane.

6.6.46 Given the different landowners involved and the landscape, phasing and infrastructure issues needing to be addressed, including the potentially complex transport issues (see below), preparation of a joint Masterplan/development brief for the site is required. At all stages use of the Council's Design Panel will be required.

6.6.47 A listed building lies close to the south eastern site boundary at Cryalls Lane and its setting will need to be conserved by the retention and enhancement of open areas, the creation of new open space, the avoidance of new development and the visual mitigation of any proposed new access to the site. It will be important that any application for development is accompanied by a detailed Heritage Assessment, assessing any potential impact on heritage assets. This should also include the impacts of increased traffic levels on the conservation areas within Borden village. An archaeological assessment will also need to be undertaken as the potential for important Iron Age, Roman and other remains is high.

6.6.48 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Page 356 Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality

and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.6.49 Landscape evidence shows this landscape's sensitivity and ability to accommodate change to be crucial issues needing to be addressed. The site also forms part of the landscape setting to, and separation of, Sittingbourne and Borden. Despite its physical reduction by the proposed new development, the remaining separation and setting should be respected and enhanced. It will therefore be essential that a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment be undertaken that shall include proposals for effective landscape and visual mitigation. This shall comprise an effective strategic landscape and green space buffer on the southern, western and eastern site boundaries to contribute to and reinforce a long term and sustainable gap between the settlements and to avoid perceptions of coalescence. This should include (including if necessary adjoining land):

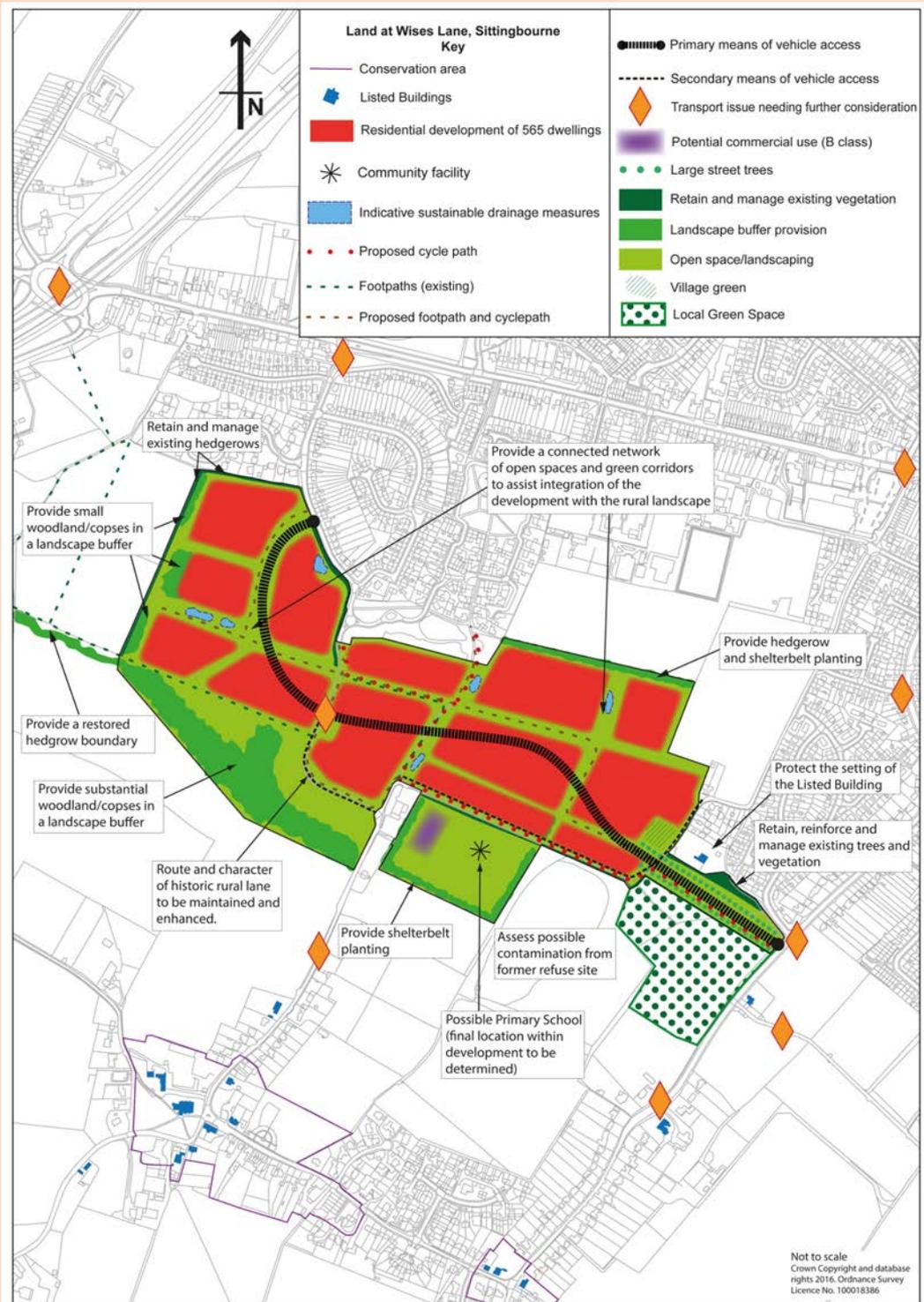
1. varied widths of woodland, copses, wide hedgerows, orchards and other natural green space appropriate to the local landscape character of the area;
2. the breaking up of the mass and scale of development, as it is perceived from the existing public footpath network, and from the higher ground at Borden;
3. advance planting of the landscape and open space buffer;
4. The establishment of green linkages between existing (adjoining) and proposed open spaces; and
5. demonstration of a net gain in biodiversity.

6.6.50 To further mitigate visual impacts, development on the land to the west of Wises Lane and on the southern boundary to the allocation should comprise lower densities, with a leafy character and a more rural feel, integrating and relating closely to the landscape of the countryside to the south. The design and appearance will respond to the character and distinctiveness identified by the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011. The residential development on the northern part of the land east of Wises Lane near to Westlands School could potentially be at a higher density, with contemporary, distinctive architecture helping to give the area a strong identity, supported by green streets and open spaces, creating a permeable and attractive pedestrian and living environment.

6.6.51 Although located close to a good range of services and public transport choices, there is other provision, such as perhaps a GP surgery and convenience store, which could be provided if further assessment demonstrates them to be necessary and viable. A two form entry primary school is likely to be required and this should be provided on the southern boundary to the site where it can support the landscape initiatives described above. The location of the school is shown indicatively on the southern edge of the allocation where its design and layout would need to avoid increasing adverse impacts within the countryside gap. The development brief and planning application process should consider the most suitable location in relation to these issues and its general accessibility for pupils.

6.6.52 Whilst the remaining countryside gap will be protected in accordance with Policy DM25, a local plan review will consider whether the open space established at the edge of the allocation should be included within any revised boundary to the gap policy.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.6.3 Development concepts for south-west Sittingbourne

6.6.53 The development should provide open space in accordance with Policy DM17, including ensuring that the proposed Local Green Space designation at the junction of Borden Lane and Auckland Drive is placed into appropriate management. Where access to the site is required from Borden Lane, its land take shall be the minimum necessary in order to limit visual impacts on the Local Green Space, whilst landscape mitigation will be required. Financial contributions towards improvements to existing sports pitch and formal play facilities will be required.

6.6.54 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as

necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.6.55 With the site located relatively sustainably in terms of access to local amenities and services, opportunities should be taken to ensure that connections to existing walking routes to the A2 and town centre are made, new footpaths created and that opportunities to travel on foot to destinations to the south such as local primary schools are created and/or enhanced. Provision of local bus services into the area must also be made and this will impact upon how the site is to be assessed.

6.6.56 Transport infrastructure issues are of major importance. Firstly, given the likely timing of improvements to J5 of the M2 at the A249, an assessment of the level of development able to come forward before completion of the improvement will need to be undertaken at the development brief/planning application stage. Secondly, improvements to the A2 at Key Street with the A249 will also be necessary if not already implemented by other planned developments. Thirdly, some of the roads serving the area may require localised improvements and/or traffic management. These could include the junction of Wises Lane with the A2, Adelaide Drive with the A2, Brisbane Avenue with Adelaide Drive, Auckland Drive with Borden Lane and Borden Lane with Homewood Avenue.

6.6.57 The primary accesses to the site are likely to be from Borden Lane and from the A2 at Wises Lane. This could take the form of a new road linking these two locations which would facilitate access by local bus services and could provide some benefit to levels of traffic currently using the A2. Such an arrangement will enable consideration to be given to traffic management initiatives (inc. possible localised closures) on roads such as Cryalls Lane, Wises Lane and Riddles Road, especially where limiting the potential for increased traffic usage in rural and existing residential areas. In the case of Wises Lane, any traffic management should consider its status as a 'rural lane' within Policy DM26 and its route should, in the eventuality of it being partially closed to traffic, be retained as a green corridor/pedestrian/cycle route.

6.6.58 Whilst the constraints on the highway network are not considered to represent a critical barrier to the levels of development proposed, it is not possible at this stage to determine the extent of improvements and traffic management that may be necessary at the detailed level. These will be matters to be determined more appropriately at the development brief and planning application stage. For the development brief/planning application, a Transport Assessment should be submitted to determine the need and timing for any improvements to the transport network.

6.6.59 Potential contamination from methane gas migration from the former waste tip to the south will also need to be examined and this may have a bearing on overall housing numbers and the location of development and open space. Topography and location may also require a noise assessment to consider matters such as traffic noise from the M2 and A249.

Main Modification 170

Policy New MUX 1

Land at south-west Sittingbourne

Planning permission will be granted for a minimum of 565 dwellings, commercial floorspace, landscaping and open space on land at south-west Sittingbourne, as shown on the Proposals Map. Development shall take place in accordance with a Masterplan/development brief (developed through stakeholder consultation). These and submitted planning applications will demonstrate and encompass:

6 Land allocations for new development

1. Accordance with Policy CP4, in particular, a strong landscape framework, achieving a net gain in biodiversity (to be shown by an integrated Landscape Strategy and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) and including:
 - a. provision of a substantial landscape and green space buffer, provided in advance of new development so as to ensure the mitigation of adverse visual impacts and the maintenance of a long term local countryside gap between Sittingbourne and Borden, in accordance with Policy DM25;
 - b. provision of green corridors and other green spaces within the development to: ensure an attractive living environment; assist in mitigating wider landscape and visual impacts; link with other existing open spaces; achieve a net gain in biodiversity; and meet open space needs in accordance with policy DM17.
2. A high quality design which responds appropriately to the local landscape character and distinctiveness of Sittingbourne and Borden as identified by the the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011;
3. Mitigation of visual impacts and implementation of public access to, and appropriate management of, the designated Local Green Space at the junction of Auckland Drive and Borden Lane;
4. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure shall be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
5. Undertake a Heritage Assessment to determine heritage impacts and to propose mitigation as necessary. There should be no substantial harm to the setting of Cryalls Farmhouse;
6. Undertake an archaeological assessment and propose mitigation as necessary;
7. Provision of appropriate access to the site from Borden Lane and Wises Lane, with a transport assessment at the development brief and planning application stages to further consider:
 - a. the implications of a proposed road link between the Wises Lane (A2) and Borden Lane;
 - b. the phasing of development relative to, and financial contributions toward, improvements to the A249 at its junctions with the M2 and at Key Street;
 - c. transport improvements at the junctions of the A2, together with other residential streets and rural lanes, as may be determined;
 - d. whether effective and sensitively designed traffic management measures (inc. possible road closures) will be necessary in parts of Cryalls Lane, Wises Lane and Riddles Road so as to manage traffic levels on rural roads to the south and residential areas to the east, whilst maintaining and enhancing opportunities for walking and cycling.
8. Providing public transport, pedestrian and cycle links within the development and to the adjacent network;
9. A Health Impact Assessment in accordance with Policy CP5;
10. The retention and enhancement of any designated Rural Lane, in accordance with Policy DM26;
11. Provision of a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
12. An assessment of potential noise and contamination and any mitigation necessary to address it; and
13. Provision of infrastructure needs arising from the development, including that identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule. This shall include provision by the developer of a two-form primary school and consideration of other local facilities able to improve the services available to existing and future residents.

Land at Frogнал Lane, Teynham

6.6.60 Teynham is one of the largest villages in the Borough and is identified as a Rural Local Service Centre in Policy ST3 as it supports the needs of the existing community and the settlements around it. The village owes much of its good range of services and public transport provision, including a railway station, to its historic development along the main Roman Road Watling Street (Greenstreet). This strong linear form, reinforced in the 19th and 20th century by further development, gives this part of the village its strong character. The countryside around the settlement is predominantly agricultural in both character and use, but to the north of the A2, the village also encloses a large undeveloped area of farm land and open spaces. This is in strong contrast with the landscape to the west and south of the A2 that is more open in character.

6.6.61 The extensive 30.7 ha allocated site north of the A2 is largely bounded by existing development on Frogнал Lane and Lower Road and the cul-de-sacs leading from Station Road. It is flat, although sunken in places as a result of brick earth extraction and currently used for sports pitches and farming. As a result of its location, the site is both well related to the existing framework of the village and has minimal impact upon the surrounding countryside and landscape. It further benefits from its location close both to Teynham railway station, the bus services running along the A2 and a good range of local services.

Main Modification 171

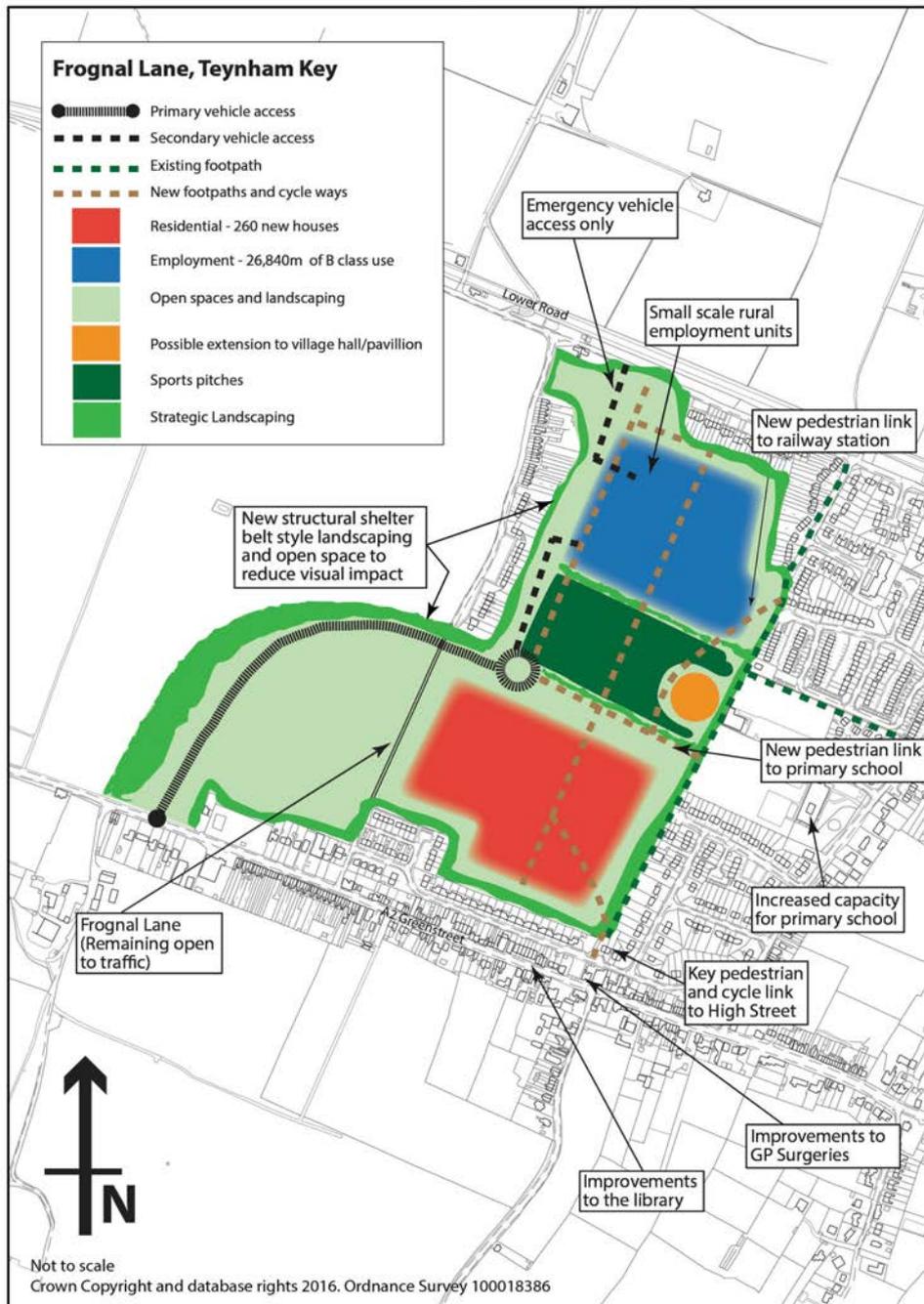
6.6.62 The allocation is for:

1. ~~a minimum of~~ approximately 260 dwellings on 7.5 ha;
2. 26,840 sq m of 'B' use class rural employment uses on 8.2 ha providing small-scale units, with an element which is suitable for start-up businesses; and
3. at least 6 ha of open space with additional landscaping, together with 3 ha of sports pitches.

6.6.63 The residential element of the scheme is envisaged as forming the southern extent of the site, located to the north of existing residential development extending along Frogнал Gardens and London Road. The employment element of the allocation will be located at the northern Lower Road end of the site. It is important that employment uses are appropriate to the location, especially given nearby housing and the nature of the local transport network. Both elements will require appropriate landscaping so as to minimise impacts on the amenities of existing residents, whilst pedestrian/cycling links between the existing, new development and local facilities will be important. Use of the Council's Design Panel is recommended.

6.6.64 Between the employment and housing elements there will be open space so that there is no overall net loss of existing playing pitches or open space. Within the open space area, provision will need to include that for 0.7ha of parks and gardens, 0.3 ha of open space, 2.7 ha, 0.1 ha of space for children and young people and 0.1 ha for allotments. However, future applications will examine open space matters in more detail in accordance with Policy DM17. In addition to meeting the open space needs of the community, provision/improvements to support existing play facilities, alongside indoor sports facilities are required, including, for example a new sports pavilion. The existing public right of way footpath to the east of the site must be maintained.

6 Land allocations for new development



Map 6.6.4 Development concepts at Froggnal Lane, Teynham

Main Modification 172

6.6.65 The site should achieve a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers. It should also consider any relevant parish/village housing needs assessment. Based on 260 dwellings, land will also be made available for three pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development and this will form the basis of discussions with the developer(s). These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.

6.6.66 Access to the site will be from a new road and junction from the A2 across an arc of land of 8.3 ha to the west of Froggnal Lane to address the otherwise restricted highway access between this lane and

the A2. As a result of preparing an integrated landscape strategy for the site, this land will also be provided as informal open space (including natural/semi-natural greenspace). On its outer boundary to the surrounding agricultural landscape, shelter belt landscaping will best reflect local landscape character and enable visual impacts in views from the open countryside to the north and west to be minimised. On the main site itself, retention of existing trees and new reinforcement planting, especially at the boundaries of the site will, along with other landscaping, create new features and a strong identity for the site. More specifically, new planting will work toward achieving a net gain in biodiversity on the site. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.6.67 Given the site's location close to the A2 Watling Street, which is an ancient route, an archaeological investigation will be prudent as part of any planning application and, if necessary, adequate mitigation measures must be put in place.

Main Modification 173

6.6.68 The scale of the development here will require a transport assessment in relation to impacts upon the A2 corridor. This will also need to consider the appropriateness of a financial contribution toward the completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. The proposals would also need to support improvements to public transport services, especially bus services to Sittingbourne, Faversham, and to the rural areas around the village. Enhancements to the facilities and environment at the rail station should also be considered. There may also be a need for environmental enhancements and traffic management at the A2 and Lynsted Lane and possibly junction improvements at Station Street with the A2. Development will also be planned to minimise the use of the Lower Road as a vehicle access to the site. Any access to Lower Road shall be for emergency vehicles only and traffic management measures will be required to ensure that vehicles cannot access or leave the site via Lower Road, exacerbating its use as a 'rat-run'.

Main Modification 174

6.6.69 The Transport Assessment should also inform impacts upon air quality, ensuring the development does not compromise the centre of Teynham which is an Air Quality Management Area. Innovative mitigation measures may be required to address any impacts.

Main Modification 175

6.6.70 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

6.6.71 There are current restrictions in the capacity of the connections to the Teynham Waste Water Treatment Works which will need to be addressed before development proceeds in accordance with Policy DM21.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.6.72 Developer contributions will be required to address infrastructure needs, with particular attention to the need to improve GP facilities at Teynham, increase capacity at the village library and primary school.

Main Modification 176

Policy MU 3

Land at Froggnal Lane, Teynham

Planning permission will be granted for mixed uses comprising a minimum of approximately 260 dwellings, 26,840 sq m of 'B' use class employment, open space and landscaping on land at Froggnal Lane, Teynham, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. ~~Accord with a development brief to be prepared and adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document;~~
2. Provide an integrated landscape strategy that will achieve a net gain in biodiversity and natural/semi-natural greenspace, integrate the development and its access road within the wider landscape and create a strong landscape structure to incorporate existing vegetation and create new planting and habitats;
3. Prepare a heritage assessment and, if necessary, provide for adequate mitigation measures to be put in place;
4. Provide open space and sports facilities to meet the needs of both the existing and new residents, with no net loss in existing provision;
5. Secure pedestrian and cycle links between the existing community, the proposed development area and the services and facilities within Teynham;
6. Avoid increased use of the Lower Road and junction of the A2 and Froggnal Lane by bringing forward, as appropriate, traffic management measures within Froggnal Lane and bring forward, as appropriate, improvements to traffic conditions on the A2 within the village;
7. ~~Prepare and act upon a transport assessment that will additionally address the timing of development relative to the proposed Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Bapchild link~~ Bring forward such transport improvements and other mitigation as required by a transport assessment;
8. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3 and any village/parish housing needs assessment, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
9. Locate and provide employment uses appropriate to the amenity of existing residents;
10. Ensure waste water connections at points that are adequate in their capacity;
11. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
12. Achieve improvements to education, library and health facilities at the village;
13. Address air quality impacts arising in the Teynham AQMA, including the implementation of innovative mitigation measures; and
14. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

The Oare gravel workings, Oare Road, Faversham

6.6.73 This 67 ha site, located to the north-west of the town, is bounded by Oare Creek, Oare Road, Ham Road and the open expanses of the North Kent Marshes to the north. Used for gravel workings and processing, it is a mix of vegetation, lakes, open land and historic structures associated with its former use as a gunpowder works.

Main Modification 177

6.6.74 The site is an exceptional opportunity to meet future housing and employment needs at the town that could provide for the use and wider management of its environmental assets. Uniquely, it can do this without use of the high quality agricultural land that surrounds much of the town and in a way that strongly accords with the Local Plan Vision. The opportunities include:

- up to ~~300~~ 330 dwellings (inc. affordable housing and provision for Gypsies and Travellers);
- a creative hub at the cluster of historic buildings in the centre of the site including 1,500 sq m of non-residential floorspace; and
- the management of the whole site for biodiversity and to offset recreational pressures on the wider marshland environment.

6.6.75 There will be a recognition, integrated into the earliest planning of proposals, that this is a highly sensitive location. The constraints of flooding, biodiversity, landscape and a need to maintain the separation between Faversham and Oare, determine that the south-eastern portion will be the focus for built development, with the remainder of the site left undeveloped but managed.

6.6.76 The open marshland landscapes around the site and the raised ground to Oare village mean that the site acts as a buffer between Faversham, Oare and Ham Marshes, but also means that much of the site has views to and from these locations. A landscape assessment and mitigation strategy will include the retention of, as far as possible, existing vegetation, the creation of a new, strong landscape framework around and within the built areas and the retention of important views both into and out of the site. It will also need to include those measures necessary to minimise the visual impact of development in views from the open landscapes beyond the site and the screening of visually detracting existing employment uses. A comprehensive approach to external lighting, achieved via a prepared lighting strategy, will avoid adverse impacts upon biodiversity and on dark night time skies.

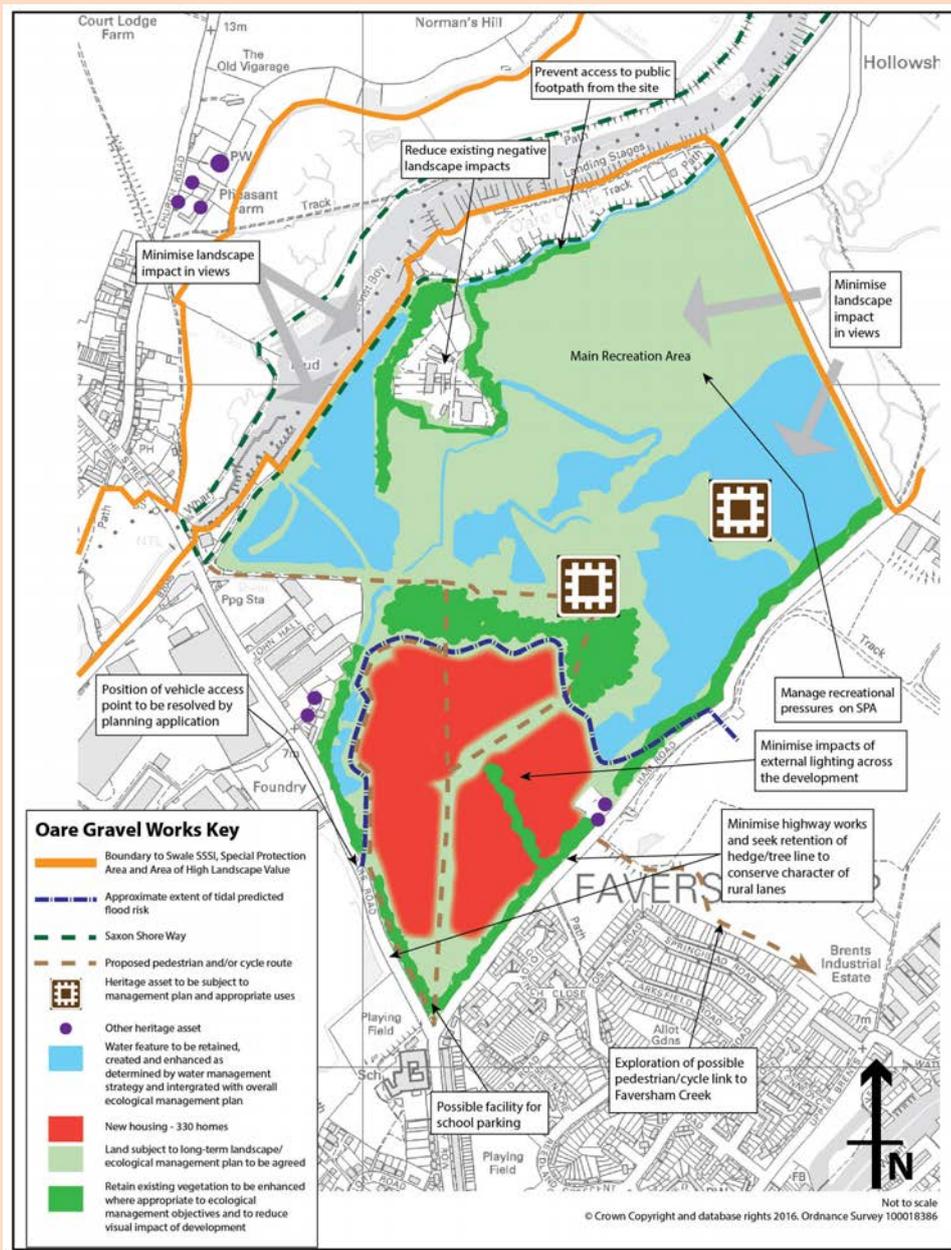
6.6.77 The site has its own ecological interests needing to be assessed and addressed, but especially important are the internationally designated Swale Special Protection Area and nationally important Site of Special Scientific Interest that adjoin the site. With easy access close to the site onto the wider marshes, disturbance to birds could increase if not managed. Whilst evidence indicates that this risk can be managed, much depends upon the master planning and detailed stages of development and the role the site plays in supporting species using the SPA. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.6.78 Both landscape and ecological assessments will ultimately need to produce the foundations for the detailed management and financial arrangements that will provide for the long-term, ecological-led management of the whole site. The overall objectives will be that there should be: (a) no significant effect on the Special Protection Area; (b) a positive and appropriate impact on the biodiversity of the site itself; leading to (c) a net gain in biodiversity overall.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.6.79 The site's former use has left a legacy of historic assets, ranging from a cluster of buildings in the centre of the site to blast walls. Development will secure the future of these assets through their appropriate non-residential use and successful integration with the wider development. Their importance requires assessment and understanding so that it guides the most appropriate use of the buildings that will also successfully integrate any wildlife roosts and nests within the buildings. Appropriate uses might include a visitor/educational centre or office and industrial uses. The timing for the restoration of these buildings relative to the rest of the development proposals will need to be agreed. Other heritage assets outside the site include the Oare windmill and adjoining cottages where proposals will minimise impacts upon their setting and outlook.

Main Modification 178



Map 6.6.5 Development concepts at Oare gravel workings, Faversham (modification indicates increased development yield)

6.6.80 Whilst houses can be built above the forecast flood level for the area, a planning application will need to provide a site flood risk assessment and demonstrate a safe means of escape in the event of

flooding in the wider area and without prejudice to the objectives of the Shoreline Management Plan. The historic buildings will also require some flood defence appropriate to the uses proposed for them and for their setting. Given the water features and network on the site, these will need to be managed and steps taken to ensure their quality is maintained or improved and the site would be a strong candidate for a planned network of sustainable urban drainage. The future use of water bodies will be dictated by the overall management plan and mitigation proposals for the site. Water supply and waste water connections will be in accordance with Policy DM 21. Some parts of the developed area are also likely to be contaminated and these will need to be remediated as appropriate.

6.6.81 The traffic arising from the new uses proposed will need to be assessed for their impact on the transport network and on air quality on the A2 through Ospringe. A transport assessment will include possible impacts on northern routes into the town centre, many of which are narrow and restricted and bring forward any localised improvements that need to be made, including perhaps an additional drop off area for Davington School. The need for any interim transport improvement to Junction 7 of the M2 at Brenley Corner will need to be explored with the Highways Agency. A cycle/footpath link from Ham Road to Faversham creek across the north of the town should also be explored. Vehicle access to the site can appropriately be achieved, however, the precise location of the access will need to consider such matters as the rural character of Ham Road, the retention of existing vegetation, the role of the existing access opposite the Western Link and the need to consider the risk arising from flooding.

6.6.82 Such are the design issues affecting the site and the importance of securing an imaginative and exemplary scheme, the Council will use its Design Panel to assess the project throughout its developing stages. Bespoke designs will be led by influences of water, marsh, maritime and industrial heritage, permeating every detail of the proposed built and landscape environments. These will comply with a Technical Development Brief, focusing upon design issues, that will be made the subject of a planning condition so as to tie future developers into the concepts advocated at the inception.

Main Modification 179

6.6.83 The site should bring forward a range of housing types with an emphasis upon family homes in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing. ~~and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 300 dwellings, land will be made available for three pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

6.6.84 Open space requirements of 4.2 ha are expected to be addressed within the site and will be primarily aimed at meeting the needs for natural and semi-natural green space and to address the requirements arising from the ecological assessment and mitigation proposals. However, future planning applications will examine open space matters in more detail in accordance with Policy DM17. For sports facilities contributions toward off-site provision will be required, whilst formal play facilities can be provided on-site unless this would inhibit the proper mitigation of landscape and biodiversity impacts. The current activities of groups such as the sea scouts who use the site will be expected to continue with better facilities.

6.6.85 Central to the acceptance of any proposal for the site is not only the high quality of its execution, but its ability to achieve the long-term and financially secure management of the entire site to meet ecological and landscape objectives. This will require a legally binding agreement with those parties necessary to run and manage the site in, as far as possible, perpetuity and in accordance with a management plan prepared and implemented with the involvement of wildlife organisations. Designation of a Local Nature Reserve could also be the ultimate outcome for the site.

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 180

Policy MU 4

The Oare gravel workings, Oare Road, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for mixed-uses, comprising 1,500 sq m of commercial floorspace, together with some 300 homes and proposals for the conservation, enhancement, and long term management of the site's ecological and heritage assets at Oare gravel workings, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Achieve buildings and landscape design, which are bespoke and appropriate to the site's constraints and context and conforming to a technical development brief, the preparation of which will be a condition of any outline planning application;
2. Minimise adverse transport impacts (inc. those on air quality), whilst enhancing opportunities for walking and cycling;
3. In accordance with an integrated landscape strategy, minimise adverse landscape impacts, including those upon dark night time skies, landmark buildings and settlement separation, and retain existing vegetation where possible, screen existing visually detracting features and achieve a structural landscape scheme with substantial new landscaping;
4. Manage and minimise the risk of flooding having regard to the relevant Shoreline Management Plan;
5. Manage and enhance water features and quality as part of a water management plan that will include sustainable urban drainage measures;
6. Address any contamination to achieve a safe development;
7. Avoid, minimise and mitigate adverse impacts upon biodiversity and achieve a net gain in biodiversity by:
 - a. assessing biodiversity interests, including, if required, a Habitats Regulations Assessment which will demonstrate that development is not likely to have a significant effect on the Special Protection Area (SPA);
 - b. reducing recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring appropriate opportunities for use of the site by residents and visitors (particularly for dog walking) and using such land to meet natural and semi-natural green space needs. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
 - c. ensuring that habitats retained, enhanced and created are protected from later development, and remaining accessible to the public; insofar as compatible with the objectives of criterion 7a;
 - d. the agreement and implementation of a management plan for the whole site to clarify the proposals for various habitats across the site and to provide a sustainable and financially secure basis for managing the site through the development process and in the long term; and
 - e. achieving a positive impact on the biodiversity of the site itself, including protecting and enhancing on-site habitats to provide for (at least) current levels of use by key species, including its use by SPA birds, and managing the site to maintain and enhance the biodiversity associated with fields, scrub, woodland, water features and ditches.
8. Identify and assess the significance of heritage assets and secure their conservation, restoration enjoyment and management through appropriate re-use and siting of development;

9. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10 Policy DM8;
10. Agree the proportion of new housing that will come forward before the restoration of heritage assets and the implementation of those matters within criterion 8;
11. Make provision for formal play facilities on site, unless not compatible within criterion 8, otherwise make an off-site contribution toward these and improvements to existing sports pitches;
12. Ensure waste water connections at points that are adequate in their capacity;
13. Secure continued facilities and access to the water for sea scouts;
14. The submission of a viability assessment so the Council is satisfied as to the long-term security of proposed management measures; and
15. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development.

Land at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane, Faversham

6.6.86 This 27 ha site is located to the east of the town and bounded by Love Lane to the west, an industrial area at Graveney Road to the north and the Faversham to Dover railway to the south. The eastern boundary to the site is approximately formed by a north-south ridge beyond which the land falls away to become more visually prominent. The site is farmed from a complex of buildings close to Love Lane.

Main Modification 181

6.6.87 The site is proposed for allocation as a business park of 20,000 sq m of 'B' use class uses on 5 ha of the site with the emphasis upon creating a B1a use class office park environment. In addition, approximately ~~200~~ 260 houses on a further ~~5~~ 7 ha could be provided to meet housing needs at the town and provide some financial support to the proposed employment uses. The remainder of the site will form a major parkland asset and strategic landscaping. ~~A second phase of housing and employment may be appropriate, but the merits of this will be for consideration at a later date.~~

6.6.88 The site occupies a gateway location on the eastern approaches to the town and this demands high quality standards of built and landscape design to both capture the imagination of a range of employers and achieve the successful integration of the site within the wider context of Faversham. The Council will expect proposals to be taken through and respond positively to its Design Panel process, whilst preparation of and adherence to a technical development brief will be a requirement arising from a planning condition on any outline planning permission.

6.6.89 The site adjoins the Faversham conservation area at its boundary with the cemetery in Love Lane and the proposed open space will enable this to be respected, together with views of the town's Parish Church. Given the location of the site close to the A2 Watling Street, an archaeological assessment will be prudent.

6.6.90 The site's access to the strategic road network is an advantage for attracting development, however, it will be important to ensure that the development functions as an extension to Faversham and not as a stand alone settlement unrelated to the town. This means enhancing links with the centre for non-car modes of transport and ensuring that any non-industrial commercial uses proposed complement those in the town centre and do not harm its viability.

6.6.91 Access to the site is likely to be provided by both Graveney Road and Love Lane with access to the motorway available from both Junction 7 of the M2 and the Thanet Way via the Duke of Kent junction to the east. A transport assessment will be required to support any planning application, but early

6 Land allocations for new development

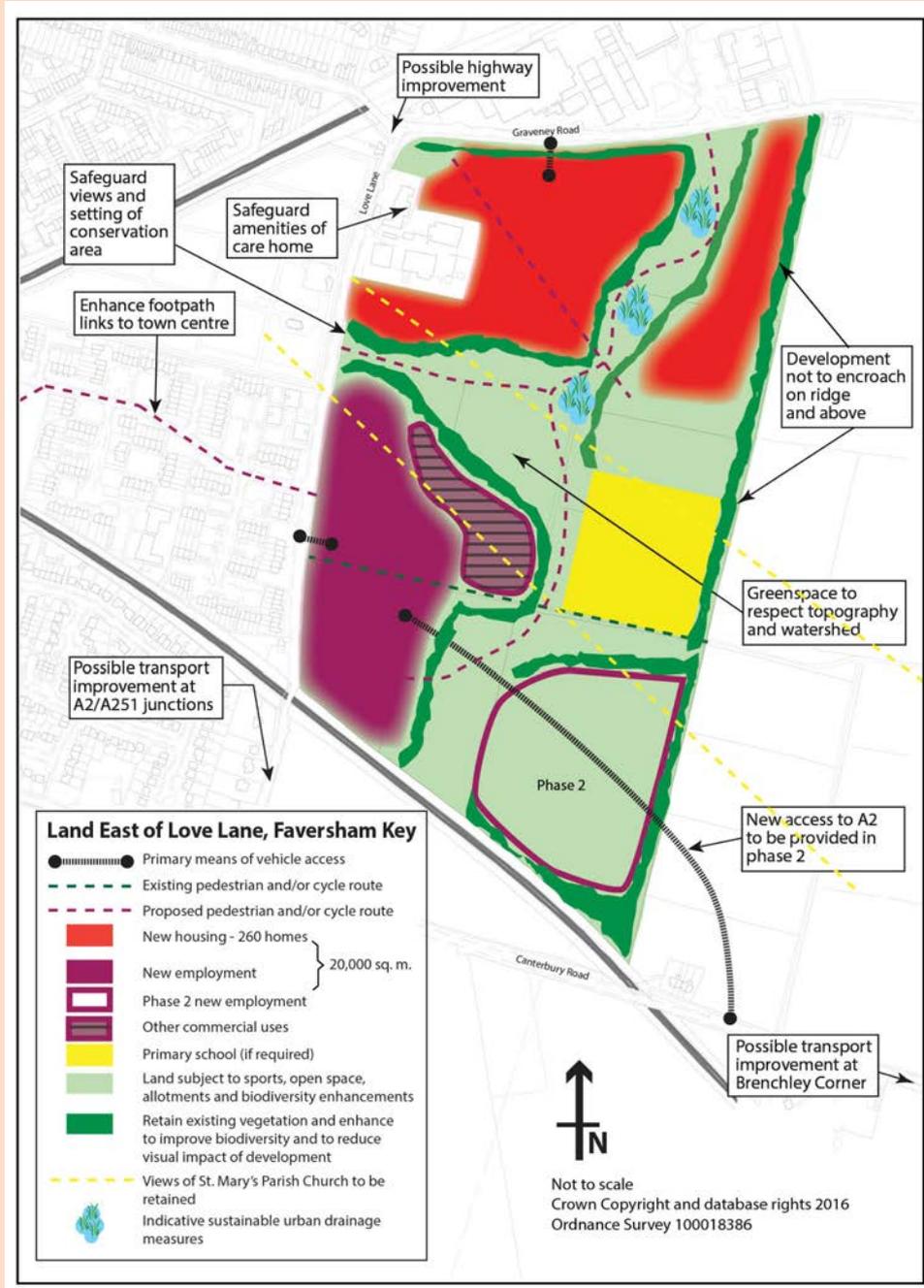
assessment indicates that an appropriate improvement/mitigation will be required at Brenley Corner and a need for an improvement at the junction of Love Lane and the A2. Use of these accesses are unlikely to be acceptable in transport terms for meeting the entire commercial potential of the site and this will require the creation of an alternative access from the southern part of the site through to the the A2 at a point to the south east of the site. This would avoid the crossing of the railway by traffic in Love Lane itself and present the opportunity to introduce traffic management measures there. A trigger for provision of this road will need to be agreed before completion of the housing and any later phase of employment provision. Off-road pedestrian and cycle connections to and from the site could be more attractive and improvements to these links will be required. The frequency of bus services from the town to Whitstable past the site may also need to be improved alongside other links. Water and waste water issues arising from the development of the site will need to be addressed in accordance with Policy DM21.

6.6.92 Early commencement of the employment elements of the development are considered critical in terms of achieving the strategy for Faversham. The Council will agree with the developer an early trigger point for the commencement of the employment development relative to the number of housing completions. Latter triggers may also be introduced for other phases, having regard to likely market conditions. Whilst non-industrial uses may be considered, they should be in addition to, or a very small proportion of, the 20,000 sq m of industrial employment floorspace provision for the site as this level has been identified to meet local needs at Faversham for the plan period.

Main Modification 182

6.6.93 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

Main Modification 183



Map 6.6.6 Development concepts for land at Lady Dane Farm, Faversham (modification shows increased development yield for housing)

Main Modification 184

6.6.94 The site should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers. As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on 200 dwellings, land will be made available for two pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within

6 Land allocations for new development

~~the wider community.~~ Lying close to some poorer quality areas of housing, the purpose of development here will be not to reinforce these characteristics, but to support an enhancement of the local housing market in terms of housing type and quality of environment.

6.6.95 Financial contributions toward existing sports provision and formal play facilities will be required, whilst open space proposals will form the heart for the community and will:

- link the urban area to the open countryside to the east of the site;
- achieve the separation between housing and employment;
- provide local amenities for residents and workers, creating an attractive environment in which to invest, work and live;
- achieve an overall net-gain in biodiversity;
- **meet the open space needs of some 2.9 ha arising from the development itself, including 0.5 ha of parks and gardens, 0.2 ha of amenity greenspace, 2.1 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace, 0.1 ha for children and young people and 0.1 ha of allotments.** This provision will need to include space of a type to mitigate against recreation impacts on the Special Protection Area (see para. **6.6.86**). However, future planning applications will examine open space matters in more detail in accordance with Policy DM17;
- contribute to long distant views of the town and its landmarks from the east; and
- minimise impacts to the town's compact urban form.

6.6.96 The approach to landscaping and open space are strong drivers for both the layout of development and in minimising adverse landscape impacts. The rolling landscape is the chief feature of the site and should be used to define the development envelope in a way that relates to the topography and its watershed. A second important feature is the north-south ridge on the eastern boundary that represents the outer acceptable extent of development. An integrated landscape strategy will be required to address these issues and to ensure that development is set below the level of the ridge to avoid adverse impacts within the wider landscape. It will make imaginative and sensitive use of the shallow valley fall across the site from south to north and the retention and enhancement of shelter-belt trees where it is appropriate to do so, whilst the use of informal meadows and traditional orchard planting will reinforce the landscape character of this agricultural landscape.

6.6.97 Proposals will support the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity. A Habitats Regulations Assessment may need to be undertaken, given the location of the site relative to the Swale Special Protection Area. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

Main Modification 185

6.6.98 The proposed allocation is located to the south of a Local Wildlife Site at Abbey Fields. Development proposals should assess the likely impact upon the site and, if necessary, propose mitigation.

6.6.99 Developer contributions will be required to meet community needs arising from the development. Notably, land may be required for a new two form entry primary school for the town (if confirmed by the County Council) and for the improvement of health facilities at existing centres.

Main Modification 186

Policy MU 5

Land at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane

Planning permission will be granted for mixed-uses, comprising 20,000 sq m of 'B' use class employment, approximately ~~200~~ 260 dwellings, open space and landscape enhancements, on land to the east of Love Lane, Faversham, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Achieve a built design and layout which responds to the context of the site and its landform to achieve an attractive new semi urban edge to Faversham that respects the surrounding agricultural landscape;
2. Use the rolling landscape to define the development envelope in a way that respects its topography and watershed and through an integrated landscape strategy:
 - a. secure substantial strategic parkland to meet open space needs (including that for natural and semi-natural greenspace) and provide for improvements to existing sports pitch and formal play facilities;
 - b. achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
 - c. minimise adverse visual impacts, with particular regard to the siting of development at the eastern boundary; and
 - d. provide a landscape framework that reflects and reinforces the areas landscape character.
3. Improve connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport to the town centre and other locations;
4. Avoid commercial uses that would adversely affect the vitality and viability of Faversham town centre;
5. Bring forward industrial development in accordance with triggers for their phasing agreed with the Council. Other commercial development will be provided subject to their being no adverse impact upon the viability of the town and it not prejudicing the delivery of the industrial floorspace needs for the town identified by the Local Plan;
6. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
7. Assess the likely impact upon the Abbey Fields Local Wildlife Site, and if, necessary bring forward mitigation proposals;
8. Bring forward such transport improvements and other mitigation as required by a transport assessment, including junctions with the A2, and, potentially, improvements/mitigation at the Brenley Corner A2/M2 junction;
9. Provide, in accordance with a trigger agreed with the Council, a new eastern access to the site providing a direct link to the A2;
10. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing ~~and Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with Policies DM8 and DM10~~ Policy DM8;
11. Ensure waste water connections at points that are adequate in their capacity;
12. Ensure that heritage assets are assessed and protected, whilst minimising the visual impact of development on the wider setting of the town and its conservation area; and
13. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including the provision of land for a primary school (if required).

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 187

Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham

6.6.100 Approximately 4 ha of land is allocated at Graveney Road predominantly for employment use. The site lies on the eastern edge of Faversham and comprises land and buildings previously associated with a former garden furniture manufacturer (circa 2.7 ha), together with a number of existing uses. The 2008 Local Plan sought to enable the redevelopment of the majority of the site to form a headquarters for the garden furniture manufacturer. The allocation at that time was for a mixed use development (employment/residential) tied to the specific needs of the then occupier.

6.6.101 Now that the garden furniture manufacturer has ceased trading this approach has been reviewed. The poor quality of the buildings on site will necessitate a redevelopment of a significant part of the site, although existing businesses are not envisaged as being affected. With the site located close to the strategic road network, it is well placed to meet the town's future employment needs, but in so doing, this location on the approaches to the town demands a high quality design, both in terms of the built development but also through the creation of a substantial landscaped frontage.

6.6.102 In considering the wider issue of employment in Faversham, the Council acknowledges that achieving employment uses here may require consideration of a range of uses to support the vitality and delivery of employment land. In considering the merits of other supporting uses, the primary objective for the site is that it should be predominantly for employment.

6.6.103 The site adjoins a second employment allocation (Policy A6) and the development of the site should provide the means of access to allow both sites to be accessed from a single point, whilst facilitating an internal access to the adjacent site.

Main Modification 188

Policy MU6

Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for employment development and other enabling uses on land at Graveney Road, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Development proposals will:

1. Ensure that a significant proportion of the site comprises 'B' use class uses;
2. Provide a shared means of access with land subject to Policy A6;
3. Prepare a transport assessment, having regard to any proposals for the land to the east, and implement any highway and other transportation improvements arising from the proposed developments; and
4. Remove poor quality buildings and achieve a high quality built and landscape design befitting the prominent position of the site.

Main Modification 189

Perry Court Farm, Faversham

6.6.104 This 33.1 ha site extends from Abbey School and Perry Court Farmhouse to the north, southwards to the M2. Its western boundary adjoins Brogdale Road, a rural lane, whilst the eastern boundary adjoins Ashford Road. The south-east corner of the site is close to junction 6 of the M2 with the A251.

6.6.105 Located at the edge of the town, the site is reasonably well positioned in terms of access to services, although the A2 is a barrier to easier pedestrian and cycle access. The site is visually contained by a long term visually defensible boundary provided by the M2 and other roads and existing urban influences. As a result, the site has strong potential to support the Borough's future employment and housing needs, whilst being of sufficient scale for some local services to be provided as part of a mixed use development.

6.6.106 The site is crossed by a public footpath leading from the A2 at The Abbey school to Brogdale Road. It comprises gently undulating farmland, predominantly rural in character, although there are some urban edge/fringe influences from the large scale school buildings; sports grounds, residential properties on land adjoining to the north and east; and further to the south, the presence of the M2.

6.6.107 The site should bring forward some 370 dwellings with a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing and specialist accommodation (use class C2). In terms of employment, 3ha (18,525 sq.m) of new B1a, B1b and B1c class uses will provide the opportunity to help the Borough diversify its economy into higher skilled areas. B1a (office) uses should therefore form a significant part of this mix and the site is well placed to meet these needs due to its relationship with the M2 and other routes. The impact of locating main town centre uses, such as offices, leisure and retail development may require the submission of an impact assessment in accordance with Policy DM2, but it is the Council's view that larger scale retail and leisure development is unlikely to be acceptable due to adverse impacts on the town centre.

6.6.108 To further consider the design issues associated within these proposals, use of the Council's Design Panel is strongly recommended.

6.6.109 Landscape and heritage evidence indicates the location as having a moderate capacity to accommodate change, being relatively well contained by the surrounding road network and existing vegetation. Whilst the land contributes to the landscape and heritage setting of the town, the influence of development here on this is considered to be limited because of the urban influences which result in a more fragmented and less defined transition between urban and rural areas. Further south however, consideration should be given to the conservation and enhancement of the rural approaches, particularly along Brogdale Road, where landscaping and open space provision could be used to limit such impacts.

6.6.110 Overall to consider these matters, detailed heritage and landscape assessment will need to consider the significance of the impact of development at the local level on the heritage and landscape settings of the town, together with those of nearby designated and undesignated heritage assets where settings should be preserved. Given the sites proximity to the A2, an archaeological assessment should consider the importance of the site and, if necessary propose mitigation.

6.6.111 In terms of the relationship between development and the M2, it is important that the rural character of the southern part of the site is respected and that the extent and scale of development is appropriate in terms of landscape impact. Use of substantial green space and planting provision will be aimed at avoiding the impression of urban sprawl and should also be aimed at reducing noise from the motorway and avoiding significant adverse landscape character impacts to the south of the M2.

6 Land allocations for new development

part of the setting of the Kent Downs AONB. Planting should reinforce the local character of the Faversham and Ospringe Fruit Belt Landscape Character Area (Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal, 2011).

6.6.112 An ecological assessment will need to be submitted at the application stage to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

6.6.113 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.6.114 Open space would need to be provided within the site to meet the needs of new residents, in accordance with Policy DM17, to include accessible natural green space.

6.6.115 It is highly likely that safeguarded minerals are present at this site (as shown on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Proposals Maps and Chapter 9 of this Plan) and therefore the quality and quantity of the mineral and the practicalities of prior extraction should be investigated via a Minerals Assessment in line with the safeguarding mineral and prior extraction policies contained within the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.



Map 6.6.7 Development concepts at Perry Court Farm, Faversham

6.6.116 To enhance access to services, a footpath to the site frontage along Ashford Road, together with a pedestrian crossing between the site and the eastern side of Ashford Road would be required. Development should ensure that the existing public right of way is retained, with consideration given to its resurfacing and upgrading to a bridleway to allow both cyclists and pedestrians to use it. If this is not achievable then a footway/cycleway will need to be provided to the south side of the A2 between Brogdale Road and Ashford Road.

6.6.117 A transport assessment should consider the need for highway improvements, including those to the A251 and A2 junction, together with the A2 junction with the Mall, alongside improvements at the A2 junction with Brogdale Road. The assessment would also need to consider any mitigation works required at Junction 7 of the M2 in consultation with Highways England. The transport

6 Land allocations for new development

assessment should inform an air quality assessment to ensure that the Air Quality Management Area in the centre of Ospringe is not compromised. If necessary, innovative mitigation measures should be promoted.

6.6.118 Development may also be required to contribute to enhanced bus provision between the site and Faversham town centre, whilst the quality of pedestrian links across the A2 should also be enhanced.

6.6.119 Planning applications may be required to submit a noise assessment to consider the impact of traffic on the M2 on new residents.

Main Modification 190

Policy New MUX 2

Perry Court Farm, Faversham

Planning permission will be granted for a mixed use development at Perry Court Farm, Faversham, as shown on the Proposals Map, to include a minimum of 370 dwellings, together with 18,525 sq. m of B1a, B1b, B1c class employment uses, supporting uses and landscaping and open space. Development proposals will:

1. Be in accordance with Policy CP4 and in particular demonstrate and provide a strong landscape framework (shown by a submitted Landscape Strategy and Landscape and Ecological Management Plan) to include:
 - a. substantial width of woodland planting along the site boundary with the M2, which shall additionally safeguard the setting of the Kent Downs AONB;
 - b. additional substantial areas of woodland planting and green space e.g. community orchards and allotments, within the south western quarter of the site near Brogdale Road;
 - c. retained, managed and enhanced hedgerows and shelterbelts;
 - d. footpath and cycle path routes within green corridors linked to the adjacent network; and
 - e. planting selected to reinforce the local landscape character area.
2. Be of high quality design, with building siting, form, height and materials related to the existing built form and topography of the site and the surrounding context and to include consideration of:
 - a. the setting of landscape and heritage assets;
 - b. the rural approaches to the town; and
 - c. building heights demonstrating they have been influenced by, and show respect for, views from the south.
3. Provide for a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing in accordance with Policy DM8;
4. Provide open space to meet the needs of residents in accordance with Policy DM17;
5. Through both on and off site measures, ensure that any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure is mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;

6. Submit a detailed heritage assessment to consider the significance of the impact of development at the local level on the heritage setting of the town and other heritage assets in accordance with policies DM32-DM33. An archaeological assessment should consider the importance of the site and, if necessary propose mitigation;
7. Provide the majority of B1 class employment floorspace as B1a (offices). Employment uses other than B1 will not be permitted unless it is clearly shown that they would not be achievable. Proposals for alternative employment uses must demonstrate they would not diminish the quality of the development, whilst proposals for main town centre uses will need to be the subject of an impact assessment;
8. Undertake an air quality assessment to ensure that the Ospringe AQMA is not compromised, with, if necessary, the use of innovative mitigation measures;
9. Submit a noise assessment and implement any mitigation arising;
10. Provide infrastructure needs arising from the development, including mitigation works required at Junction 7 of the M2 and health provision, together with those matters identified by the Implementation and Delivery Schedule; and
11. Be supported by a Transport Assessment to determine the need and timing for any improvements to the transport network and the phasing of development. A financial contribution toward any such improvements, including a potential contribution to enhancement to bus provision between the site and Faversham will be sought.

See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

6.7 Proposed regeneration areas

Central Sittingbourne regeneration area

6.7.1 Sittingbourne Town Centre is orientated on an east-west axis, with the historic High Street comprising the retail focus of the town. This includes a range of building styles and retailers of varying sizes, both national chains and independents of varying quality. To the north of the High Street is the Forum Centre which is a relatively small scale shopping centre which is now somewhat outdated and presents a poor image for the town.

6.7.2 To the north of the Forum lies the A2 (St Michael's Road), the railway line and Eurolink Way. All form significant barriers for pedestrians and vehicles between the town and areas to the north, in particular to Milton Creek. Additionally, the railway station is poorly connected to the town centre, forms a poor transport interchange and its environment is dominated by traffic.

6.7.3 There has been recent development of a foodstore and petrol station to the north west of the centre and there is a bulky goods retail centre north of Eurolink Way.

6.7.4 To the south of the High Street is a foodstore, a cluster of civic uses and facilities (including the Swallows Leisure Centre, Library and Police Station), but the town lacks a cinema and other cultural and leisure facilities. This area also presents a series of unattractive areas, including the now demolished Bell Shopping Centre, areas to the south of the High Street and the swathes of surface car parking that all represent an inefficient use of land and poor quality, unattractive spaces.

6.7.5 The western end of the High Street is an unremarkable collection of uses, surface car parking and exposed backs of properties which undermine the setting of Cockleshell Walk and Trinity Church and produce an unattractive gateway to the town centre. At its eastern end, the street scene is dominated by the current civic offices at Swale House, car parking, vacant land and vehicle showrooms. The former cinema building is not in full use and dominates the listed St Michael's Church and graveyard, the latter being one of the few green spaces in the town centre.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.7.6 The appearance of land behind the shopping streets in the town centre is generally poor, with unattractive views of commercial premises and service roads, whilst the centre as a whole is characterised by large areas of surface car parking which is poorly maintained in some cases, unevenly used across the town and poorly used after business hours. They represent a poor use of space and also detract from the environment and amenity of the town.

6.7.7 There is a Conservation Area in the core of the High Street with a predominance of eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings, reflecting its importance as a coaching stop between London and Canterbury, although St Michael's Church at the eastern end of the High Street dates back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Adopted Local Plan (2008) policy context

6.7.8 The [Local Plan 2008](#) and the [Sittingbourne Town Centre and Milton Creek Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010) comprised policies and design principles to regenerate the town centre. There has been some progress in respect of implementing these, but significant issues with a major proposal caused by the economic downturn and changing national retail patterns have prompted a review. Recent national planning policy change also indicates the need to keep town centres under review.

6.7.9 The National Planning Policy Framework indicates that local plans should set out a suite of positive policies to promote competitive town centres, including identifying a range of suitable sites to meet development needs and setting out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.^(6.2) National planning policy guidance advises consideration of the role, function and hierarchy of town centres in the area over the plan period and auditing existing centres to assess vitality and viability and potential to accommodate new and/or different types of development. Whilst the lifetime of the Plan period needs to be taken into account, three to five yearly reviews are recommended, so a review of the approach for the central area of Sittingbourne was indicated for this draft local plan.

6.7.10 It is useful to review how previously adopted policies from the Local Plan 2008 proposed change in this area, to review progress and how this has informed policy review.

- [Policy AAP 7](#) which focused on the existing town centre and consolidating and expanding the retail offer and services; and improving the public realm until such time as management plan to complement major retail expansion to the north could be prepared.
- [Policy MU7](#) dealt with the reallocation of the Bell Centre for redevelopment for mixed uses including housing, leisure, retail, office and community uses.
- [Policy AAP 8](#) focused on land around Milton Creek to the north of the railway and allowed for a new residential community, plus major new expansion of the town centre retail, leisure and business development.
- [Policy B27](#) acted as a link policy which allowed for major expansion of the Forum centre and for the town centre to expand northwards over the railway. The new and old parts of the centre were to be linked via a substantial pedestrian / cycle link which were also intended to accommodate small retail and service units.

6.7.11 The policies were brought together in the [Sittingbourne Town Centre and Milton Creek Supplementary Planning Document](#) (September 2010) which set out a strategy and key design themes for the various parts of the centre. The policies sought to support the regeneration strategy of the plan by promoting the consolidation and growth of the town as a retail centre by providing a step change in the retail and leisure provision, so as to retain more spending locally and reduce the need for people to travel to other centres outside the Borough for these purposes. These plans involved major expansion of the town centre over the railway, with a new residential community in the Milton Creek area, plus a bridge connection, such that the retail heart of the town would be refocused north-south as opposed to east-west.

Progress in implementing adopted policy

6.7.12 Since adoption of the the 2008 Local Plan, the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (bridge section) has been completed, which has succeeded in taking commercial traffic for the business estates to the north of the town out of the centre itself. This has created the opportunity (as anticipated) to regenerate and improve a previously traffic dominated environment with more services and facilities.

6.7.13 A new convenience superstore (6,682 sq m) and petrol filling station opened in Mill Way, just outside the town centre and with leisure and community uses and 150 dwellings still subject to outline planning permission. This site was originally outside the town centre regeneration area (having been in active use as a Paper Mill). This has had the effect of absorbing most of the convenience retail need identified by the Retail and Town Centre Study 2010.

6.7.14 A major planning application for convenience and comparison retail, plus leisure uses to the north and south of the railway reached an advanced stage before being withdrawn in autumn 2013. Allied to this, an outline permission for a pedestrian and cycleway bridge over the railway to link the existing town centre with the new development to the north was granted. However, this bridge was not of the scale and function envisaged by Policy B27 of the Local Plan 2008 – the latter having proved impractical and undeliverable in this location.

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~~6.7.15~~ ~~Permission has also been granted for mixed hotel, health centre and residential uses on the Bell Centre site at the eastern end of the town centre. Demolition is complete, and although implementation of the permitted scheme is in doubt, as the development company concerned went into receivership, At the Bell Centre, at the eastern end of the town centre, alternative proposals for residential and health centre uses are expected to come forward in the near future.~~

6.7.16 With these major changes the Borough Council has now entered a development partnership agreement with Spirit of Sittingbourne to work together and with other stakeholders and landowners to bring forward the core elements of the central area regeneration. The main aims of the partnership are to bring forward new civic, cultural and leisure facilities, a new station square and transport interchange in the existing town centre and further retail development on the Princes Street depot site to the north of the railway. Enhancement of the existing Mill Road linkages between the north and south of the railway are expected as part of the Mill site redevelopment scheme, but will complement the rest of the development partnership scheme. A master plan will be produced to support the final land use arrangements, phasing and linkages between the various elements of the scheme.

New and reviewed evidence

6.7.17 Whilst the economic context has changed and some of the evidence of need has changed accordingly, many of the pre-existing issues and needs for the town centre identified in the previous policy documents remain.

6.7.18 The [Swale Retail and Town Centre Study](#) (2010) indicates that there is capacity for (comparison) retail floorspace within a range of 14,058 – 29,754 sq m within the Borough, with the upper end of the range indicating an assumption of claw back of retail expenditure from the current 51% retention of spending to 60%. Due to expected changes in increased efficiency of retail floorspace use and the impact of online shopping, the demand for additional floorspace is not expected to materialise until post 2015. These findings present a rather different scenario to that upon which previous policy was based. Moreover, these figures are Borough wide as opposed to Sittingbourne town centre focused. In the light of experience with the withdrawal of the Tesco Sittingbourne project and limited developer interest at the present time, the likelihood of achieving the upper end of the scale and clawing back expenditure from other larger centres is unlikely. The modest convenience retail headroom indicated by the study for the plan period has already been met

6 Land allocations for new development

by the new store on the former paper mill site and on an existing former DIY store at Dover Street. However, smaller speciality convenience stores are appearing in units in the High Street to meet local needs. There has been little demand for new comparison retail floorspace in the recent past, although vacant units in the town centre are significantly reduced from the worst period of economic downturn.

6.7.19 The need to expand the leisure and cultural offer of the town centre was identified by a study on the Feasibility of Development Cultural Infrastructure as part of Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration (2009) and this need remains unmet. The offer is currently limited to the Bingo Hall, pubs and some restaurants and the Avenue Theatre (which seats just 100).

6.7.20 The [Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Development Needs Study](#) (2013) identified an unmet need Borough wide for a minimum 31,408 square metres (net) of office floorspace, some of which could be expected to be met at Sittingbourne.

6.7.21 The withdrawal of the retail proposals north of the railway initiated a debate on the best way forward for the Milton Creek/Crown Quay Lane area within an earlier draft of the Local Plan. Changing patterns of retail behaviour, (particularly Internet shopping) and failure of this convenience shopping led scheme with comparison shopping, together with pressures to boost housing supply has led to the view that this area should form a major new residential community. This is now addressed by Policy A9 outside the regeneration area.

6.7.22 The following issues identified in the Local Plan 2008 remain valid and are carried forward:

- reducing the dominance of vehicular traffic in the town centre;
- improving north south connectivity with the town centre;
- rationalising car parking and making better use of back land; and
- improving the public realm and amenity of the centre.

6.7.23 Distinction also needs to be made between the boundary to the town centre area, for the purposes of determining planning applications in accordance with Policy DM1 and Policy DM2, and the regeneration area which encompasses a wider area. To avoid confusion within the interpretation of policy, the regeneration area is described as referring to central Sittingbourne rather than the town centre.

Revised policy for the central Sittingbourne area

6.7.24 The role and purpose of Sittingbourne town centre is set out in the settlement strategy (Policy ST3) and the strategy for the Sittingbourne area (Policy ST5). Sittingbourne is the principal town in the Borough and the focus of new housing, employment, services and infrastructure, which will support regeneration in the town centre. The aim for the centre is to ensure its vitality through enhancing the retail offer, and a wider range of services including leisure, culture, education and improving both the public realm and the quality of new buildings. The town centre boundary is defined on the Proposals Map and the approach to retail and development proposals within and outside this boundary are set out in Policy DM2. Policy DM1 seeks to maintain and enhance vitality and viability of the town centre by setting out the approach which will be taken to proposals for non-retail uses in the core and secondary shopping areas, which are also defined on the Proposals Map.

6.7.25 The purpose of this new policy is to revise and update the proactive regeneration policy framework for Sittingbourne town centre from the Local Plan 2008 and Sittingbourne Town Centre and Milton Creek Supplementary Planning Document (September 2010) and place it within the context of the regeneration of central Sittingbourne. It takes into account progress achieved to date, the changed national planning policy context and prevailing economic context, and new evidence, whilst being as flexible as possible to accommodate regeneration and investment proposals. An outline masterplan is currently being prepared by the development partnership.

6.7.26 The main objectives are:

- to enhance the retail offer and attractiveness,

- improve connectivity throughout the centre;
- enhance and expand the range of services and mix of uses to encourage vitality;
- address environmental improvement through responding to local character and heritage;
- provide great quality new buildings which are exemplars of sustainable design and construction; and
- within an integrated landscape strategy, introduce green spaces and trees; and utilise suitable opportunities for residential development in the town centre; and enhance the secondary shopping areas of the town.

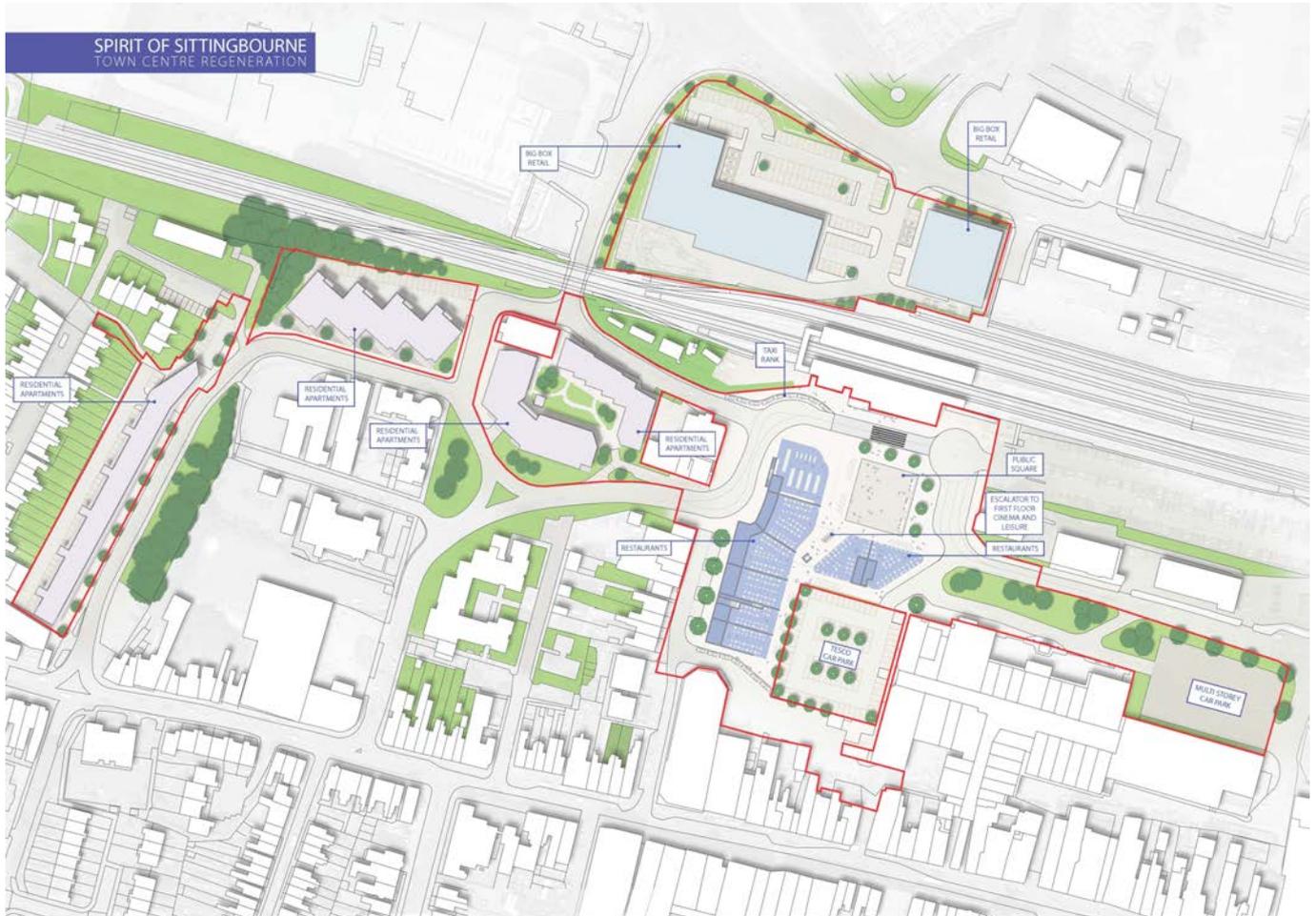


Figure 6.7.1 Extract from central Sittingbourne Masterplan area

6.7.27 The basic role for the town and its centre within the Borough continues, but reflecting the latest evidence and progress to date means presenting a realistic view of the way forward. Although additional comparison retail provision and expansion of services and facilities is still envisaged for the town centre, this is not to take the form of a major step change in retail offer and associated large scale expansion on land to the north of the railway. The means of implementing a more achievable strategy is focused on implementation of the development partnership scheme with Spirit of Sittingbourne through pooling land resources between the public and private sectors and allowing flexibility for other inward investment within a framework for meeting key objectives and development needs. Achieving these will assist with encouraging competition and expanding the qualitative range of the offer.

6.7.28 Scope to provide additional comparison retail exists within the town centre around the Forum and St. Michael's Road, with the possibility of larger units, if required, on the Princes Street depot site on Eurolink Way, located opposite the foodstore to the north of the town centre. Evidence indicates that there is no further quantitative need for convenience floorspace in the town with the market currently tending to take up smaller existing units either for nationals not so far represented in the town, or for independent speciality stores.

6 Land allocations for new development

6.7.29 The need for additional cultural and leisure facilities in the town and more variety in the night time economy remains unmet. This is an integral part of the development partnership focused on the area adjacent to the Forum centre for the provision of a cinema and a live performance venue. Supporting uses such as restaurants and comparison retail would be possible here. Planning permission is also being sought for a skate park facility to the north of Mill Way (at Lloyds Wharf) and will enhance this part of the Creek side and link into the Church Marshes Country Park.

6.7.30 Improvement and consolidation of civic services, education and health services is also part of the development partnership and these will continue to be focused on the area to the south of the High Street on Central Avenue through to the Avenue of Remembrance. A need for a town centre college of further education has been identified, which is seen as vital for the local labour force to support the economic regeneration of the Borough as a whole. The 'civic quarter' would be a good location for this facility and it would assist with increasing pedestrian footfall and vitality and help link the various functions of the centre. There is interest in providing the college from a provider.

6.7.31 Providing office floorspace at the scale indicated by the evidence of [Employment land needs in Swale 2014-2031](#) (2015) is currently difficult to demonstrate (given the historic lack of demand for large office premises in the town and non-take up of the speculative Watermark development at its edge). A more realistic prospect would be for smaller offices to be met within the regeneration area, either above retail premises, through suitable changes of use or purpose built accommodation in the civic quarter, at the eastern and western gateways or edge of town centre locations.

6.7.32 Traffic management needs to remain a key part of the regeneration strategy and the development partnership intends to remodel and traffic calm St. Michael's Road and the station approach and achieve a better bus train interchange in this location. This will integrate the station more with the town centre and provide a better gateway and pedestrian environment and enable this area to be reclaimed for new uses including a town square. Proposals around Cockleshell Walk, Fountain Street and Dover Street will also be required to significantly raise the standard of the environment and conditions for pedestrians.

6.7.33 Solving the north-south connections to and from the town centre is difficult as east-west road and rail routes create a substantial barrier. Given experience with the former retail proposals north of Eurolink Way, it seems unlikely that a bridge over the railway could be achieved without adversely affecting the viability of development on either side of it. Given the reduced levels of development likely to come forward, it is considered that attention should focus on improving existing connections.

6.7.34 A transport assessment will be required to assess the improvements needed arising from the regeneration area, both as a result of the scale of development proposed, but also due to the likely proposals for reconfiguring roads around the railway station. Further afield on the A2 at its junction with the A249 at Key Street, development is likely to be required to fund a scheme of road improvements.

6.7.35 A car parking strategy for the town centre will be implemented in two ways. Firstly, the development partnership scheme will lead to existing car parking areas being enhanced and or being redeveloped, whilst providing new parking to a level equivalent to existing provision, together with that needed to serve new development. Its design and pricing structure will be undertaken in a way that is convenient and attractive to residents and visitors and will be an integral part of the development partnership masterplan. Further details of the town centre parking strategy are covered in Policy CP 2. The second strand of the car parking strategy is likely to involve the rail service operators enhancing their commuter car parking provision by adding decking to the existing station car park at St. Michael's Road.

6.7.36 The 'back land' areas of the town centre are poorly presented and represent significant amounts of poorly used space that will benefit from well-designed redevelopment. Public realm improvements in these spaces and in the main commercial parts of the centre would do much to improve their amenity and attractiveness, whilst development proposals will explore opportunities to improve these outlooks and pedestrian links into the main shopping streets. There are a number of unattractive buildings in the centre which would also benefit from redevelopment. The Bell Centre is an example which presents a derelict site with key frontages both to Bell Road and the High Street. The site is suitable for mixed

use development including residential, leisure, community and office/retail. A land mark building appropriate to the location at the edge of the town centre and pedestrian link to the main shopping area is needed at this location.

6.7.37 The Council will be seeking a design and landscape led approach to the town centre and it will be expecting both innovative and sensitive design responses to the development opportunities that are available especially where prominent sites or land mark buildings are proposed and would expect the advice of the Council's Design Panel to be sought. Proposals for the public realm should be finished with high quality materials and landscaping making them attractive for visitors and shoppers, whilst the design of new car parks will need special attention to ensure that their appearance does not detract from the overall regeneration objectives. Sittingbourne's heritage assets can play a key role in delivering successful town centre regeneration in the future. This could be achieved by means of a programme of historic building repair, restoration, refurbishment and re-use, in tandem with a programme of townscape and conservation area enhancement. Many of the development proposals will be taking place within the town centre conservation area or its setting. Whilst pursuing innovative and modern designs, development proposals will need to respect and positively respond to the character and heritage there, drawing upon the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal.

6.7.38 As part of the co-ordinating work prior to the submission of any planning applications, an integrated landscape strategy should be created for the regeneration area as a whole which will set out the approach toward a major scheme of public realm, green space improvements, new surfacing, lighting and street furniture. The strategy's objective will be to improve the amenity and attractiveness of the town centre for the business environment, shoppers and visitors alike. It will bring forward a proposal for a new green grid structure for the centre formed by the expansion of street tree planting into upper Bell Road, St. Michael's Road, West Street, Station Street, Park Road, Albany Road, Cockleshell Walk and Fountain Street to echo that already present in the Avenue of Remembrance, Central Avenue and Bell Road. This will be implemented by the development of key sites in the vicinity of these streets.

6.7.39 In accordance with Policy CP4 a Health Impact Assessment should be prepared to enable an integrated approach to creating a healthier environment across the regeneration area.

Main Modification 192

6.7.40 The central area currently has relatively little housing, but the [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) has identified capacity for at least ~~296~~ 567 dwellings within the regeneration area. The contribution from this area to the overall housing land supply is identified in Policy ST4, although this does not preclude other suitable sites within the town centre regeneration area coming forward under Policy CP3. Well designed schemes could improve visual amenity, create and knit together the townscape and increase vitality. Sites identified by the SHLAA include:

- Site of Swale House, East Street: The relocation of civic facilities will enable the release of this site for 95 dwellings.
- Central Avenue: The establishment of new shops, civic and other facilities here will also include 121 dwellings.
- Fountain Street; The redevelopment of this area will provide for ~~42~~ 65 dwellings.
- Land at Cockleshell Walk: Once the new town centre car parking facilities have been secured, the redevelopment of car parks here will be able to provide ~~52~~ 150 dwellings;
- Land at The former Bell Centre, Bell Road: The redevelopment of this site for residential development, offices and community facilities will be able to provide a minimum of 120 dwellings;
- Junction of East Street and St Michael's Road: The redevelopment of this corner site will enable the development of 16 dwellings.

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 193

6.7.41 The regeneration area should bring forward a range of housing types in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing, although it is not likely to provide for more than 10% affordable units in accordance with Policy DM8. ~~The larger sites (Swale House, Central Avenue and Cockleshell Walk), would be required to provide some Gypsy and Traveller pitches in accordance with Policy CP3. Whilst the Council recognises that the density of developments expected on these sites are unlikely to render the provision of Gypsy and Traveller sites practicable, it will be for detailed discussion at the planning application stage to determine the likely provision, if any.~~

6.7.42 These dwellings will generate the need for some 4.5 ha of open space, which includes 0.8 ha of parks and gardens, 0.3 ha of amenity greenspace, 3.1 ha of natural and semi-natural greenspace, 0.1 ha for children and young people and 0.2 ha of allotments. Financial contributions toward existing sports and play spaces will be required.

6.7.43 The evidence, together with new and emerging initiatives, have redefined the regeneration area to an area covering some 50 ha, as shown on the Proposals Map, from that in the 2008 Local Plan. Policy Regen 1 is intended to act in such a way as to co-ordinate the approaches to the different development sites around the area and to set out the Council's expectations across a number of themes.

6.7.44 Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

Policy Regen 1

Central Sittingbourne regeneration area

A regeneration area for central Sittingbourne, including its town centre, is shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Within this area proposals which support the objective of consolidating and expanding Sittingbourne's position as the main retail, business, cultural, community and civic centre for the Borough, will be permitted.

- A. Development within the area will proceed in accordance with, or complement, a master plan to be prepared to support the development agreement between the regeneration partners and will accord with the key objectives of:
1. Providing additional comparison retail space and uses which provide greater vitality, viability, diversity and activity;
 2. Supporting the creation of a station square and bus train interchange with associated improvements to the station itself;
 3. Providing for a cinema and performance venue within the town centre area identified in Policy DM2;
 4. Providing for a redeveloped and enhanced civic quarter focused on Central Avenue, Roman Square and Avenue of Remembrance to include civic offices and services, health centre, housing and further education facilities;
 5. Reducing the visual dominance of St Michael's Road through traffic calming and environmental enhancement;

6. Providing for suitable car parking that will support existing and new uses and be in accordance with an overall parking strategy for the centre;
 7. An integrated landscape strategy for the area as a whole that secures improvements in the public realm, green spaces and the pedestrian environment. Proposals will implement a green grid structure with street tree planting in key streets;
 8. A Health Impact Assessment to enable an integrated approach to be adopted across the regeneration area in accordance with Policy CP4; and
 9. Redeveloping sites predominantly for housing in the eastern and western gateways to the regeneration area, especially at Cockleshell Walk, Fountain Street, West Street, Dover Street and East Street, as identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, or at other suitable sites which are in accordance with Policy CP3.
- B. All development proposals will:
1. Accord with Policies DM1 and DM2 to maintain and enhance the retail offer of the primary shopping areas, whilst introducing uses there and elsewhere within the town centre which achieve greater vitality, viability and diversity of services and facilities, alongside buildings of architectural excellence. Where town centre vitality and viability is not harmed, other sites able to achieve similar objectives will be permitted within the regeneration area defined by this policy;
 2. Maintain or enhance key non-retail uses which underpin the retail and community functions of the town centre for both day and night time economy;
 3. Provide for residential development of suitable type and scale above commercial premises, or as part of mixed use developments, or on other suitable sites;
 4. Maintain and increase office floorspace provision above commercial premises within the town centre area, or where sites are not available, within the regeneration area;
 5. Redevelop visually poor areas with buildings of innovative and sensitive design to create new and improved townscape areas, which are of sustainable design and construction in accordance with Policy DM20;
 6. Retain, enhance and create new open spaces and green spaces which should include tree planting (including street trees);
 7. Provide public spaces, squares and public art, alongside improved lighting and street furniture;
 8. Improve north south links to facilities north of the railway and Eurolink Way via Milton Road and Crown Quay Lane and
 9. Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy.

Queenborough and Rushenden, Isle of Sheppey

6.7.45 This Regeneration area covers some 165 hectares of land and buildings on both banks of Queenborough Creek. Parts of the area have a poor environment and are dominated by heavy industry and traffic. There is also a physical separation between the communities of Queenborough and Rushenden; the latter suffering considerable levels of deprivation. New community facilities are needed in the area, most notably a new primary school, improved health and community facilities and new open space.

Adopted policy context

6.7.46 The area was identified as a major strategic opportunity for regeneration of the Island (primarily housing, employment and social and community facilities) in the adopted Local Plan 2008 and a supplementary planning document Masterplan was adopted in 2010. The allocations included a mixed use community of housing, employment and community facilities, together with the large business park proposed at Neatscourt.

6 Land allocations for new development

Progress in implementing adopted policy

6.7.47 There has been some notable progress in the delivery of regeneration to this area. The Neatscourt development has progressed with the building of a large Morrisons supermarket (5,310 sq m), a petrol filling station and a fast food takeaway. Full planning permission has also been granted for a mixed use development for Phase 2, comprising of A1 use class non-food retail floorspace (6,351sq m), B8 use class trade counter floorspace (1,395 sq m) and A3 use class café/restaurant floorspace (697sq m). The Rushenden Relief Road (now called Thomsett Way) opened in November 2011, opening up the area with improved road access and reducing the lorry movements through Queenborough. Some 137,000 sq m of industrial floorspace remains to be developed.

6.7.48 A large scale retrofit project has taken place, which saw a new approach to regeneration and the environment, working with local residents in Rushenden across all tenures to make their homes more energy efficient by providing a series of energy-saving measures. This retrofit was delivered in partnership and was the first of its kind in England to cover private and social homes of various construction types. This was a completely new attempt to link regeneration and the environment specifically, by working with local residents.

6.7.49 Land raising has taken place to protect sites from flooding and major new wildlife habitat has been created at the eastern end of Sheppey to mitigate and compensate for habitat lost at Neatscourt.

6.7.50 Economic fortunes have changed markedly since the adoption of the Masterplan and this has been keenly felt at Queenborough and Rushenden. The area's regeneration is now being led by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who have been reviewing how to take proposals forward.

6.7.51 Given the economic downturn, the 2,000 dwellings suggested by the adopted Local Plan and the original supplementary planning document now appear to have been an optimistic forecast of what is now likely to come forward. Previously, development relied on significant proportions of high density and flatted accommodation taking advantage of the waterside location and a proposed marina. However, the marina is no longer viable and the first phase of development will be at a considerably lower density which may set the pattern for other parts of the site. One area to the south of the creek, in particular, has had viability concerns, especially given contamination of the site and the presence of existing industrial uses.

6.7.52 However, there are now more favourable signs of new housing coming forward. Progress has also been made by the HCA in respect of land to the south of the creek and a further landowner has aspirations to develop an additional site. Together, it seems more likely now that most of the scheme can be delivered within the plan period.

Revised policy for Queenborough and Rushenden

6.7.53 The Council continues to identify this area as a 'Regeneration Area' and remains committed to the 2010 Masterplan's aim of:

"a 'multifaceted' regeneration, using the highest standards of design; an urban scheme which is respectful of the history and character of Queenborough, where new houses complementing the old will revitalise the area, bringing money into the local economy, improving education and services, and putting a 'value' on the visual, historical and ecological qualities that the Isle of Sheppey enjoys. The new regenerated Queenborough and Rushenden will be a very attractive place to live and work."

6.7.54 The HCA are currently working on a revised 'Queenborough & Rushenden Regeneration – Indicative Revised Land-Use Plan' which will be adopted in 2015 as an addendum to the original Masterplan. It is intended to reflect the changes to the original Masterplan which have occurred since its adoption, notably, a reduction in the total number of dwellings for the area to approximately 1,180 as identified by Policy ST 4. However, the original Masterplan will remain adopted as a supplementary planning document.

6.7.55 Other changes to the original Masterplan include the removal of the proposed marina. There is now much greater certainty regarding the delivery of the school, which represents a key element of new

social/community infrastructure, given its new location on land owned by the HCA. The school will now sit in the heart of the new residential community and on a key new pedestrian axis linking Queenborough and Rushenden.

6.7.56 The former Istil Mill and Thomsett sites have now been included for residential development. Their development will remove industrial uses from part of Rushenden Road to help to create more integrated communities and improve the quality of both the natural and built environments. Similarly, the introduction of residential uses along the new Rushenden Link Road will improve the character of this key gateway into Queenborough and Rushenden, and improve pedestrian linkages to the new retail and employment uses at Neatscourt.

6.7.57 Within the regeneration area identified on the Proposals Map, residential development will be permitted on the following sites identified in the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA):

- West Street (SW/333) up to 80 dwellings.
- West of Rushenden Road (SW/335) up to 480 dwellings.
- ISTIL Mill Site (SW/998) up to 240 dwellings.
- South of Queenborough Creek (SW/370) up to 380 dwellings.

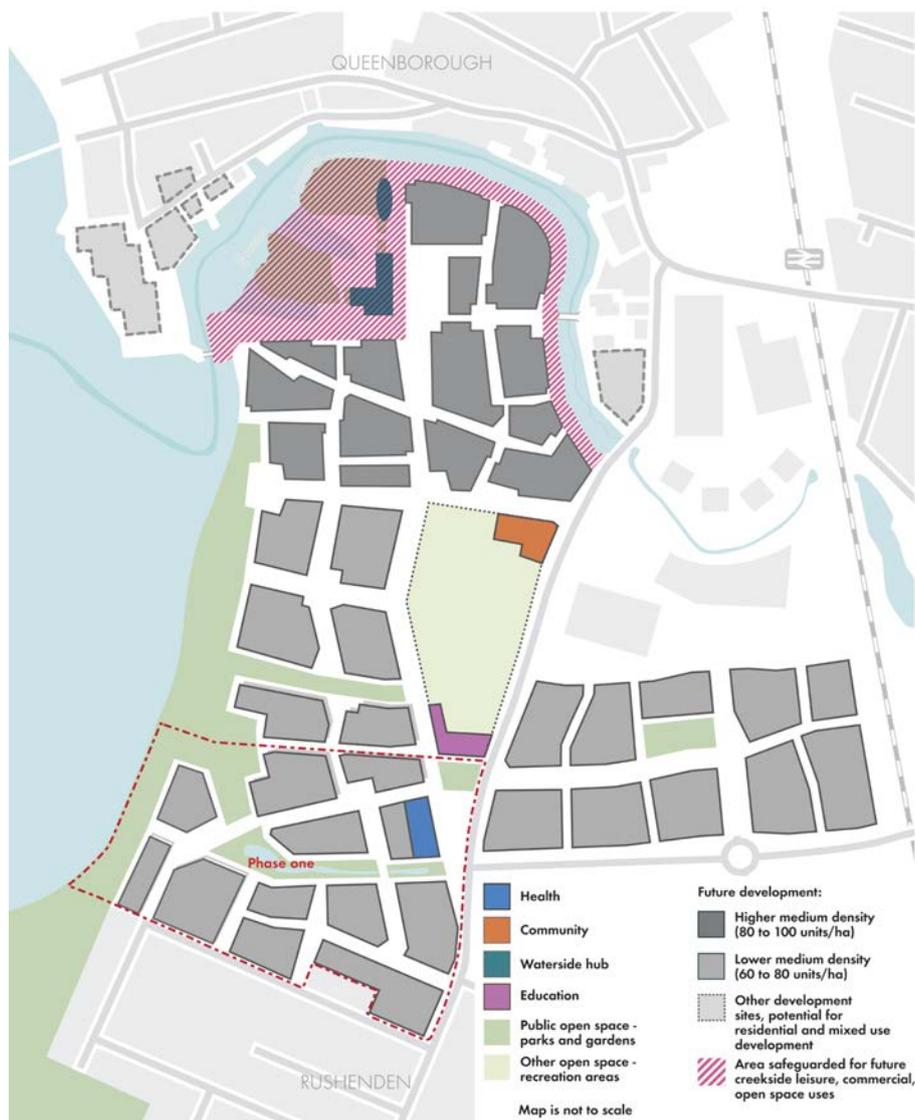


Figure 6.7.2 Queenborough and Rushenden draft Masterplan area

6 Land allocations for new development

6.7.58 If detailed consideration of these sites demonstrates that higher densities can be achieved then this may be considered by the Council. Likewise, other development opportunities within the wider regeneration area may also emerge and, subject to the assessment of their future value for employment, they may be considered acceptable for mixed uses including housing.

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6.7.59 The regeneration area falls within some of the Borough's most deprived areas and the purpose of development here will be not to reinforce this area's current characteristics, but to support a restoration of the local housing market in terms of housing type and quality of environment. A range of housing types should be brought forward in accordance with Policy CP3, including those for affordable housing, with 25% of the scheme overall expected to be affordable dwellings, with the monies associated with the additional 5% to be spent upgrading the existing affordable homes in Queenborough and Rushenden. This will help to bridge the gap between the new and old communities and bring the existing homes up to current standards. ~~As a basis for discussion with the developer, based on the number of dwellings proposed, land will be made available for 10 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers on an appropriate site(s) within the development. These will be for sale or rent as identified at the planning application stage and will be achieved in such a way as to ensure integration within the wider community.~~

6.7.60 In accordance with Policy CP4 a Health Impact Assessment should be prepared to enable an integrated approach to issues to be adopted across the regeneration area.

6.7.61 Queenborough Creek, the conservation area and the wider estuarine environment are under-appreciated assets. A high standard of development will be required that is not only sensitive to these assets and their settings, but as the means to secure a major uplift to the image of the area. There are also opportunities for greening poorly presented areas and producing landmark developments and quality public spaces. Environmental enhancement must extend through and beyond the identified mixed-use sites into existing residential and business communities. The Council will expect all proposals to be subject to scrutiny by Swale's Design Panel and will accord with an integrated landscape strategy prepared as part of the 2010 master plan SPD. Archaeological assessment and mitigation may be required as part of the planning process.

6.7.62 Although mitigation for adverse impacts on European habitats has already been implemented at the strategic level, detailed proposals will need to continue to be assessed for their impacts upon biodiversity which may lead to further mitigation and compensation needing to be provided, especially where required as part of any Habitats Regulation Assessment. Development proposals will need to reduce recreational disturbance on the SPA, by ensuring the provision of appropriate recreational and accessible natural greenspace opportunities on-site for use by residents and visitors. Such proposals will be subject to an HRA and where demonstrated as necessary to avoid likely significant effects on the SPA, a financial contribution towards wider management of recreational pressures on the North Kent Marshes will be sought in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28.

6.7.63 Most of this regeneration area is considered by the Environment Agency to be within the High Risk Flood Zone, but it is defended and suitable for development. Site based flood risk assessments, however, will be required for development proposals and some upgrading of defences will be needed.

6.7.64 New community facilities are proposed, most notably a new primary school and improved health and community facilities, together with new open space, all of which will be made in accordance with the masterplan for the regeneration area. Contributions to improve existing sports and formal play space provision will also be required.

6.7.65 However, market conditions are likely to affect both the type and overall numbers of new housing development coming forward and the level of new services that can be supported. The Council is continuing to work to ensure that new provision commensurate with that required as a result of the new development will be provided.

6.7.66 Recent development has seen the emergence of the Neatscourt area as a retail centre to complement Sheerness town centre. However, it is important that if further proposals for retail uses are brought forward, they do not undermine the role and retail function of Sheerness town centre and other local centres or undermine the ability of the site to meet the identified needs for industrial floorspace for Sheppey (and the Borough) for the local plan period.

6.7.67 Policy Regen 2 is intended to give the overall framework for regeneration at Queenborough and Rushenden and how development should respond to opportunities and constraints.

Main Modification 195

Policy Regen 2

Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Area

A regeneration area for Queenborough and Rushenden is designated as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Within this area, proposals will support the objective of regenerating the area for residential, employment and community uses to achieve the integration of communities. Development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Accord with the adopted Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document and its addendum;
2. Contribute towards the creation of a distinctive sense of place for the planned new settlement that also reflects the area's waterside location and historic environment;
3. Demonstrate sensitive and innovative design, which responds to the challenge of creating new townscape and be subject to scrutiny by the Swale Design Panel;
4. Achieve high standards in terms of sustainable design and construction, including the design and specification of the buildings and sustainable urban drainage;
5. Accord with an integrated landscape strategy through the creation of a new landscape structure for the area, supporting the creation of a network of areas for play, walking and informal recreation, as well as achieving a net gain in biodiversity overall;
6. Assess biodiversity interests, including a Habitats Regulations Assessment. Proposals will ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy;
7. Improve the quality of the environment and housing choice to restore the local housing market area;
8. Achieve a mix of housing in accordance with Policy CP3, including provision for affordable housing, ~~and Gypsies and Travellers~~ in accordance with ~~Policies DM10~~ Policy DM8;
9. Provide, at Neatscourt, commercial floorspace unless this would adversely impact upon the vitality of Sheerness town centre or compromise the achievement of meeting industrial floorspace needs as required for the Local Plan period;
10. Secure those improved services and facilities necessary for a sustainable community;
11. Where appropriate, assist with alternative accommodation for the displacement of existing businesses;
12. Through physical, environmental and economic measures, integrate the existing and new communities;

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13. Assess the need for, and provide such transport initiatives and improvements as are necessary; and
14. Assess and respond to any risk from flooding.

Main Modification 196

The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area

6.7.68 The Port of Sheerness is a significant feature of the Isle of Sheppey's economy, and in handling nearly 1.5 million tonnes of cargo per annum is classified by the Department for Transport as a "major" port. It is one of the largest foreign car importers in the UK and handles thousands of tonnes of forest products and steel from all over Europe. The Port has good infrastructure, including access to the wider road and rail networks.

6.7.69 The role of the Port of Sheerness will be maintained and enhanced as a deep water gateway port to Europe. The priority will be to safeguard this port function. Future expansion is likely to involve intensification of port use both within the existing port confines and via expansion onto appropriate nearby land. In the longer term, the regeneration of the Port of Sheerness could have far reaching consequences for the Borough and represent a major opportunity for Sheerness and the communities on western Sheppey, many of whom currently experience high levels of social and economic deprivation.

6.7.70 Following consultation, the owners of the Port are currently finalising the Sheerness Port Masterplan - A 20 year Strategy for Growth. The Masterplan is part of the strategic plan to develop and grow the Port of Sheerness over the next 20 years, reflecting the owner's long-term ambition to remain a key employer and driver for sustainable growth in the Swale and wider Kent region. The draft Masterplan identifies options for the physical strategy for expansion and development of the Port of Sheerness, based upon growth forecasts. The options considered include both expansion within the operational area and major land reclamation intended to facilitate new port operations and regeneration of the older historical parts of the dockyard with additional potential for housing and other mixed use development.

6.7.71 Heritage is a key issue, both in terms of its potential to act as a catalyst for change, but also in terms of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets. The Dockyard conservation area includes the most important part of the 19th century engineer John Rennie's original plan and the heritage and cultural significance of the former Royal Naval Dockyard is now widely recognised and accepted as being of international importance. Adjacent to the Port is Bluetown, a community of small businesses and homes with considerable heritage and development potential located in the shadow of the historic dockyard wall.

6.7.72 Alongside heritage, there are also biodiversity, coastal and infrastructure considerations that will need to be addressed to bring these wider proposals for regeneration forward over the longer term. However, if realised, these areas would represent the single largest potential regeneration in Swale and one of the largest across North Kent.

6.7.73 Adjacent the current port operational area is the former Thamesteel site, which is in need of regeneration. In the short-term the site could provide opportunities to expand operational land for the ports activities, having regard to improving the amenities of adjacent residential areas whose quality of life was impacted by the previous steel mill activities. Given the scale of the site and its access to the rail network, if Port activities are to be extended onto the site, the Council will expect schemes to explore the use of existing rail infrastructure on the site.

6.7.74 Longer term options within the emerging Port Masterplan, such as potential land reclamation, could play a significant role in the wider regeneration of Sheerness. These will be matters for a review of the Local Plan to consider, having regard to such further evidence that has been prepared and a further future review and consultation on the Port of Sheerness Masterplan which can provide a framework to inform both a Local Plan review and development projects through the statutory consenting process.

Main Modification 197

Policy New Regen 3

The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area

6.7.75 A regeneration area for the Port of Sheerness is shown on the Proposals Map. Within this area proposals will be supported which support the objective of maintaining and enhancing the Port of Sheerness as a deep water gateway port to Europe. The priority will be to safeguard the port function and to encourage investment in infrastructure that supports water and rail freight connections.

6.7.76 Expansion involving the intensification of port use within existing port confines and/or expansion onto appropriate land within the area defined on the Proposals Map will be supported provided that:

1. any measures required by the development to improve local access by road and rail are brought forward as part of the proposals;
2. the proposals increase the potential for the movement of freight by rail;
3. the proposals are of a scale, use and external appearance that would not detract from the visual appearance or residential amenity of the locality;
4. the significance of heritage assets are sustained and enhanced with viable uses consistent with their conservation with new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;
5. a project specific HRA demonstrates that the integrity of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA is retained; and
6. there are no other significant adverse social or environmental impacts arising as a result of the project.

6.7.77 Potential longer term options will be considered via a review of the Local Plan. All proposals intended to secure the regeneration of the area for mixed uses will be considered in terms of their social, economic and environmental implications and their ability to secure the wider possible benefits for the sustainable regeneration of Sheerness and Bluetown.

6.7.78 See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 4

Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne Regeneration Area

6.7.79 Located in the rural area south of Sittingbourne, the Kent Science Park has developed across 26ha and comprises some 47,100 sq m of laboratory, research and development space, with some 63 tenant companies employing 1,600 staff predominantly involved in bio-sciences and environmental technologies. The Park represents a regionally important cluster of technology and knowledge-based businesses and delivers growth which provides the main opportunity to diversify the local economy and bring about a shift towards higher-value employment and skills. The site also has its own power facilities which can potentially be further utilised in a sustainable fashion.

6.7.80 The Science Park is identified as one of the Borough's 'Existing Strategic Employment Locations' in Policy CP1 and the current extent of the site, together with areas already committed for expansion, are shown on the Proposals Map. The UK Science Park Association (UKSPA) definition of a science park is provided in the Local Plan glossary.

6.7.81 Part of the site's unique attraction is its scenic countryside location. It is close to local biodiversity designations and national and local designated landscapes (Kent Downs AONB and Area of High Landscape Value). These designations, together with the nature and character of rural lanes that lead to the site, also mean that opportunities for expansion at this location need to be very carefully considered.

6.7.82 New Policy Regen 2, is intended to address the future needs of the site, both in terms of the efficient use of existing land and buildings (including consented land) and in terms of any expansion proposals. The Council would consider these favourably, provided that the environmental and transport constraints can be addressed.

6.7.83 Proposals to expand the Park should come forward in the context of a landscape strategy and framework prepared for agreement by the Council. This should seek to conserve and enhance the parkland character of surrounding land, including its remaining landscape structure, whilst diversifying and restoring features and habitats and creating links between features. Attention should be given to any impacts within views of the site, especially from the south.

6.7.84 A transport assessment will need to consider the impact of proposals on the network of rural lanes around the site and at other locations, recognising that the Council will also wish to be satisfied not only in terms of the overall highway capacity of the network, but also the continuing environmental quality of the lanes around the site. Both these issues are likely to be assisted by comprehensive measures that can maximise the use of public transport, other non-car modes and car use reduction initiatives between the Park, Sittingbourne (particularly key public transport facilities), Sheppey and the strategic road network.

Main Modification 198

Policy New Regen 4

Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Regeneration Area

6.7.85 The Council will support proposals at the Kent Science Park, as shown on the Proposals Map, that will consolidate and expand its role as a business cluster of regional significance, specialising in technology and knowledge-based businesses. The location, scale and design of

proposals shall avoid significant adverse impacts on the environment or where not possible, minimise and adequately mitigate such impacts, or compensate for them as a last resort. All development proposals shall additionally:

1. comprise uses compatible or complementary with the use of the site as a 'Science Park' as defined by the UK Science Park Association;
2. exploit the existing opportunities for sustainable energy and design at the site, unless demonstrated not to be feasible or financially viable;
3. demonstrate, via a Transport Assessment, adequate capacity in the existing transport network, including delivery of any identified and necessary improvements to that network that shall also include implementation of a Travel Plan to minimise car journeys;
4. not significantly harm the character of rural lanes in accordance with Policy DM26; and
5. for proposals to extend the site, demonstrate that:
 - a. the development cannot more appropriately be undertaken within the existing boundaries of the site, as defined by the Proposals Map;
 - b. current levels of facilities for sport can be maintained; and
 - c. take place in accordance with an overall landscape strategy and framework that will ensure both the mitigation of impacts, especially upon designated sites and their settings in accordance with policies DM24 and DM28-DM29, and the continuance of a high quality environment for the site.

6.7.86 Glossary definition: The UK Science Park Association (UKSPA) describes a Science Park as a business support environment that encourages and supports the start-up, incubation and development of innovation-led, high-growth, knowledge-based businesses; initiatives called by other names such as Research Park, Innovation Centre, Technology Park, Technopole or technology-based Incubator – where they aspire to meet the essential criteria set out above are also included within the definition.

6.7.87 *See also modification to Proposals Map in Chapter 9*

6.8 Neighbourhood plans

Introduction to Neighbourhood Planning

6.8.1 The Localism Act introduced rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. These can be taken forward by Town and Parish Councils or 'neighbourhood forums', which are community groups intended to undertake neighbourhood planning in areas without parishes. Such forums should apply to the local planning authority for appropriate recognition to take the lead of a Neighbourhood Plan.

6.8.2 The criteria for establishing neighbourhood forums are intended to encourage new and existing residents' organisations, voluntary and community groups to put themselves forward. These groups can use neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. These are described legally as 'neighbourhood development plans.'

6.8.3 Communities can also use neighbourhood planning to permit the development they want to see - in full or in outline – without the need for planning applications. These are called 'neighbourhood development orders.'

6.8.4 The Local Plan will continue to set the strategic context within which neighbourhood development plans will sit.

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6.8.5 Neighbourhood Plans also have to meet a number of conditions before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. These conditions are to ensure plans are legally compliant and take account of wider policy considerations (e.g. national policy). The conditions are:

- they must generally be in line with local and national planning policies;
- they must be in line with other laws;
- if the local planning authority says that an area needs to grow, then communities cannot use neighbourhood planning to block the building of new homes and businesses, but can use neighbourhood planning to influence the type, design, location and mix of new development; and
- neighbourhood plans must contribute to achieving sustainable development.

6.8.6 An independent qualified person will check that a neighbourhood development plan or order appropriately meets the conditions before it can be voted on in a local referendum. This is to make sure that referendums only take place when proposals are workable and of a decent quality. Neighbourhood development plans or orders do not take effect unless there is a majority of support - more than 50% - in a referendum of the neighbourhood. If proposals pass the referendum, the local planning authority is under a legal duty to bring them into force.

6.8.7 Currently Swale has three designated neighbourhood plan areas - Faversham Creek, Boughton and Dunkirk and Minster. Only the first of these has progressed beyond its early stages of preparation.

The Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

6.8.8 The Faversham Creek area is part of the town's extensive conservation area and contains a number of historic buildings, together with traditional marine related activities and a series of green spaces. All contribute to the character of the area and represent an important asset to the town.

6.8.9 The Creek is operating under a number of complex constraints. Navigation is restricted in parts by a loss of depth and width to the channel and there is no longer safe navigation for large craft in the Basin due to silting. Navigation into the Basin is also restricted by a defective swing bridge at Bridge Road. Navigation could also be improved by dredging, but in addition to its costs, there are likely to be limitations imposed on large scale industrial dredging of the Creek by the Swale Special Protection Area (SPA).

6.8.10 Flood risk, particularly in relation to the re-use of previously developed land within the 1:20 year flood zone of Faversham Creek, must be carefully assessed and managed, whilst a number of these sites are likely to be contaminated and require some remediation work. A further issue is that the attractive waterside environment of the creekside area has not had the same investment to improve the quality of its environment as the town centre. There are also a number of historic buildings needing restoration.

6.8.11 For these reasons, the regeneration of Faversham Creek, whilst protecting the rich maritime, industrial and landscape heritage for economic, environmental and educational purposes, is the principal objective. This has been strongly supported by local consultation.^(6.3) This analysis indicates that the Neighbourhood Plan should seek to regenerate Faversham Creek by focusing on:

- clusters of heritage assets and marine-related activities with regeneration potential;
- navigation improvements to the Creek through a combination of sluicing and smaller scale injection dredging;
- protecting and enhancing important green spaces and upgrading the public realm within the area; and
- maximising pedestrian links between the Creek and the town, along the creekside and to wider countryside routes.

Statement 8

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan Vision

Faversham Creek is a place where we can celebrate the town's rich history and attractive appearance; where we can enjoy spending time, both on and off the water; where boats, residents and visitors want to be; where developments integrate the needs of people and nature and where there is a distinctive character and identity rooted in traditional industries and enriched by new businesses.

6.8.12 Within the areas of heritage/marine-related activity adjoining the Creek, listed and other historic buildings and maritime uses, wharves and moorings important to the character of the Creek should be retained and, where necessary, restored alongside complementary redevelopment opportunities. Given the location of these areas within the functional floodplain, and the historic association with the Creek, workshops/business uses, facilities for moored boats (e.g. showers/toilets) and small scale retail and restaurant uses would be best able to address these issues and improve the visitor attraction to the area.^(6.4) Dependent on design, amenity and flood risk considerations, residential development could be permitted above ground floor level to assist with the viability of mixed use schemes and to provide activity throughout the day and evening. On some sites, mixed-use development would be unsuitable and on these sites 100% residential development would be acceptable. New buildings should be of a sensitive design with their scale and context respecting the setting of the listed building and the adjoining creekside buildings.

6.8.13 A Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy has been prepared by Faversham Town Council and adopted by the Swale Joint Transportation Board, which seeks to extend town centre streetscape enhancements to the creekside area. The principal aim of the strategy is that improvements in the public realm around Faversham Creek should respond to and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the creekside area. The Strategy outlines the guiding principles regarding the improvements to the streetscape of the creekside area and establishes guidelines for the design of specific items in the overall environment, both built and natural. The Strategy also sets out guidance for creek streetscape enhancements for discrete areas of the creekside. The priorities for implementation will be set through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

6.8.14 The Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan will detail its strategy, guided by Policy NP1. It will include the allocation of specific sites and levels of development, the parameters for development as well as proposals for the improvement to accessibility and the public realm. Proposals will be delivered through the granting of consents and the implementation of improvements set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. Whilst Policy ST4 has indicated a level of new housing as arising from the Neighbourhood Plan area, this is solely for the purposes of demonstrating its potential contribution to the overall supply of housing in the Borough. It will be for the Neighbourhood Plan process to determine locally the final levels of employment, housing and other uses that will come forward.

Policy NP 1

Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan

Within the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan area, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), priority will be given to the regeneration of Faversham Creek by retaining maritime activities (including the retention and improvement of wharves and moorings, including for large craft) with complementary redevelopment opportunities for workshops/business uses, residential, small scale retail and restaurant uses. Where relevant, development of the area will:

1. Accord with the Neighbourhood Plan (once it has taken effect);
2. Provide for the restoration of and enhancement to the settings of listed and other important historic buildings;

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3. Protect open space and nature conservation interests and upgrading of the public realm;
4. Improve navigation of the Creek (subject to appropriate mitigation of the impacts on the adjacent International Designations and the Shellfish Waters);
5. Provide a publicly accessible creekside walkway;
6. Require high quality designs which respect their context;
7. Be acceptable in terms of flood risk; and
8. Re-mediate contaminated sites.

6.9 Area of Search - The Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road A2 link

6.9.1 The Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (SNRR) was originally conceived as a link between the A2 to the east of the town and the A249 in the west, able to provide new links into the town's commercial areas and to free road space in the streets around the centre. Phases of the road were complete over a 10 year period from the A249 through to new developments at East Hall farm in the north east of the town, leaving the link to the A2 incomplete. The Milton Creek section was completed in November 2011.

6.9.2 The development strategy of the Local Plan focuses new development at the main urban area of Sittingbourne, with allocations at north west and north east Sittingbourne and major regeneration development in central Sittingbourne at an advancing stage of preparation. There are also major new commitments for employment uses along the route of the SNRR at Grovehurst, Kemsley and Eurolink Phase 5. These make use of spare capacity on the A249 and the completed sections of the SNRR. Completion of the road to the A2 in the Bapchild area will realise the full benefits of the road, further relieving the town centre of traffic, opening up development opportunities and maximising the benefits of proposals for regeneration, traffic management and calming in the centre of the town. Completion also brings other environmental benefits, notably the Canterbury Road section of the A2 between the town centre and east of the town will benefit from reduced congestion at peak times and improved air quality within the section declared as an Air Quality Management Area.

6.9.3 High level transport modelling has demonstrated the value of completing the SNRR as outlined above, although the provision of the road is not imperative in traffic terms to deliver the development targets as proposed in the Local Plan. More detailed transport impact assessments for development proposals in the town centre and elsewhere may indicate that the current improved economic growth context could alter this situation. It is therefore important to maintain the commitment to finalising the route of the final section of the road and to ensure its inclusion in appropriate transport programmes and funding bids, as well as allowing it to attract developer funding. In the longer term a precise alignment can be considered as part of a local plan review where its role can be further considered alongside any potential for a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road between the A2 and M2 east of Sittingbourne.

6.9.4 Local public consultation was carried out by Kent Highways in 2010 on a single route crossing the railway and then either going straight to the A2 to the west of the village, or sweeping around the north of Bapchild to join the A2 east of the village. The outcome of this consultation was inconclusive in terms of route preference (although the most easterly route presents the most costly of those considered).

6.9.5 The SNRR could, with appropriate funding, be delivered within the plan period and will support local growth, however, it will not be required to support the growth planned for the first five years of the Local Plan period and probably longer. The scheme is already identified in Kent County Council's Local Transport Strategy for Swale and its transport delivery programme, although to date it has not been supported by funding from the Local Economic Partnership. As a preferred route has not yet been agreed, this Local Plan identifies a safeguarded 'Area of Search' on the Proposals Map, which reflects the area covered by reasonable options tested in the 2010 consultation. Within this area of search, the route of the road will be sought and allocated either by a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) if need and timing dictates, or, most likely, through Local Plan Review. These mechanisms will determine the detail of the route and the appraisal and mitigation of impacts, including the area impacted by the chosen route itself and any

potential for impacts on traffic flows and living environments on the A2 corridor east of Sittingbourne. The latter may require traffic management solutions in the settlements most affected. The evidence base for the route will include and review the design and consultation work carried out by Kent Highways in 2010 and work on this is expected to proceed in collaboration with the highway authority.

6.9.6 The proximity of the area of search to the Swale SPA/Ramsar site will need to be borne in mind in any decision on route location with reference to the mitigation of impacts in accordance with policy DM28 and the Habitats Regulations.

6.9.7 The 'Area of Search' incorporates land which is allocated for mixed use under the allocation for north east Sittingbourne in Policy MU 2. However, the area proposed for residential use is not envisaged as coming forward before decisions about the road alignment have been resolved. South of the railway, Policy A 8 allocates land at Stones Farm for housing and open space. These are likely to come forward within a much shorter timescale than the road proposals and will not narrow the scope for route options to be considered. Between the railway and the A2, Policy A8 proposes some 15 ha of proposed public open space within the proposed 'Area of Search'. This will continue to allow for the widest consideration of route options possible, whilst enabling appropriate weight to be given to such matters as the need for adequate open space and settlement separation between Sittingbourne and Bapchild, as proposed by Policy DM25. Additionally, both policies MU2 and A8 require regard to be given to the need to provide for the road corridor. Across the 'Area of Search', developments likely to reduce or remove the consideration of route options or preclude achievement of the road between the current end of Swale Way and the A2 will not be permitted in advance of the allocation of a precise route. Funding towards provision for the road will be sought from suitable sources of public and developer funding.

Policy AS 1

Safeguarded area of search: Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road - The A2 link

The area shown on the [Proposals Map](#) forms an 'Area of Search', within which a safeguarded route for the completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to the A2 will be determined and allocated via Local Plan Review, or should earlier need and timing dictate, the preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD). Development proposals likely to reduce or remove the consideration of route options or preclude achievement of the road will not be permitted. In determining its route, environmental mitigation issues associated with the route will be addressed, including the impact of the new road on the traffic flows and living environments along the A2 corridor to the east of Sittingbourne.

6.10 Longer term opportunities

Main Modification 199

6.10.1 ~~We need to be sure that the land we allocate in the Local Plan for development has a reasonable chance of coming forward for development within the Local Plan period. This is not always possible where the timing of development coming forward may be long term, or the issues needing to be resolved may be complex or their outcomes uncertain. Local Plans should rightly signal situations where early planning for the long term needs to begin so that they may be brought forward by a future Local Plan. These 'signposts' may indicate where we may want to see future change where the means to deliver them is not yet clear, but they are not part of our current Local Plan Strategy, at least in the first 10 to 15 years of the plan; they neither signal the principle of development or pre-judge any of the issues involved. They are intended to give confidence to those parties and agencies involved that they can expect the Council to examine these opportunities when a future Local Plan is prepared. Such opportunities are indicated by Policy GP 1.~~

6 Land allocations for new development

Main Modification 200

The Port of Sheerness and its surroundings

6.10.2 The Port of Sheerness is a significant feature in the Isle of Sheppey economy. Adjoining the port is the former Thamesteel premises, which is now closed. Between these areas is Bluetown, a community of small businesses and homes with considerable heritage and development potential located in the shadow of the historic dockyard wall. The Dockyard conservation area includes the most important part of Rennie's original Royal Naval Dockyard plan; its international heritage and cultural significance widely recognised.

6.10.3 Whilst the wind turbine manufacturing facility permitted at the Port in 2012 on the Lappel Bank would be the biggest plant of its type in Europe, capable of creating around 1,700 direct jobs, the planned operator is no longer proceeding with its plans. These proposals have therefore been excluded from the employment land supply for the Borough at this time. In the meantime, the Port owners are preparing a port management plan, in partnership with others, to guide its future strategic thinking and it is likely that this will give rise to longer term development proposals of a significant scale and complexity potentially involving both new employment and housing.

6.10.4 Such proposals could represent the single largest potential regeneration in Swale and one of the largest across North Kent. They could represent a major opportunity for Sheerness and the communities on western Sheppey, many of whom experience levels of social, economic and environmental deprivation.

Main Modification 201

The Kent Science Park

6.10.5 Located in the rural area south of Sittingbourne, the Kent Science Park has developed across 22 ha and currently comprises some 47,100 sq m of laboratory, research and development space, with (as at Feb 2012) some 63 tenant companies employing 1,350 staff predominantly involved in bio-sciences and environmental technologies. An extant planning permission allows for the development of a further 4 hectares and there may be limited additional scope using the existing site access.

6.10.6 If it were possible to unlock further growth at this location, as well as supporting the national agenda for growth, development would provide a significant boost to the Council's longer term strategy of up-skilling the local population and achieving greater self containment for work-home travel patterns. Growth could also achieve significant local benefits from high quality added value activities, a range of employment opportunities unique to Swale, diversification of the current employment base, helping to retain high earning resident workers and boosting the skills of local people.

6.10.7 Some land around the Park is environmentally sensitive - the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is to the south of the motorway and local environmental designations are nearby. Current evidence indicates that land to the immediate south of the Park up to the motorway could accommodate major growth perhaps extending the park over a 25-year period by up to 100,320 sq m of B class floorspace with a net figure of 1,256 jobs in Swale (1,543 for Kent). However, both the economic case for and environmental consequences of extending the Park are a matter for future assessment as part of a review of the Local Plan, if the area's transport limitations can be unlocked.

6.10.8 Only a small proportion of this growth (including 4 ha with an extant planning permission), can currently be achieved due to the restricted network of rural lanes that link the site with Sittingbourne and the main road network. However, the site is close to the M2 motorway and it is achieving a direct link to the motorway network that presents the Park's only opportunity to further grow. A new junction

to the M2 would be contrary to the national policy for roads and without its inclusion within the national transport programme and/or as a result of a successful bid for transport funding via the South East Local Economic Partnership, there is currently little prospect of delivering wider growth at the Science Park.

6.10.9 The Council, Kent County Council, the Highways Agency and the operators of the Park are currently assessing the prospects for such a proposal and its relationship with longer-term solutions for the current difficulties at Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249. It is clear that a new junction could not be planned to act for the sole use of the Science Park without any wider strategic purpose or without assessment of its likely location. However, there is recognition by the parties that such proposals need to be considered and as such they are appropriately 'signposted' as a longer-term possibility so that it may enable such a scheme to be considered for greater strategic priority.

Main Modification 202

Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road

6.10.10 The transport network between the Borough's towns and its junctions with the M2 give rise to a number of issues:

- safety and capacity problems at Junction 5 and the A249 leading to delays;
- congestion in central Sittingbourne that limits regeneration;
- congestion and delay within the A249 corridor; and
- deterioration in environmental quality on the A2 between Sittingbourne and Faversham.

6.10.11 It is clear that a solution to the issues at Junction 5 of the M2 is required. The degree to which other transport solutions that could involve a more significant reconfiguration of the westward and southern transport movements from Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey has been the subject of debate and expectation for some years; it being the Council's belief that a new link between the M2 and the A2 may be beneficial to these ends. Kent County Council is committed to undertaking a full appraisal and design for a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road in partnership with the Kent Science Park operators and Swale Borough Council. They are also willing to actively promote the scheme within their transport programmes and within the Local Economic Partnership. A signpost for such a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road provides an impetus for such work with tangible progress on both the principle and route being a signal for a review of the Local Plan.

6 Land allocations for new development

End Notes

- 6.1 Includes 20 dwellings likely to come forward beyond 2031
- 6.2 National Planning Policy Framework paras 23 – 26 CLG 2012, supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (Ensuring the vitality of town centres)
- 6.3 Stakeholder Consultation and Options Report 2009. Urban Initiatives for SBC and Developing proposals and future planning policy options to deliver regeneration of the Creek area 2010. Tony Fullwood Associates for SBC
- 6.4 Functional flood plain is defined as land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood

7 Development management policies

7.1 Building a strong, competitive economy

Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas

7.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires planning policies to be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. They should also define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.^(7.1)

7.1.2 The majority of shops in Swale are located in the town centre areas of Faversham, Sheerness, and Sittingbourne as defined on the Proposals Map in Policy DM 2.

Main Modification 203

7.1.3 With regard to new retail and other development in the town centres, the Local Plan defines 'primary' and 'secondary' shopping areas frontages on the Proposals Map. However, it is acknowledged that a future review of the Local Plan may need to re-examine the extent of these areas once the retail regeneration of Sittingbourne town centre is implemented. Our centres are facing considerable challenges at present and it is the Council's approach that there should be flexibility in the range of uses that are provided in these shopping areas, especially to encourage the unexpected opportunities that may occur on the fringes of the primary or secondary shopping areas frontages. This flexibility will help enhance the vitality and viability of the Borough's town centres and maximise their contribution to the local economy. A wide range of uses can potentially have a key role in maintaining a diverse and commercially prosperous centre without undermining their primary retail function.

Main Modification 204

7.1.4 In accordance with Policy DM1, within the defined primary shopping areas frontages, retail will remain the predominant use, especially at its heart. The Council will allow the limited introduction of other uses that will enhance the primary retail function. In so doing, it will ensure that the replacement of shops with other uses does not lead to a concentration of non-retail frontages or break a continuous frontage of retail uses that would lead, or eventually lead, to the dilution of the retail function of the area or compromise community safety with anti-social activity. It will also consider the location of the premises in question within the frontage, its position and importance within the commercial area and the percentage of the total length of retail frontage likely to be taken up by the proposed use. There will also be a need to retain a wide range of uses that are important to the health of commercial areas, or those that underpin an area's primary shopping function. The Council will seek to retain these key town centre uses, such as employment, civic functions and pubs, when a redevelopment or change of use would lead to a lesser contribution to the vitality or viability of the area. Above the ground floor of premises, a more flexible range of uses can be considered, including residential or other uses able to bring activity into the centre, especially in the evenings.

Main Modification 205

7.1.5 In the defined secondary shopping areas frontages, a wider mix of uses will be permitted as appropriate, including residential, although vital and viable uses such as retail, should continue to be

7 Development management policies

retained. Despite their secondary shopping area frontage status, it remains important to ensure that the vitality of these areas continues, and where possible, improved to provide attractive shopping environments.

7.1.6 Outside the main town centres, shops can be found grouped in local centres, parades or in neighbourhood and village centres, or on their own in residential streets or in a village. Many petrol filling stations also now provide a shop, and farm shops also fulfil an important local role. Shops in all these locations play an important role in catering for day-to-day shopping requirements, including for those without access to a car, reducing the need for people to travel to the town centres. Shops in all these locations should be retained, with changes of use only being acceptable in accordance with Policy DM1 and Policy DM2.

Main Modification 206

Policy DM 1

Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas

In town centres and other commercial areas, planning permission will be granted for development proposals, in accordance with the following:

1. Within the defined ~~Primary Shopping Areas~~ primary shopping frontages, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), the Borough Council will permit non-retail uses that:
 - a. maintain or enhance the primary retail function of the area by adding to the mix of uses to help maintain or increase its overall vitality and viability, especially where providing a service or facility for residents or visitors currently lacking or under-represented in the town centre, or by increasing pedestrian activity in the immediate locality;
 - b. do not result in a significant loss of retail floorspace or the break-up of a continuous retail frontage;
 - c. do not lead to a concentration of non-retail frontage; and
 - d. do not result in the loss or erosion of a non-retail use that underpins the role, functioning, vitality and viability of the area.
2. Within the defined secondary shopping areas frontages, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), or within a Local Centre as defined by Policy DM2, the Borough Council will permit non-retail uses, including residential, provided that they would not:
 - a. lead to a significant concentration of non-retail floorspace or housing or the loss of significant retail frontage;
 - b. result in the loss of existing residential accommodation or a use important to the community; and
 - c. lead to a loss of residential amenity.
3. Outside of the primary and secondary shopping areas frontages, or Local Centre as defined by Policy DM2, the Borough Council will permit a non-retail use if it maintains the area's role, functioning, vitality and viability and:
 - a. does not result in the loss of existing residential accommodation or a use important to the community;
 - b. does not lead to a loss of residential amenity; and in the case of rural areas
 - c. Accords with Policy DM3.

See also changes to the Proposals Maps in Chapter 9.

Proposals for main town centre uses

7.1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework promotes a sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses such as retail, leisure, office and other complementary uses. This means that the preferred location for such development is within existing town centres, but, if sites are not available in such locations, then development on the edge of the town centre may be appropriate. Consideration may then be given to other locations within the wider urban area. Main town centre uses proposed outside of the urban area is generally discouraged. However, new development may be permitted where it is primarily intended to meet a local identified need. In such cases, the Council will normally expect proposals to involve the re-use of an existing building(s).

7.1.8 Sittingbourne is the main town of the Borough with the largest population and provides shopping, local government, and other services and its role should be to function as the centre that meets the needs of the Borough as a whole. Faversham and Sheerness also have town centre status and should function as centres for their smaller, but still sizable, home and surrounding populations. Outside the main centres, in the other urban areas and rural local service centres, are smaller local centres which provide a shopping street or parade of shops that enable local people to meet some of their everyday shopping needs without need to travel to the town centres. On main routes such centres may also include more specialist shops that draw people from further afield. The Council's [Retail Study 2010](#) has determined the hierarchy of town and local centres for purposes of Policy DM2 and the Council will support and encourage proposals for new retail development appropriate to the size, role and function of the settlement concerned, in accordance with Policy ST 3.

7.1.9 Certain proposals for retail, leisure and office use will require the submission of an impact assessment to examine impacts upon existing, committed and planned public and private investment in a centre or centres in the catchment area of the proposal. It will also consider the impact of the proposal on town centre vitality and viability. The floorspace threshold for such assessments within the Borough will be that as set out in national planning policy.

Main Modification 207

Policy DM 2

Proposals for main town centre uses

Planning permission will be granted for main town centre uses subject to:

1. Taking into account the scale and type of development proposed in relation to the size, role and function of the centre, as follows:

Type of centre	Location
Town Centre	Sittingbourne (principal town), Faversham, Sheerness

7 Development management policies

Type of centre	Location
Local Centre	Queenborough & Rushenden, Halfway, Minster, Milton Regis, Boughton, Eastchurch, Iwade, Leysdown, Newington, Teynham

Table 7.1.1 The Swale Retail Hierarchy

2. Being located within the town centres as defined on the [Proposals Map](#); or
3. Where demonstrated that a town centre site is not available, being located on a site on the edge of a town centre, subject to criteria 4a to 4c; or
4. Where demonstrated that there ~~is~~ are no suitable sites available at locations within 2. and 3. above, proposals elsewhere within the built-up areas of Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), will only be permitted if:
 - a. it is demonstrated by an ~~retail~~ impact assessment (when the proposal is above the defined floorspace threshold in national planning policy) that it would not individually, or cumulatively with those trading or proposed, undermine the vitality and viability of existing town centres, or of other local centres and the facilities and services of other locations;
 - b. it does not materially prejudice the provision of other land uses, particularly the supply of land for 'B' use class uses, housing, community use and open space; and
 - c. it is well located in relation to the main road network and easily accessible by public transport, pedestrians and cyclists.
5. ~~In other Local Centres, proposals will be permitted where it is intended to provide for the everyday needs of the residents or visitors and the immediate surrounding area and accords with criteria 4a to 4c; and~~
6. ~~Elsewhere, proposals will only be permitted where they address the tests set out in national policy and accord for proposals that are primarily intended to meet a local identified need and accord with criteria 4a to 4c. In such cases, the Council will normally expect proposals to involve the re-use of an existing building(s) and accord with Policy DM3.~~

The rural economy

7.1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework supports economic growth in rural areas to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Local planning authorities should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses, support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments and promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages.^(7.2)

7.1.11 In Swale, the rural areas are considerable generators of wealth including from tourism and the wide range of small to medium sized businesses that operate there. However, it is not possible to identify the opportunities likely to arise in terms of the allocation of specific sites. Policy DM 3 is the means to highlight the needs of specific sectors and the protection and expansion of rural services, whilst balancing support for the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprises with limiting and managing adverse impacts upon the wider countryside. The policy is considered in the context of Policy ST3 which, for larger scales of employment growth, steers provision to the urban areas and rural local service centres.

7.1.12 It is not the purpose of this policy to define rural employment, as the variety of businesses that can be successfully accommodated within rural areas are wide. They will range from home-based businesses, newly created businesses, land based businesses and those for whom the attractive environment fits the ethos of the company concerned.

7.1.13 A factor affecting the development of the rural economy is the limited availability of land and buildings. Such locations are often an attractive and more lucrative prospect for residential use. To retain the availability of rural buildings for employment, the Council will only grant planning permission for their residential use where evidence is provided that shows that there is no demand for them to be used for employment, or if they are wholly unsuitable for any employment use. Evidence of demand should include the results of efforts made to market the building, normally with a planning permission, as available for employment use.

7.1.14 For the rural tourism sector, given the outstanding environment in Swale and its potential contribution to the economy, the Council wishes to see an expansion of sustainable rural tourism initiatives that can benefit local communities, economically and socially as well as raising awareness and support for conservation and enhancement of the Borough's natural assets. Indicators of such business credentials are likely to be:

- how it will manage and market itself and how it will make its purchasing choices;
- whether it communicates ideas via an environmental policy;
- its choice and use of resources and how energy, water and waste is managed;
- its relationship with local communities and its support of and contribution to the local economy;
- the transport opportunities and choices are available;
- a spread of knowledge, management and awareness of the local environment and wider area, access, landscape and wildlife;
- how it will identify, address, promote and support the local distinctiveness of the area; and
- will it be developed at a scale appropriate to the local community and environment.

7.1.15 For proposals involving existing tourism businesses, membership of the [Green Tourism Business Scheme](#), the national sustainable tourism certification scheme for the UK, or similar national certification schemes, will be taken as a demonstration of their sustainability credentials when planning applications are being considered.

7.1.16 When considering proposals for tourism and visitor facilities, the Council will ensure that they complement the existing services present within the locality and where appropriate support their use by existing communities, as well as visitors. In the case of the many holiday parks located in the rural area, their needs are considered more specifically by Policies DM4 and DM5.

7.1.17 For the agriculture sector, the industry has highlighted the need for it to keep pace with the changing context brought about by climate change, food security, food miles, the decline in pollinators, global markets, major food retailers and changing legislation/guidance. These may bring about demands for facilities such as large scale crop storage facilities and new growing technologies.^(7.3) Policy DM 3 supports farmers to respond to these challenges. [The Kent Downs AONB Unit's Farm Diversification Toolkit](#), can help farmers take a balanced and integrated approach to making changes on their farm. The Borough also has a significant woodland resource which brings with it opportunities in terms of development and diversification in respect of woodland products and renewable energy, sustainable woodland management and or as a resource for sustainable leisure and green tourism activities.

7.1.18 Key parts of the economy, vitality and viability of rural community are their local services and community facilities, including local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, schools, public houses and places of worship. Policy DM3 promotes proposals for new services or the innovative diversification or expansion of existing provision. The Council will look to the retention and development of such services and facilities where they are, or can be made viable. Where development proposals threaten

7 Development management policies

the continued future of such uses, the Council will look to applicants to submit evidence to demonstrate the options that they have considered to retain the use, such as through sharing of services or diversification, which will also include details of its viability.



Picture 7.1.1 Older fruit growing methods alongside modern polytunnels

7.1.19 Even if the site or building is currently vacant, evidence will need to show that it is neither viable nor likely to become viable and that alternative employment uses have been robustly tested. This will also include the applicant having marketed the enterprise or the property for its commercial/community use for a reasonable period in a manner and at a price that reflects that use.

7.1.20 In supporting the valuable contribution of appropriately located rural businesses, it recognises that there may be reservations about the effects such developments could have or where new initiatives challenge traditionally held views about food production and environmental quality. However, to

achieve support from Policy DM3, change must be sustainable, with proper regard to environmental considerations which will depend on the type of development proposed. However, a specific aim of Policy DM3 to limit the impact of changes is a preference for new development proposals to use existing buildings, or where a new building is justified, on previously developed land as a first consideration. The Council will be satisfied that such options have been explored before well designed new buildings, appropriate to their context in other locations, are approved. For proposals to convert existing buildings, the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled [The Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings](#) will remain a material consideration to the determination of some proposals.

Policy DM 3

The rural economy

Planning permission will be granted for the sustainable growth and expansion of business and enterprise in the rural area. Planning permission for residential development will not be permitted where this would reduce the potential for rural employment and/or community facilities unless the site/building(s) is demonstrated as having no demand for such purposes or its use would be undesirable or unsuitable. Development proposals for rural based employment will:

1. For all proposals:
 - a. in the case of larger scales of development, be located at the rural local service centres and urban areas as defined by Policy ST3 and in accordance with Policy CP1;
 - b. firstly consider the appropriate re-use of existing buildings or the development of other previously developed land, unless such sites are not available or it is demonstrated that a particular location is necessary to support the needs of rural communities or the active and sustainable management of the countryside;
 - c. retain or enhance the rural services available to local communities and visitors without undermining or resulting in the loss of existing services unless demonstrated to be unviable for the existing use or other employment or community use;

- d. for new buildings and ancillary facilities, the design and layout will need to be sympathetic to the rural location and appropriate to their context;
- e. result in no significant harm to the historical, architectural, biodiversity, landscape or rural character of the area; and
- f. avoid scales of traffic generation incompatible with the rural character of the area, having regard to Policy DM 6 and Policy DM 26.

2. For tourism and leisure:

- a. in the case of green/sustainable tourism proposals, be demonstrated by reference to their principals;
- b. provide for an expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not being met by existing facilities in the locality or where able to increase facilities available to local communities as well as visitors; and
- c. where relating to holiday parks, proposals are also in accordance with Policy DM4.

3. For the agricultural/forestry sectors:

- a. enable the diversification of a farm; or
- b. extend the growing season or improve the reliability and availability of local crops; or
- c. provide for the storage, distribution or added value activities in central hubs located close to crop sources and the primary and secondary road networks; or
- d. increase the availability of locally grown food sold direct to the consumer; or
- e. increase the sustainable management of woodlands; or
- f. increase the use of renewable energy sources in accordance with Policy DM20.

Holiday Parks

New holiday parks or extensions to existing parks

7.1.21 One of the core planning principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development.

7.1.22 In Swale, the Isle of Sheppey currently has 56 operational holiday parks comprising some 6,731 chalets and caravans (4,135 caravans and 2,596 chalets) occupying in total about 193 ha of land.^(7.4) This amounts to around 1.9% of the UK total and is the largest concentration in Kent.^(7.5)

7.1.23 Nationally, the park format varies considerably from tented accommodation to luxuriously furnished timber lodges with en-suite bathrooms.^(7.6) In Swale, the format is more traditionally based on chalets and caravans, although eco-lodge initiatives are emerging. Holiday parks provide direct employment and their users support shops, pubs, restaurants and visitor attractions. There can also be other social benefits in that they give work in areas where little alternative employment exists. The changing nature and flexibility of the leisure market and the higher aspirations of customers today are leading to leisure providers continually developing new concepts to respond to consumer needs and aspirations.

7.1.24 Swale faces a number of challenges within its holiday park tourism sector:

- whilst some parks have been modernised to meet changing needs, others are of poor quality and are in need of improvement;
- holiday parks are for short term tourism occupation, and a good economic case has been made for allowing occupancy for a greater portion of the year (although some planning challenges have arisen as a result of year round occupation);

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- the space available for parks is being squeezed by coastal cliff erosion, flood risk and restrictive policies to prevent expansion outside defined holiday areas;
- sites are often in open and/or coastal sensitive landscapes where they have had negative visual impacts.



Picture 7.1.2 Holiday areas within the north Sheppey landscape

7.1.25 Given the scale of existing provision on the Isle of Sheppey and its contribution to the current poor condition and appearance of local landscapes, the Local Plan does not seek to allocate any new sites.^(7.7) The expansion of existing sites outside the defined holiday areas will also not be permitted due to the landscape and visual impacts likely to arise. Exceptionally, extensions to existing sites will be permitted in specific local circumstances, such as where land on a site is being physically lost due to coastal processes and where its replacement can be assimilated successfully into the landscape.

Policy DM 4

New holiday parks or extensions to existing parks

1. Planning permission will be granted for the upgrading and improvement of existing static holiday caravan and chalet sites (including their conversion from one to the other) within the existing boundaries of the Holiday Park areas as shown on the [Proposals Map](#). Planning permission will not be granted for any new static holiday caravans and chalets, or extensions, outside of the Holiday Park areas on the Isle of Sheppey as shown on the Proposals Map.
2. In circumstances where land is lost to coastal erosion, minor extensions to existing static holiday caravan sites will be permitted where:
 - a. in accordance with Policies DM22 and DM23 relating to the coast and the coastal change management area;
 - b. it is demonstrated that on-site upgrading and improvement is not practicable or viable;
 - c. there is no overall increase in the existing number of accommodation units;

- d. it is part of a scheme to upgrade and improve the quality of tourist accommodation and other amenities on the site;
 - e. it results in a significant and comprehensive improvement to the layout, design and appearance of the site, together with an integrated landscape strategy that creates a landscape framework for both the existing and proposed sites that will reduce their overall impact within the landscape in accordance with Policy DM24;
 - f. in accordance with Policy DM5; and
 - g. there is no unacceptable impact on the local environment.
3. Where new or improved facilities are proposed within the existing boundaries of the Holiday Park areas, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), planning permission will be granted provided they are:
 - a. of a type and scale appropriate to the site or park they are intended to serve;
 - b. where feasible, made available for use by the local resident population; and
 - c. in accordance with Policy DM5.

The occupancy of holiday parks

7.1.26 Most holiday parks in Swale have been restricted to an eight month period of occupation, with an additional 11 day period allowed over Christmas and the New Year period for sites not at risk of flooding. The limited occupancy period was imposed to ensure that these holiday parks were not used as permanent (and sometimes sub-standard) housing (many of which would be in poorly accessible parts of the Borough) and to protect the character of the rural area. Limited occupation also afforded the opportunity to retain a period of tranquillity in rural and other areas. In areas at risk of flooding, permanent occupation over the winter period could also result in risk to life.

7.1.27 Whilst these considerations remain relevant, to give more scope and incentive to enable modernisation and upgrading to take place, the Council considers that there will be occasions when a 10 month occupancy period will be acceptable, which will, in turn, deliver tourism benefits and support for the local economy.

7.1.28 Policy DM5 sets out the parameters within which applications to extend occupancy of holiday parks to a 10 month period will be permitted. Permanent occupation will continue to be resisted. For the most part, Policy DM5 will apply to existing holiday parks, but will also be used to guide the length of occupancy that should be allowed in such cases.

7.1.29 Where land is liable to flooding, occupation will continue to be restricted in accordance with national planning policy and guidance. Applications to extend occupancy on these sites will need to be supported by an up to date Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) with mitigation measures where appropriate. In many cases, it will not be possible to provide mitigation that adequately safeguards from the risk of flooding over the winter months, and in these cases applications to extend the occupancy on these sites will be resisted.

7.1.30 In cases where sites are either adjacent, or in close proximity to, the Swale or Medway Special Protection Areas, an application to extend the holiday season will need to be accompanied by an assessment made under the Habitat Regulations in order to consider potential disturbance to over-wintering birds.

Policy DM 5

The occupancy of holiday parks

In order to ensure a sustainable pattern of development and to protect the character of the countryside, planning permission will not be granted for the permanent occupancy of caravans and chalets. Where

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it can be demonstrated that higher quality standards of holiday accommodation can be secured, planning permission will be granted for proposals to extend the occupancy of holiday parks between 1 March and 2 January the following year (a 10 month occupancy), provided that:

1. The site is not at risk of flooding, unless, exceptionally, applications accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) satisfactorily demonstrating that the proposal would result in no greater risk to life or property and where an appropriate flood evacuation plan would be put in place;
2. The amenity and tranquillity of the countryside and residential areas are safeguarded;
3. The proposals are in accordance with Policies DM22 and DM23 relating to the coast and the coastal change management area; and
4. Where located adjacent or in close proximity to the Special Protection Areas (SPA), an assessment has been undertaken to determine the level of disturbance to over-wintering birds and identified mitigation measures, where appropriate.
5. The extension of occupancy is subject to planning conditions safeguarding the holiday accommodation from being used as sole or main residences, as set out in Appendix 2.

7.2 Promoting sustainable transport

Managing transport demand and impacts

7.2.1 This policy is designed to support the National Planning Policy Framework core principles of managing patterns of growth to make the best possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focusing development in sustainable locations. It also supports the NPPF's objective in respect of climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This development management policy focuses on how the demand for transport will be addressed at the level of specific sites and network improvements.

7.2.2 The NPPF states that all developments which generate significant amounts of movement (to be determined by local criteria) should be supported by a Transport Assessment which will consider:^(7.8)

- whether the opportunities for sustainable transport mode have been taken up, depending on the nature and location of the site (taking account of whether or not it is a rural location);
- whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all people; and
- what improvements can be undertaken within the transport network which can effectively limit the significant impacts of the development.

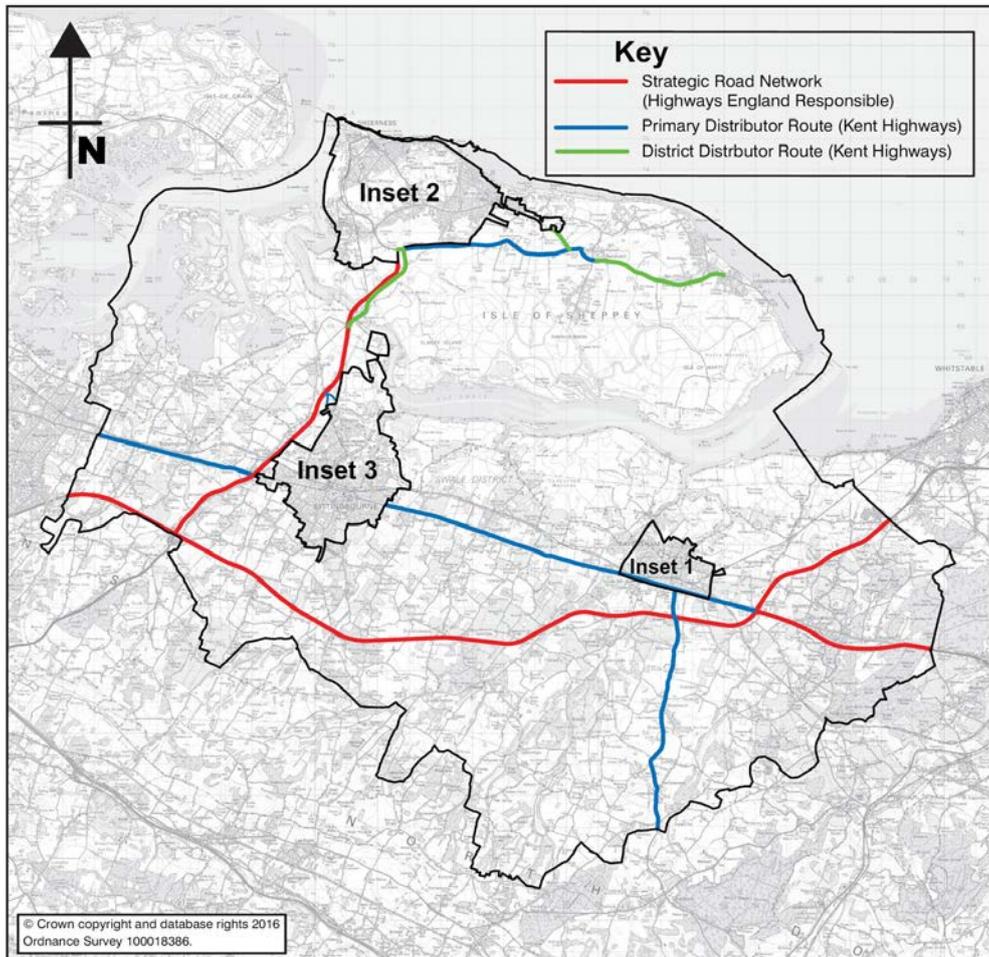
7.2.3 Developers will therefore need to ensure that their proposals are located and designed so as to minimise the need to travel in accordance with Policy CP 2 and that opportunities to connect with and maximise the use of, public transport, cycling and walking are taken wherever appropriate. This will include provision for:

- efficient delivery of goods and supplies;
- prioritising pedestrian, cycle and access to high quality public transport facilities and minimise conflicts with vehicular traffic;
- considering the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport; and
- incorporating facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles.

7.2.4 Development or redevelopment can impact on the safe operation and capacity of the highway network. Consequently, the Council will expect, where appropriate, an appraisal of the traffic impacts of the development as part of an overall transport assessment. This may also include a Travel Plan. Developers will need to demonstrate that the existing highway network has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development, or alternatively, that access and capacity can be provided in a cost effective way.

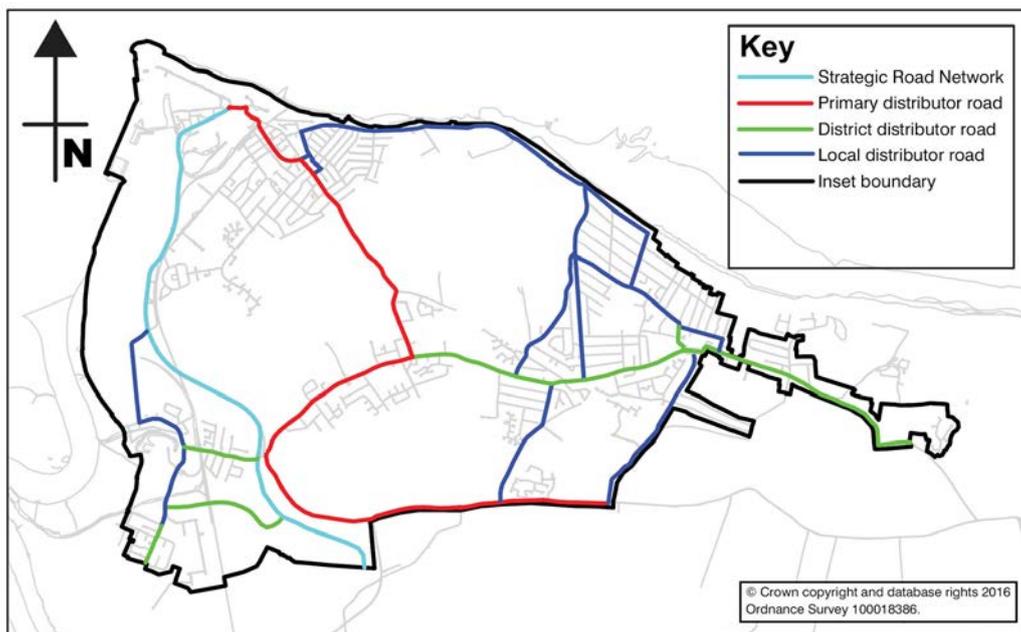
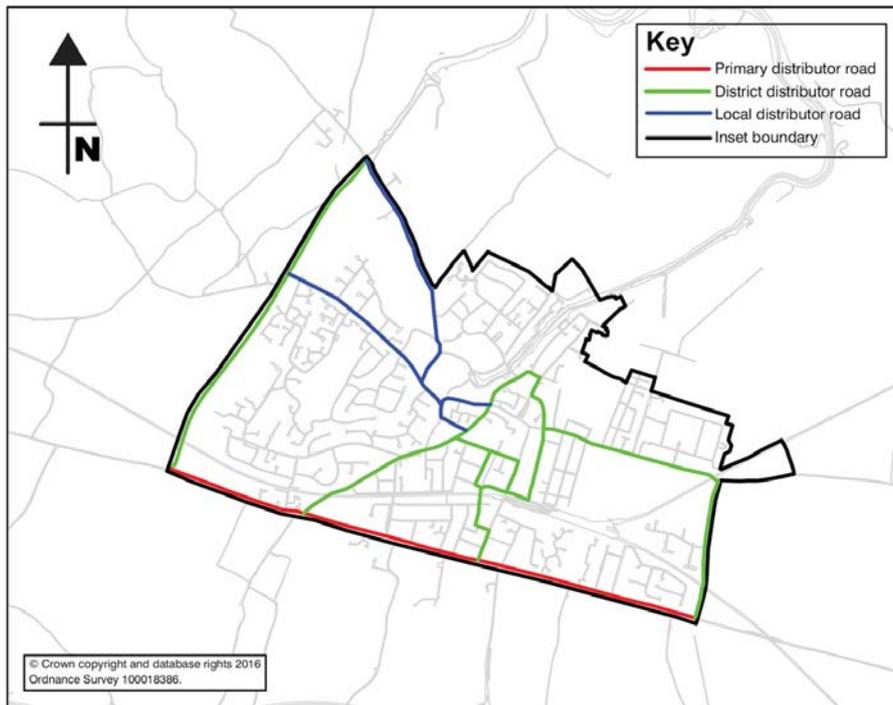
7.2.5 Where improvements can be made, the developer will either be required to undertake the works or make a financial contribution towards them (either via S.106 or, when adopted, the Community Infrastructure Levy). Such improvements may need to be undertaken before development becomes operational.

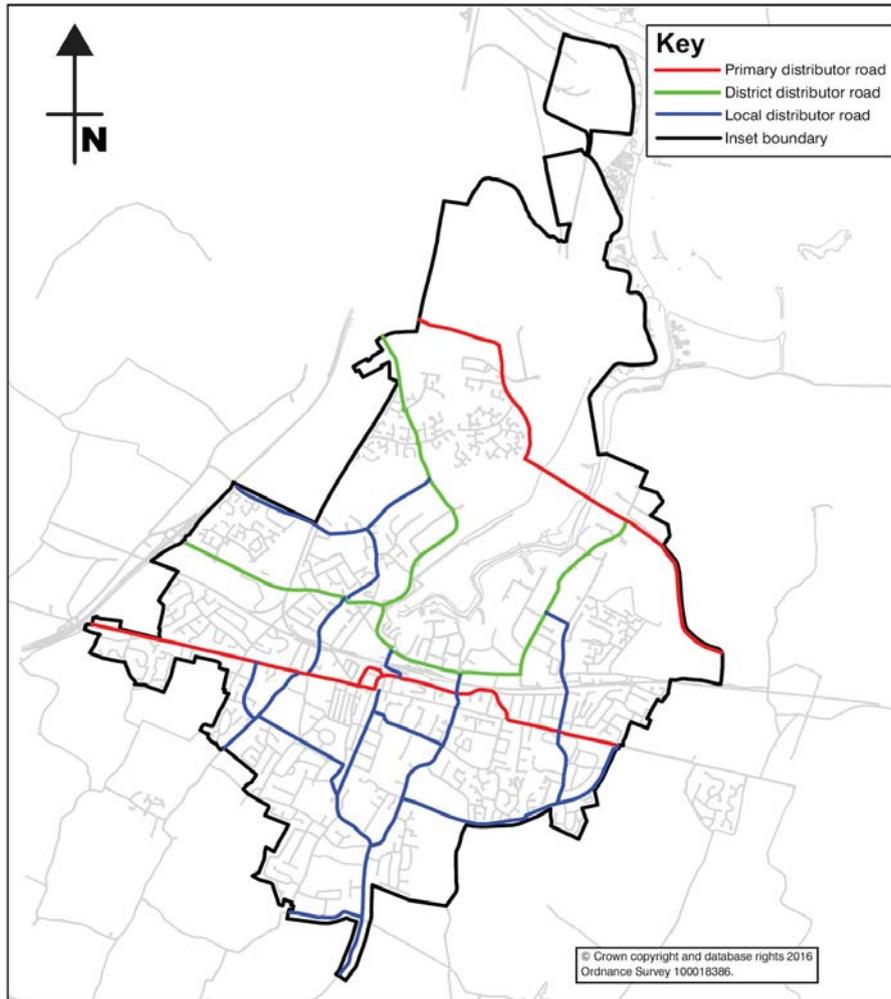
7.2.6 Direct access to the Strategic Road Network and primary road network shown on Map 7.2.1 will generally be avoided. In line with national policy, new direct access to the strategic road network will only be considered in the event of serving strategic development proposed through a local plan review. The Insets (Maps 7.2.2 - 7.2.4) show the Urban Road Hierarchy for Faversham, the Sheerness area and Sittingbourne respectively.



Map 7.2.1 Swale Inter Urban Road Hierarchy

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Map 7.2.4 Urban road hierarchy for Sittingbourne (Inset 3)

7.2.7 The NPPF states that development should only be refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe and cannot be mitigated by off site improvements to the transport network.^(7.9) Whilst 'severe' is not defined by the NPPF, Circular 2/2013 states that continued safe operation of the network is the prime consideration in terms of the operation of the Strategic Road Network.^(7.10)

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7.2.8 The environmental and air quality impacts of any transport aspects of development schemes are an integral part of their likely acceptability and the Council will pay close attention to these issues when considering any development proposal proposals, having regard to the residual cumulative impact of development schemes.

7.2.9 In order to ensure that more sustainable patterns of development and transport are achieved, promotion of cycling and the needs of pedestrians should be a priority consideration in the design of new development. This is not only a consideration for the site layout itself, where the aim should be to improve permeability within the site, but also the links out of the site to access surrounding services and facilities. Measures to reduce traffic speed in residential areas should be integral to the design and layout. Existing public rights of way through a development site should be retained on their established routes unless there are exceptional reasons to agree an alternative and or it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council and Kent County Council Public Rights of Way Access that change to the network would enhance its recreational value.

7 Development management policies

7.2.10 The Council is keen to enhance and extend public transport services by ensuring that there is a good relationship between the location of development and the public transport network. Consequently, development proposals will be expected to have regard to the relationship of the proposal with public transport services and to promote access to them, particularly in the early stages of development. This could involve providing new or better located stopping points, integrating the footpath and cycleway network with public transport services, providing vouchers or complementary season tickets to residents or workers. On larger developments, contributions could be made towards new or improved services. Developers are strongly encouraged to consult with local bus operators at an early stage in formulating their plans. The Council will expect to see the implementation of public transport services from the very start of development to set sustainable transport patterns.

7.2.11 The Council recognises the important contribution rail and water transport can make to the movement of freight and for other commercial purposes and the potential to help reduce the amount of heavy goods road traffic. It is therefore important that existing provision is safeguarded, including those facilities identified in the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plans (and the emerging development frameworks which will supersede them). Some established companies in Swale already have links to the rail freight network. The Council is keen to encourage greater use of rail and water transport and will usually support development which proposes this. The Port of Sheerness already has deep water wharfage, which could be used more intensively if the planning consent for manufacture and assembly of wind turbines at the Port is implemented. The potential for extending the deep water wharfage remains a longer term possibility for the Port. Ridham Dock provides a more limited, but valuable facility. Opportunities to intensify use of these facilities and provide interchanges with the national rail network will generally be supported, subject to the avoidance of any significant adverse environmental impacts on internationally designated sites.

Main Modification 209

Policy DM 6

Managing transport demand and impact

1. Development proposals generating a significant amount of transport movements will be required to support their proposal with the preparation of a Transport Assessment (including a Travel Plan), which will be based on the Council's most recent strategic modelling work. The Highways Agency may also require a Transport Assessment if development is deemed to impact on the strategic road network.
2. In assessing impacts on the highway network, development proposals will:
 - a. demonstrate that opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up;
 - b. where the residual cumulative impact of development on traffic generation would be in excess of the capacity of the highway network and/or lead to a decrease in safety, environmentally acceptable improvements to the network agreed by the Borough Council and the Highway Authority will be expected. Such works will be carried out by the developer or a contribution made towards them in accordance with Policy CP5 6. If such works cannot be carried out and the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe, then the development will be refused.
 - c. avoid the formation of a new direct access onto the strategic or primary distributor route network where possible, or unless where identified by the Local Plan. Other proposals for new access onto the networks will need to demonstrate that it they can be created in a location acceptable to the Borough Council and appropriate Highway Authority. Proposals involving intensification of any existing access onto a strategic, primary or other route will need to demonstrate that it is of a suitable capacity and safety standard or can be improved to achieve such a standard;

- d. integrate air quality management and environmental quality into the location and design of, and access to, development and, in so doing, demonstrate that proposals do not worsen air quality to an unacceptable degree especially taking into account the cumulative impact of development schemes within or likely to impact on Air Quality Management Areas; and
 - e. not result in the loss of usable wharfage or rail facilities.
3. The location, design and layout of development proposals will demonstrate that:
- a. priority is given to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, including the disabled, through the provision of safe routes which minimise cyclist/pedestrian and traffic conflict within the site and which connect to local services and facilities;
 - b. existing public rights of way are retained, or exceptionally diverted, and new routes created in appropriate locations;
 - c. access to public transport is integrated into site design and layout where appropriate;
 - d. the safe and efficient delivery of goods and supplies and access for emergency and utility vehicles can be accommodated; and
 - e. it includes facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra low emission vehicles on major developments.

Vehicle parking

7.2.12 In respect of vehicle parking, there are currently no nationally advised standards (other than for motorway service areas in the emerging Department for Transport Circular).^(7.11) The National Planning Policy Framework advises that if local planning authorities are setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, they should take into account:

- the accessibility of the development;
- the type and mix of the development;
- the availability of opportunities for public transport;
- local car ownership; and
- the overall need to reduce the use of high emission vehicles.

7.2.13 Swale is a semi rural district, as is much of the rest of Kent in which it is set. Public transport routes in Swale tend to be either focused on very local journeys by bus, or London radial routes by rail and some bus transport. Although Policy CP2 contains the objectives to enhance and encourage walking, cycling and bus use for local journeys (and indeed the development strategy of the plan aims to facilitate that), getting around the Borough and around Kent is still heavily car focused. The 2011 Census indicates that car ownership in Swale has indeed increased over the last ten years, and at just under 80% of households, has now converged with the Kent average. These are substantially higher than the average for England which is 74% of households with car ownership. Appropriate residential car parking standards therefore need to be devised to reflect different locations and types of accommodation.

7.2.14 Swale is located on the national and international strategic road network and has attracted a significant amount of distribution activities which are essentially road based and typically use high emission vehicles. Whilst Swale based companies have their own depots and parking, a Kent wide issue has been identified with international lorry traffic requiring parking facilities, for rest periods and to deal with 'Operation Stack' (when Channel ports are closed or obstructed).

7.2.15 Policy CP 2 explains the car parking strategy which is to be applied in Sittingbourne Town Centre as part of the major regeneration proposals there. At present time the regeneration proposals envisaged

7 Development management policies

for Sheerness in Policy ST4 are not of a scale which warrant review of the car parking serving the town centre. At Faversham, Policy ST5 places emphasis on the heritage and compact urban morphology of the town and in view of this, no major new development is proposed at the centre which warrants a review of car parking. A complementary element of the policy to develop public transport links which meet the needs of the town and the surrounding area is pursued.

7.2.16 Car parking issues for Swale are locally generated ones. The development strategy of the plan seeks to locate new development at settlements where services and facilities are close by and where there is reasonable access to public transport or it can be enhanced, thus reducing the need to travel and offering alternatives to the car and therefore parking. Policy DM6 sets out how this will be achieved at the level of individual development proposals.

7.2.17 Currently, the Borough Council applies guidance and standards developed by Kent County Council for residential and non-residential uses, although in some cases these have proved unsatisfactory in some locations. Development of appropriate local standards which take into account the type, use, design and location of the development, whilst still having regard to the principles of sustainable development and transport, will need to be prepared with reference to local situations and experience. This will be through preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document pursuant to Policy DM7, developed in partnership with Kent Highways and Transportation. In the meantime, the Council will continue to apply the extant Kent County Council guidance and standards to development proposals.

Policy DM 7

Vehicle parking

Until such time as a local Swale Borough Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) can be adopted, the Council will continue to apply extant Kent County Council vehicle parking standards to new development proposals. When prepared, the Swale Vehicle Parking SPD will provide guidelines for:

1. Car parking standards for residential development, which will:
 - a. take into account the type, size and mix of dwellings and the need for visitor parking; and
 - b. provide design advice to ensure efficient and attractive layout of development whilst ensuring that appropriate provision for vehicle parking is integrated within it.
2. Vehicle parking for non-residential uses, which will take into account:
 - a. the accessibility of the development and availability of public transport;
 - b. the type, mix and use of the development proposed;
 - c. the need to maintain an adequate level of car parking within town centres to ensure that viability of the centres is not compromised; and
 - d. that development proposals do not exacerbate on street car parking to an unacceptable degree.
3. Cycle parking facilities on new developments, of an appropriate design and in a convenient, safe, secure and sheltered location.^(7.12)

7.3 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes

Affordable housing

7.3.1 The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to use their evidence base to ensure local plans provide for the objectively assessed needs for affordable housing and set policies to achieve this need. To understand the full objectively assessed needs, the NPPF requires local authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to fully assess what the housing needs are for the local area.

Main Modification 210

7.3.2 The Government outlines its commitment to radically reforming social and affordable housing in their Housing Strategy, [Laying the Foundations](#). This includes investing £4.5bn in new affordable housing, initiatives for social renting and reinvigorating the Right to Buy. A number of policy initiatives in the strategy also highlight the Government's aim to increase home ownership. The Government has consulted on its intention to place a duty on local planning authorities to require a proportion of Starter Homes on all reasonably-sized sites. The Council will maintain a watching brief and respond as appropriate. refocus the way social housing is allocated to ensure that social housing is available for those who need it, by preventing or discouraging the occupation of social housing by tenants with high incomes or alternative homes and to criminalise unlawful subletting. ^(7.13)

Main Modification 211

7.3.3 There is considerable unmet need for affordable housing in Swale. ~~In 2010, 78% of newly forming households could not afford market housing, whilst 71% of single households could not afford a one-bedroom shared-ownership flat. The 2013 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment update identified that there were an estimated 4,295 1,639 households in need of affordable housing within Swale, as highlighted by the scale of the housing waiting list. The same study identified that in future, an estimated 1,522 787 households each year would newly require affordable housing. These acute pressures for affordable housing indicate a need of some 1,830 such 190 affordable dwellings per annum with the highest need for 4 or 3 bedroom family homes. over the forthcoming 5 year period.~~

Main Modification 212

7.3.4 ~~Relatively low levels of affordable housing supply have coincided with an increase in the size of the housing waiting list over the past 15 years within Swale. Completions over that period have resulted in an average of 126 affordable dwellings per annum, yet the number of people waiting for affordable housing has increased.~~

7.3.5 The Council's [Housing Strategy](#) (2010-2015) sets out the housing aims, objectives and vision for the Borough. In particular, the strategy promotes the effective physical and social integration of new affordable housing and new occupiers with new market housing and within existing communities.

Main Modification 213

7.3.6 ~~The [East Kent Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009](#) (confirmed by its 2013 update) recommends that between 30% - 35% of new developments should be affordable dependant on the location as follows:~~

7 Development management policies

- ~~Isle of Sheppey 30%~~
- ~~Sittingbourne, Faversham and rural areas 35%~~ The 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Part 2 - Objectively Assessed Need for Affordable Housing recommends the Council pursues an overall affordable housing target of 25%, however it recognises that when setting the target the full range of evidence, including the strategic viability assessment of this Plan, needs to be considered.

Main Modification 214

7.3.7 The Local Plan Viability Testing - Addendum (PBA, 2015) recommends affordable housing percentages having considered the viability picture for the Borough. These are reflected within Policy DM8 and will be the starting point for decision making on development proposals.

Main Modification 215

7.3.8 Policy DM8 aims, as far as possible, to meet the recommendations of the 2015 Strategic Housing Market Assessment and its update. ~~However, the policy comes at a time of severe downturn in the housing market. Currently, other than in stronger market areas, The evidence base shows that~~ affordable housing targets are not viable above a minimal level and this has been demonstrated by a viability assessment of this Local Plan. Policy DM8 sets out the affordable housing percentages which will be sought on proposals in different market areas. Viability is more most affected by ~~unfavourable economic circumstances~~ in the housing market areas of Sheppey and Sittingbourne ~~and~~ ~~and~~ and hence a lower percentage of affordable housing will be sought in these areas. ~~compared to other areas of the Borough.~~ Whilst the percentage of affordable housing being sought reflects the deliverability of the Local Plan, the Council is keen to promote and support proposals which enable or deliver affordable housing in these market areas. ~~There is a significant discrepancy between the affordable housing percentages being sought through this policy and the suggested target within the evidence base of need including the SHMA. Should economic signals, or the proposed characteristics of the development, clearly demonstrate a positive change in the impacts on viability of development proposals brought about by the provision of affordable housing, the Council will seek a proportion of affordable housing closer to the assessed level of need. In the case of positive market signals, it will also and speedily review Policy DM8 and, if supported by evidence, revise the affordable housing requirement.~~

Main Modification 216

7.3.9 ~~The East Kent SHMA also indicates the split between affordable/social rented housing and intermediate housing. In terms of tenure split the Council will seek 70% of the total number of affordable dwellings provided to be affordable/social rented housing and the balance of up to 30% to be intermediate housing, unless an alternative tenure is more appropriate, as demonstrated by a housing needs assessment. To meet the identified need for affordable housing of different tenures, the Council will, in the first instance, seek an indicative target of 90% affordable/social rent and 10% intermediate products. Specific site circumstances may affect the viability of individual proposals which may result in an alternative tenure being acceptable, however this must be demonstrated by a viability assessment accompanying a planning application. It is not yet clear whether nationally applied thresholds will be brought in for triggering affordable housing contributions, but the Council's viability testing assumes that affordable housing will be sought from all sites and has been demonstrated as viable. This is~~

therefore the basis for Policy DM8. The Council recognises that the evidence base for different tenures may vary over time particularly with the progression of policy initiatives such as Starter Homes and so will refer to the latest needs assessment in decision making.

7.3.10 Where an applicant can demonstrate that the viability of a scheme will be severely compromised, notwithstanding the affordable housing policy target set out in Policy DM8, to a point where the scheme and the meeting of other planning objectives are unacceptably undermined, this requirement may be further considered and/or an adjustment made to the tenure split. In circumstances where a lower level of affordable housing or commuted sum is negotiated, the applicant will be expected to enter into a legal agreement to ensure that a revised affordable housing target can be considered should land values rise prior to the commencement of each build phase. This is known as overage.

Main Modification 217

7.3.11 The starting point for any planning application is the on-site provision of affordable housing. In exceptional cases, the Council may consider affordable housing provision to be provided off-site. In such a case, it may be possible to require a commuted sum (or payment in lieu), which is an amount of money, paid by a developer to the Council when the size or scale of a development triggers a requirement for affordable housing, but it is not possible or desirable to provide it on the site. This option may be appropriate, for example, in cases of economic difficulties, where provision on an alternative site could be of higher quality, or where improvements to the quality of the existing housing stock are considered more appropriate. ~~Monies commuted in this way may be pooled for use on other schemes, including provision for affordable public pitches for Gypsies and Travellers.~~

7.3.12 In view of the current challenging viability situation in parts of the Borough, the provision of affordable housing in some parts of the Borough is seriously compromised. To ensure that affordable housing continues to be provided in areas where viability is challenged, the Council will consider proposals to commute or transfer part of the need on Faversham and rural sites to other parts of the Borough. This will be subject to an up to date consideration of viability issues. The Council will also produce a supplementary planning document to explain the approach for undertaking commuted sums and the methodology for its calculation.

Main Modification 218

7.3.13 ~~The exceptional financial difficulties currently experienced by the housing industry extend to~~ Affordable housing providers whose own finances and availability of grants may be such that they are not able to support a scheme even when a contribution from a developer is available. In such circumstances, the Council will look to cascade or commute any provision for use by another provider or another scheme, or pool it until a housing provider is able to come forward to support an appropriate project.

7.3.14 The requirement to provide affordable housing will be calculated at the appropriate rate on a whole site basis. Sub-divisions of a site that would bring any particular application under the affordable housing threshold will be aggregated to ensure delivery of affordable housing is achieved across the entire site. Affordable housing will be integrated with open market housing on the proposed and adjacent sites and schemes should avoid the concentration of one tenure type.

7 Development management policies

Main Modification 219

7.3.15 There is an identified need for affordable older person housing (retirement dwellings and extra care housing) and the current viability evidence shows this to be marginally viable in Faversham and rural areas, albeit this has an impact on the level of CIL achieved. Therefore zero % is sought in the policy, however the Council is keen to support proposals for affordable older person housing.

Main Modification 220

7.3.16 ~~Although there is likely to be a~~ There may be circumstances when a need arises for affordable pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, however the extent of such need could not be calculated in the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2013. Affordable pitch provision ~~is expected to~~ could come forward either via a rural exceptions site, or if further evidence to quantify the level of affordable need were to come forward through the joint working ~~currently be undertaken~~ with Kent County Council, ~~an allocation a site~~ could be identified. ~~Given the Council's approach to making pitch provision on mainstream housing allocations, this can be examined further both at the planning application stages of these sites and as part of work for Part 2 of the Local Plan.~~

Main Modification 221

Policy DM 8

Affordable housing

For development proposals, ~~of ten or more dwellings and~~ including where a need to provide affordable housing has been determined as appropriate (including within a rural area as determined by a Parish Housing Needs Assessment), provision will be made for affordable housing ~~(including those for Gypsies and Travellers)~~ as follows:

1. In accordance with the affordable housing target ranges and as appropriate to the local housing market areas as follows:

Area	Affordable Housing Percentage Sought
Isle of Sheppey	No affordable housing requirement
Sittingbourne town, urban extensions and Iwade	10% affordable housing
<u>Strategic Site at NW Sittingbourne (Policy MU1)</u>	<u>10% affordable housing if a zero CIL rate applied</u>
Faversham town and urban extensions	30% 35% affordable housing
All other rural areas	40% affordable housing
<u>All areas</u>	<u>No affordable older person housing requirement</u>

Table 7.3.1 Affordable Housing Ranges

2. The size, tenure and type of affordable housing units in accordance with the needs of the area;
3. Where possible, by designing homes for use by disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents;
4. Where possible, by supporting Starter Homes in appropriate circumstances and locations;
5. In exceptional circumstances, and in accordance with a supplementary planning document to be prepared by the Borough Council:
 - a. on-site affordable housing provision may be commuted to a financial contribution to be used off-site, singly or in combination with other contributions. Commuted sums may also be considered in respect of sites at Faversham and the rural areas so as to support the provision of affordable housing in less viable locations; or
 - b. where no Registered Social Landlord is available, the full affordable housing provision requirement will be cascaded to another provider and/or site or via a commuted sum, its calculation having regard to the full amount of market housing that has been achieved on the site; or
 - c. where an applicant can demonstrate that providing the full affordable housing provision would result in the scheme becoming unviable, a reduced requirement may be considered and will be subject to a legal agreement to ensure that full provision of affordable housing is reconsidered should land values rise prior to the commencement of development or any subsequent phases and/or an adjustment made to the tenure split.
6. If evidence demonstrates that economic conditions have positively changed the impact of viability of the provision of affordable housing, the Council will seek a proportion of affordable housing closer to the assessed level of need.

Rural exceptions housing

7.3.17 The NPPF encourages local planning authorities to be responsive to local circumstances and to plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. The NPPF describes rural exception sites as being small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. It explains that local planning authorities should consider whether allowing some market housing in rural areas could facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.^(7.14) It makes clear that in order to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.^(7.15)

7.3.18 Historically, rural affordable housing schemes were provided on a 100% affordable housing basis. Whilst there were some notable successes within Swale, with 28 units built since the year 2000, this number has not kept pace with need. Now, reductions in grant funding to housing providers has undermined the viability of some schemes to the point that achieving the necessary provision has become even more challenging.

7.3.19 In recognition of the importance of this issue, the Council have highlighted the need to deliver a housing supply that is sufficient for, and matches the needs and aspirations of, local households and those needing to move into the area.^(7.16)

Main Modification 222

7.3.20 The Council, together with rural housing partners, recognise that in order to tackle these challenges, there is a need to increase affordable housing (including those for Gypsies and Travellers) within rural areas and that a flexible approach to meeting local housing need is required. There is

7 Development management policies

national planning policy support for departing from the previous policy approach to restrict sites solely to affordable housing, to allow some unrestricted market homes for sale, including plots for sale for local self build. This should help both to increase affordable housing completions and to allow for more mixed and sustainable rural communities. In turn, this will help provide the right housing to support stronger communities and to sustain rural areas in ways that respects their character.

Main Modification 223

7.3.21 There may in the future be circumstances where a rural exception site could provide affordable accommodation to meet the needs of specific communities, such as Gypsies and Travellers. The housing need would still need to be evidenced based but a flexible approach to meeting that particular housing need would be required.

Main Modification 224

7.3.22 Whilst the Council is keen to ensure that rural affordable housing is delivered, this should not be at the expense of protection for the wider amenity of rural communities and the countryside, or indeed, the overall objectives of the Local Plan strategy. Policy DM 9 provides a number of safeguards to ensure that local circumstances, need and the overall viability of a scheme are taken into consideration in the planning application process. In cases where planning permission is granted for rural exception sites with market housing, the Council will only permit the minimum number of unrestricted market homes/plots/~~pitches~~ required to deliver the subsidy necessary to deliver a significantly greater proportion of affordable units.

7.3.23 The evidence required to accompany a planning application for a rural exceptions scheme will include:

1. an up-to-date Parish housing needs assessment (or village assessment if appropriate) covering both affordable and unrestricted market housing need undertaken by a recognised body such as Rural Communities in Kent;
2. a thorough assessment of potentially suitable, available and achievable sites, having regard to Policy ST 3 and other relevant policies;
3. a robust, independently prepared and audited, viability assessment, prepared on an 'open-book' basis to demonstrate why market housing is required to make the scheme viable;
4. the significant input from the relevant Parish Council concerned in the preparation and support of evidence; and
5. an assurance that those homes provided as affordable must remain available for local people in perpetuity and that this will be controlled via a legal agreement, a draft of which should accompany any planning application.

Main Modification 225

Policy DM 9

Rural exceptions housing

Planning permission for affordable housing (including pitches for Gypsies and Travellers) to meet local needs in rural areas will be granted provided:

1. The site accords with Policy ST3 and/or is in a location where access to day to day services can be conveniently and easily achieved;
2. The site and proposed development would not have a significant adverse impact upon the character of the settlement, the surrounding countryside and the amenity of the existing community;
3. A need for the scheme is clearly justified by the applicant, to the satisfaction of the Council, by providing the following to accompany a planning application:
 - a. an up-to-date parish or village housing needs assessment undertaken or carried out by a recognised and appropriate body;
 - b. a thorough site options appraisal; and
 - c. a prepared statement of community involvement that has sought to include the significant input of the Parish Council.
4. In addition, for schemes including unrestricted market houses/plots/pitches for sale, justification will be provided by the applicant:
 - a. to demonstrate that a scheme not relying on market housing has been considered and why it has been discounted or considered to be unviable; and
 - b. as to the number and type of houses proposed, which will be determined by the housing needs assessment and through an appraisal of viability to show the minimum provision of unrestricted market homes necessary to deliver a significantly greater proportion of local affordable homes for that site.
5. Proposals will be subject to a legal agreement that provides for the permanent control and management of any affordable housing to ensure its long-term retention for local need.

Gypsy and Traveller sites

7.3.24 Swale borough has one of the largest Gypsy and Traveller populations within Kent and the South East of England with over 60 sites. In recognition of this, making sufficient provision for Gypsies and Travellers in a fair fashion for all is a key objective for the Council.

Main Modification 226

7.3.25 The revised [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites](#) (PPTS) was published in ~~March 2012~~ August 2015 and sets out the Government's policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites nationally. Sitting alongside the National Planning Policy Framework, the aim of the PPTS is to promote community cohesion and

7 Development management policies

to align site provision with those for mainstream housing, such as requiring a demonstrable five year supply. The PPTS requires local authorities to set their own local targets for pitch provision as part of their overall housing figures.

7.3.26 Whilst the PPTS sets out the national position in respect of Gypsy and Traveller Sites, Local Authorities also need to have regard to policies and advice set out within the NPPF. The NPPF encourages sustainable development and the need to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, issues which are as relevant to the planning of Gypsy and Traveller sites as they are to the wider community.

Main Modification 227

7.3.27 ~~Traditional patterns of work are changing and although a full time travelling lifestyle is still the case for a minority, there is a shift towards a more settled lifestyle with travelling only part of the year, if at all. This more settled lifestyle gives better access to health care, employment and education opportunities which in doing so, is an important step towards tackling many of the deprivation issues faced by the Gypsy and Traveller community.~~

Main Modification 228

7.3.28 In order to gain a greater understanding of the Borough's need for pitch provision, a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was commissioned by the Council. The report's findings are outlined in the supporting text to Policy ST 2. The GTAA was completed prior to publication of the revised PPTS and its redefinition of Gypsies and Travellers, therefore the Council has revisited the evidence within the GTAA and has revised the overall need for the plan period.

Main Modification 229

7.3.29 ~~The Council's approach to provision is for this Part 1 Local Plan is to include and justify the proposed target. A separately progressed, Part 2 Local Plan, will address the allocation of sites. Policy CP3 provides an approach by which mainstream housing sites will include a proportion of their provision for Gypsies and Travellers. Together with Policy ST3, Guided also by Policy ST3, Policy DM10 is intended to act as a criteria based policy to guide windfall sites that may come forward outside the Local Plan allocations process, together with proposals for transit sites, sites for Travelling Show People and extensions to existing sites. Policy ST3 will also act as a guide for the allocation of sites by Part 2 of the Local Plan. Both parts of the Local Plan are intended to contain both the pitch target and Policies CP3 and DM10 in order that either can be progressed should a delay occur with either Local Plan.~~

7.3.30 Policy DM10 should be read and interpreted in conjunction with Policy ST 3, which sets out the Local Plan settlement strategy. For Gypsy and Traveller applications for new sites (as opposed to extensions/intensifications to existing), applicant's are required to consider the availability of sites at each 'tier' of settlement category before a site within the next lower 'tier' is considered and permitted.

Main Modification 230

Policy DM 10

Gypsy and Traveller sites

Part A: Retention of sites for Gypsies and Travellers

Existing permanent sites and ~~allocated sites~~ and those granted permanent planning permission will be safeguarded for use by Gypsies and Travellers, unless it is demonstrated the site is no longer suitable for such use.

Part B: Gypsy and Traveller sites

~~Where there are no deliverable sites for Gypsy and Travellers and where it is necessary to demonstrate a 5-year supply of such sites, the~~ The Council will grant planning permission for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People, where it is demonstrated that proposals:

1. Are in accordance with Policy ST3 by reference to the deliverability of potential or existing sites at each settlement tier(s) above that proposed by the application, unless:
 - a. there are exceptional mitigating and/or personal circumstances where the applicant has demonstrated that a particular site is required to meet their needs and where there is no overriding harm to the locality; or
 - b. where required to meet an affordable housing need either via a rural exception site in accordance with Policy DM9 or specific allocation; or
 - c. the proposal is for an extension to, or stationing of, additional caravans at an existing site.
2. Can establish that the applicants have previously led a nomadic lifestyle, the reasons for ceasing a nomadic lifestyle and/or an intention to return to a nomadic lifestyle in accordance with Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015);
3. Can achieve an integrated co-existence between all communities;
4. Are of a scale appropriate to meet the accommodation need identified and not introduce a scale of development that singly or cumulatively dominates the nearest settlement or causes significant harm to the character of an area, its landscape, or the capacity of local services;
5. Can, where appropriate, accommodate living and working in the same location, either through a mixed use site or on land nearby, whilst having regard to the safety and amenity of occupants and neighbouring residents;
6. Cause no significant harm to the health and wellbeing of occupants or others by noise, disturbance, vibration, air quality or other circumstances;
7. Cause no significant harm to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, national/local landscape or biodiversity designations and other natural or built environment that cannot be adequately mitigated;
8. ~~Enhance the landscape character and provide~~ Provide landscaping to enhance the environment in a way that increases openness and avoids exclusion and isolation from the rest of the community;
9. Provide for healthy lifestyles through open space, amenity areas for each pitch and play areas;
10. Would be safe from flooding by meeting both the exceptions and sequential tests in accordance with national policy and Policy DM22;

7 Development management policies

11. Achieve safe and convenient parking and pedestrian and/or vehicular access without unacceptable impact on highway safety; and
12. Where appropriate, include visitor or transit pitches and/or sufficient areas for future expansion. Planning conditions may be used to limit the length of time that caravans can stop at transit sites and on visitor pitches.

Main Modification 231

Extensions to, and replacement of, dwellings in the rural area

7.3.31 Rising property prices in the rural areas mean that it is often a cheaper option for occupiers and purchasers either to extend or replace a smaller dwelling when more living space is desired. The Council is concerned that large extensions or replacement dwellings can harm the character of the rural area. For these reasons, and where planning permission is required, Policy DM 11 seeks to control the extensions to, and replacement of, dwellings in the rural areas. The Council's existing Supplementary Planning Guidance [Designing an Extension: A Guide for Householders](#) is a material consideration to the determination of some proposals. Planning permission will only be granted in cases proposing modest extensions (taking into account any previous additions undertaken) of an appropriate scale, mass, and appearance to the location. In exceptional circumstances the Council will permit replacement dwellings in locations not on or close to an original dwelling where it constitutes the most effective use of land, such as an improvement to the setting and/or landscape or where it is previously developed land.

Main Modification 232

Policy DM 11

Extensions to, and replacement of, dwellings in the rural area

The Borough Council will permit the rebuilding of an existing dwelling in the rural area only if the proposed new dwelling is of a similar size and proportion, an appropriate scale, mass and appearance in relation to the original dwelling and location, ~~and is to be erected on, or close to, the position of the original dwelling~~ or where it constitutes the most effective use of the land.

The Council will permit ~~modest~~ extensions (taking into account any previous additions undertaken) to existing dwellings in the rural areas where they are of an appropriate scale, mass, and appearance in relation to the location.

Dwellings for rural workers

7.3.32 The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that to promote sustainable development in rural areas new isolated homes should be avoided, except in special circumstances, such as to meet an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside. ^(7.17)

7.3.33 Whilst the Local Plan similarly applies restraint upon isolated developments in the countryside, particularly new dwellings, a new dwelling may be permitted where the demands of a particular rural-based enterprise make it essential for one or more full-time workers to live at, or very close to, their place of work. As it may be just as convenient, and more sustainable, for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings, the availability of such premises will need to be established so as to avoid unnecessary development in the countryside. Whether a new dwelling is essential in a particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved. In particular, it will be important to establish whether the stated intentions to engage in the rural-based enterprises are genuine, are reasonably likely to materialise, and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. It will also be important to establish that the needs of the intended enterprise require one or more of the people engaged in it to live nearby. Any dwelling permitted must be appropriate for the need and to its rural location.

7.3.34 In cases where a dwelling is considered by the Council to be essential to support an enterprise, it will normally be appropriate for permission to be initially granted for a caravan or temporary structure for a limited time period, usually for a minimum period of three years, whether on a newly created rural business or on an established one thus enabling the situation to be reviewed over time.

7.3.35 The Council needs to be persuaded of the essential need for a dwelling in each individual case, at the time that applications for both temporary and permanent dwelling stages are considered. In particular, there will be a need for a functional test to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. In addition, a financial test will be necessary to demonstrate that the enterprise is economically viable and to provide evidence of the size of the dwelling that the unit can sustain. It is recognised though that some enterprises, which aim to operate broadly on a subsistence basis, but which nonetheless, provide wider benefits (e.g. in managing attractive landscapes or wildlife habitats), can be sustained on relatively low financial returns. The Council will control by conditions the occupancy of any dwellings permitted under Policy DM12 to ensure that they are retained for use by persons solely, or last, employed in these activities, or their immediate dependents, whilst the removal of some permitted development rights would normally be appropriate.

7.3.36 In the absence of further national guidance on the issue of housing for rural workers the Council will continue to have regard to Annex A to the former Planning Policy Statement 7 in the determination of planning applications.

Policy DM 12

Dwellings for rural workers

Planning permission will be granted for new, permanent, rural worker dwellings in the countryside, subject to:

1. There being a clearly established, existing, essential need for the proper functioning of the enterprise for a full-time worker to be readily available at most times;
2. There being no suitable existing dwelling available nearby or in a nearby settlement;
3. The location, scale and design of the dwelling maintaining or enhancing landscape and countryside character; and
4. The siting of the dwelling should, firstly, explore whether there are suitable buildings available for conversion at the enterprise, or secondly, in the case of a demonstrated need for a new building, that it is located as close as possible to existing buildings on previously developed land at the enterprise, or if this is not possible, within the immediate locality on an acceptable site.

7 Development management policies

Extending the garden of a dwelling in the rural area

7.3.37 Planning permission is required to extend the garden of a dwelling on to land which is used for another purpose. In rural areas, this typically involves the change of use of agricultural land or woodland which, if not managed, can change the character of the rural landscape by the loss of rural features and the introduction of urban features into the countryside. These may also significantly diminish landscape character or biodiversity by, for example, changes in land management. A specific issue occurs where woodland may be singly or cumulatively taken into the curtilage of a dwelling house preventing its proper and sustainable management. Such proposals will not normally be encouraged, especially within the designated landscapes identified by Policy DM24.

7.3.38 When considering applications for such changes of use, outside the built up area boundaries shown on the Proposals Map, the Council will be guided by Policy DM24 and Policy DM33, including the Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011 Supplementary Planning Document and will assess whether the proposal conflicts with other policies of the Plan. The Council will also consider the likely cumulative effects of a single proposal if repeated by others in the locality. A landscaping and/or management scheme should be submitted with the application as appropriate to demonstrate how it will support the above Supplementary Planning Document for the area concerned. In cases that are approved by the Council, a planning condition will normally be imposed to remove permitted development rights for garden buildings and other domestic works to protect the landscape from further harm.

Policy DM 13

Extending the garden of a dwelling in the rural area

Planning permission for proposals to extend the garden of a dwelling in the rural area, or to use such land as amenity land, will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

1. The proposal would not result in significant harm to the landscape, biodiversity or form of a settlement or inhibit the appropriate management of the land in accordance with Policy DM24 and DM33 and the Council's Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011 Supplementary Planning Document; and
2. A scheme of landscaping is provided and implemented that will, as required, conserve, create, or restore the character of the landscape concerned.

7.4 Requiring good design

General development criteria

7.4.1 In seeking to achieve high quality design or the conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment, the Council sets criteria against which planning applications can be considered. Inclusion in a single policy can usefully limit their detailed repetition in the wording of other policies. Policy DM14 is therefore a useful starting point for anyone considering making a planning application and will help ensure that important matters, such as sustainable design, the safeguarding of environmental features and amenity, are taken into account at the outset. The policy is not comprehensive and should not be considered in isolation, but read in conjunction with all the other policies in the Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance.

Policy DM 14

General development criteria

All development proposals will, as appropriate:

1. Accord with the policies and proposals of the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise;
2. Include information sufficient to enable the Council to determine the application in conjunction with the Council's published Local List of requirements;
3. Accord with adopted Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance;
4. Respond to the constraints and opportunities posed from climate change and natural processes;
5. Reflect the positive characteristics and features of the site and locality;
6. Conserve and enhance the natural and/or built environments taking in to account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets;
7. Be both well sited and of a scale, design, appearance and detail that is sympathetic and appropriate to the location;
8. Cause no significant harm to amenity and other sensitive uses or areas;
9. Provide for an integrated landscape strategy that will achieve a high standard landscaping scheme that informs the earliest stages of a development proposal; and
10. Achieve safe vehicular access, convenient routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, enhanced public transport facilities and services, together with parking and servicing facilities in accordance with the County Council's standards.

New shopfronts, signs and advertisements

7.4.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stresses the importance of good design.^(7.18) This is also a matter for shopfront design, whilst, in respect of advertisements, the NPPF explains that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment.^(7.19)

7.4.3 Shopfronts and signs have a major influence on the appearance of town centres and other commercial areas. Inflexible corporate design with its use of standardised colours and artwork is a significant factor in the loss of local distinctiveness and can result in the erosion of the character and appearance of buildings and areas, whilst a proliferation of signs can detract from the visual quality or amenity of an area. The Council requires a high standard of shopfront design and advertisements that address these concerns in a way that both safeguards those features which are of visual and historic interest and provides interest within the town centres. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled [Design of shopfronts, signs and advertisements](#) is a material consideration to the determination of proposals.

Policy DM 15

New shopfronts, signs and advertisements

Development involving shopfronts will be required to be of a design which respond positively to the character of the building and its locality. The Borough Council will not permit the alteration or replacement of shopfronts of visual or historic interest unless it can be demonstrated that the resulting works would conserve the character of the affected building or area in which it is situated. Development involving advertisements will be designed in a manner that minimises harm to amenity and public safety.

7 Development management policies

Alterations and extensions

7.4.4 Extensions to existing buildings will be well designed and respond positively to the style and character of the building being extended, particularly in cases involving heritage assets. Alterations and extensions to existing buildings should reflect the scale and massing of the existing building, preserve features of interest and reinforce local distinctiveness, whilst safeguarding the amenity of adjacent residents. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled [Designing an extension - A guide for householders](#) is a material consideration to the determination of proposals. For the redevelopment and extension of rural buildings, Policy DM 11 additionally applies.

7.4.5 The Government has amended permitted development rights, from 30th May 2013, to allow for single storey extensions to be built, without the need for planning permission in unprotected areas, for a period of three years, up to 30th May 2016. Upon expiry of these rights in May 2016, and in the absence of any other central Government changes, the Borough Council will apply the following policy approach to alterations and extensions.

Policy DM 16

Alterations and extensions

Planning permission will be granted for alterations and extensions to existing buildings provided they:

1. Are of an appropriate design and quality which responds positively to the style and character of the building being extended;
2. Are appropriately scaled in relation to the building and its surroundings;
3. Maintain or enhance (where applicable) the character of the street scene ;
4. Reinforce or enhance as appropriate local distinctiveness;
5. Preserve architectural, historic, landscape, or nature conservation features of interest; and
6. Protect residential amenity.

7.5 Promoting healthy communities

Open space, sports and recreation provision

7.5.1 One of the core planning principles in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all. In terms of promoting healthy communities the NPPF recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. It advises that assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreation provision and use these assessments to determine what open space, sports and recreation provision is required. ^(7.20) Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be used for built development other than in exceptional circumstances. ^(7.21)

7.5.2 Open space (including sports and recreation provision) in Swale contributes to the Borough's outstanding environment. The Council needs to ensure there is enough open space, sports and recreation provision which is accessible and in the right place, well managed and maintained and of a sufficiently high quality to attract users.

7.5.3 The Council's adopted [Open Space Strategy](#) (2009) seeks to extend and enhance the amount and quality of open spaces within the Borough by providing high quality, safe and accessible open space and the protection of existing open space, sports and recreation provision through policy and strategic links. It also provides a clear framework and approach that determines the priorities for investment, future policy

and opportunities. The Strategy has examined the quantity and quality of the existing stock and recommended standards for new provision. With Sport England the Council has undertaken a facilities planning model for sport which has identified an unmet demand for swimming pools, sports halls and artificial grass pitches.

7.5.4 Both the Council's Open Space Strategy (currently subject to possible review), its open space assessment and audit 2009 and its local assessment of facilities 2012 have identified a number of deficiencies needing to be addressed (see Chapter 4).

7.5.5 Other linked strategies include the Council's current Play Strategy 2007-2012 and the [Swale Green Grid Strategy](#) (2007), together with the Playing Pitch Strategy. These highlight the need to: make provision for use by older people; fill gaps in provision and improve facilities to encourage increased usage; and to promote health and wellbeing through creating a network of multi-functional green spaces providing sustainable access within urban areas and beyond.

7.5.6 Policy DM17 protects existing open space, playing pitches and sports facilities and seeks, where required as a result of new development, the provision and enhancement of good quality and well-maintained open space, sport and recreation facilities. It sets out the need to provide open space, playing pitches and sports facilities as part of development proposals and highlights the requirement to address deficiencies, with reference to the Council's Open Space Assessment and Facilities Planning Model. Actual amounts will be determined at planning application stage, in the context of the specific details of the proposed development. In this respect, when new developments occur the policy seeks to ensure that provision does not fall below current levels. Finally, in order to integrate such provision into the Local Plan green infrastructure network, the Policy advocates the multi-use and functioning of spaces to achieve benefits to communities and to biodiversity (through the creation of natural habitats) in accordance with [Could not findcopy_3721912_ID_4132](#).

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Policy DM 17

Open space, sports and recreation provision

Proposals for residential and other developments as appropriate will:

1. Safeguard existing open space, sports pitches and facilities in accordance with national policy, having regard to the Council's open space assessment and facilities planning model;
2. Make provision for open space in accordance with Table 7.5.1 and for sports facilities in accordance with the needs identified by the Council's facilities planning model; whilst ensuring that the location of new open space, sports and recreation provision does not result in increased levels of recreational pressure on internationally designated sites;
3. Where it is not appropriate to make provision for new open space and sports facilities on site, make contributions to the off-site funding of facilities to meet local deficiencies or to the qualitative or quantitative improvement of existing provision; and
4. Provide for the multi-use and purpose of open space and sports facilities as appropriate, with particular emphasis on contributing toward the Local Plan Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Strategy, provided by Policy CP7, so as to achieve benefits for both communities and biodiversity.

Type of space	Quantity to maintain <u>current existing</u> levels of provision	Borough <u>Proposed</u> need	Distance from new development
			(1) (2)(3)

7 Development management policies

Parks and gardens	1.11 ha per 1000 population	19.48 ha	2km of a destination site. 800m of a local site. 400m of a neighbourhood site.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	4.36 ha per 1000 population	76.50 ha	2km of a destination site. 800m of a local site. 400m of a neighbourhood site.
Formal outdoor sport	1.09 ha per 1000 population	No additional facilities, but contribution to improve existing.	800m
Amenity greenspace	0.45 ha per 1000 population	7.90 ha	400m
Provision for children and young people	0.24 ha per 1000 children's population (2 -17 years)	0.50 ha	400m
Formal play facilities	Contribution either on or off site to enhance existing	N/A	N/A
Allotments	0.20 ha per 1000 population	0.35 ha	800m

Table 7.5.1 Swale open space, sports and recreation standards

1. Destination site – large parks providing a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape cultural or green infrastructure which (in the case of parks and gardens) are accessible by public transport. Includes areas recognised for significant importance and biodiversity such as local nature reserves, woodlands and country parks.
2. Local site – large areas, including a landscape setting, outdoor sports, children’s play, informal recreation; and areas of varied biodiversity such as coastal parks, country parks and community woodland
3. Neighbourhood sites – pocket parks of less than 0.5ha which provide a landscape setting, informal space or children’s play; as well as space which provides varied biodiversity such as linear paths and small areas of space.

Local Green Spaces

7.5.7 The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should be able to identify Local Green Spaces for special protection. By designating these spaces the Council will be able to protect them from development and ensure their retention for enjoyment by the local community. It explains that spaces to be designated will be of particular importance and demonstrably special to local communities because of, for instance, their recreational value and tranquillity, heritage or biodiversity value.^(7.22)

7.5.8 The Council has undertaken an assessment of potential Local Green Spaces against defined criteria and this is published separately in [Technical Paper No. 2](#). The sites in question have, for the most part, been put forward by local communities themselves and have been the subject of specific consultation with landowners and occupiers. The areas represent a wide diversity of types, ranging from coastal cliff tops, allotments and recreation grounds through to private country parks, urban woodland and informally used urban fringe land.

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7.5.9 The sites listed in Policy DM 18, as defined on the Proposal Maps, are designated as Local Green Spaces. Policy DM18 can have no direct influence on the management of these sites, although clearly the Borough, Parish and Town Councils wish to see their current usage continue. However, Policy DM18 will be used to preserve these Local Green Spaces and proposals for development which would conflict with the purposes of designating the land will not be permitted, other than in exceptional very special circumstances.

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Policy DM 18

Local green spaces

The following Sites are designated as Local Green Spaces, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#).

Settlement	Address	Site Area (ha)
Sittingbourne	Corner of Auckland Drive/ Borden Lane	4.4
Faversham	Woodland at The Knole and stream walk	7.6
Hartlip	Recreation ground	1.7
	Hartlip Parkland	3.2
	Allotments	0.8
Minster	Abbey Rise	4.2
	The Glen	9.1
	Barton Point coastal park	34.6
	Lapwing Close	0.3
	Lovell Road play area	0.3
	New Road/Prince Charles Avenue	0.2
	The Leas, Seathorpe picnic area, Windy Gap, Roundhill and Minster Cliffs	78
	Cricket field	3.6
	Noreen Avenue	0.1
	Nunnery Grove and Garden of Remembrance, Love Lane	0.5
	Thistle Hill community woodland	12.9
Thistle Hill play area	0.6	
Newington	Allotments and community woodland	4.7

7 Development management policies

Settlement	Address	Site Area (ha)
Tonge	Tonge Mill and Pond	9.3
Upchurch	Allotments, Oak Lane	1.5
	Recreation Ground, between Oak Lane and Chaffes Lane	1.0
	The Paddock, Oak Lane/ Chaffes Lane	0.8
Warden	Field adj Warden Village Hall	2.8

Table 7.5.2

Within designated Local Green Spaces planning permission will not be granted other than for:

1. The construction of a new building for one of the following purposes: essential facilities for outdoor sport or recreation, cemeteries, allotment use, or other uses of land where preserving the openness of the Local Green Space and not conflicting with its purpose;
2. The re-use or replacement of an existing building, provided the re-use does not include any associated uses of land around the building which might conflict with the openness of the Local Green Space or the purposes of including land within it; and
3. The carrying out of an engineering or other operation or the making of any material change of use of land, provided that it maintains the openness and character of the Local Green Space.

See Chapter 9 for Changes to the Proposals Map and Technical Paper No. 2 for the full list of Local Green Spaces considered and the assessment of sites.

7.6 Meeting the challenges of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Sustainable design and construction

7.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that planning plays a key role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and looks to local planning authorities to proactively address this in policies and in determining planning applications. ^(7.23) The NPPF states that planning authorities should plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings and when setting any local requirements for a building's sustainability do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon building policy and adopt nationally described standards. ^(7.24) As part of its efforts to boost economic growth and housing supply, the Government has simplified housing standards through the Housing Standards Review. This is driven through Building Regulations and prevents planning authorities imposing local requirements on the construction of new dwellings. The Government has also withdrawn the Code for Sustainable Homes, and set the energy performance requirements in Building Regulations at a level equivalent to the outgoing Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) runs the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM). This scheme is not affected by Government changes and will continue as before. The BRE are now developing the Home Quality Mark, which may allow differentiation in sustainable house building, similar to the former Code for Sustainable Homes. To complement mandatory Building Regulations, the new system does include additional optional Building Regulations on water, access and space - referred to as the new 'national technical standards'.

7.6.2 In determining planning applications the NPPF sets out how local planning authorities should expect new development to comply with local plan policies on requirements for decentralised energy supply, unless it can be demonstrated that this is not feasible or viable. It also requires applicants to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption. ^(7.25)

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7.6.3 Finally, the NPPF Planning Practice Guidance also advises how planning can identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in plan-making and the application process to address the potential impacts of climate change ^(7.26).

7.6.4 The Government does not intend to proceed with the zero carbon Allowable Solutions carbon offsetting scheme, or the proposed 2016 increase in on-site energy efficiency standards, but will keep energy efficiency standards under review, recognising that existing measures to increase energy efficiency of new buildings should be allowed time to become established ^(7.27)

7.6.5 The Swale Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development Study ^(7.28) provided a carbon profile of Swale, identified carbon reduction and renewable energy opportunities, helped set policy and targets and considered sustainable design and construction standards as well as mechanisms for delivery. The economic viability of policy and targets was considered throughout the study. The Study showed that existing buildings, especially non-residential buildings, make up the bulk of the Borough's future energy demand and that priority should be directed to reducing the energy demand of existing development. The study also found that in rural areas there is a significant use of oil and coal fuels and addressing this would reduce carbon emissions.



Picture 7.6.1 An earth house within a designated landscape

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7.6.6 The Local Plan Viability Assessment recommended that, for reasons of viability, the policy requiring Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, outlined in Bearing Fruits 2031 (August 2013), should not now be included in this Submission version of the Local Plan. The has examined the Local Plan, including policy DM19, and concluded that the requirements for Code Level 3 and BREEAM 'Good' and 'Very good' will remain are appropriate.

7.6.7 Having considered the evidence and opportunities within Swale, Policy DM 19 and Policy DM 20 set out the Council's approach to creating a more sustainable built environment. These policies work alongside the Government's approach of using layout, orientation, design and density to minimise energy consumption. It promotes district heating, waste reduction, green infrastructure, mixed-uses and adaptable buildings in new and existing development. They recognise the potential for low and zero carbon energy production within the Borough and expect all development to respond to the energy opportunities outlined in the

7 Development management policies

Renewable Energy study and presented in the Swale Energy Opportunities Map (Map 7.6.1). These policies, along with Policy DM 21 also recognise the role of improving the water and energy efficiency of the existing stock and reusing existing structures where appropriate. This is particularly important with reference to conserving our historic environment. English Heritage have published some useful guidance on Climate Change and the Historic Environment which should be used and referenced in planning applications involving the energy and water efficiency improvements of existing stock, and in particular historic buildings.^(7.29) The Environment Agency has also published a range of documents to help people and businesses conserve water and better manage their water demand.^(7.30)

Waste

7.6.8 The UK construction industry is responsible for producing over 36 million tonnes of landfill waste every year - approximately 35% of total waste generated - with domestic residential waste accounting for an additional 10%. However, there are examples of construction waste being drastically minimised – for example, Denmark recycles 90% of its construction waste.^(7.31)

7.6.9 The Waste Framework Directive sets out a hierarchy of options for managing waste from the most desirable option of prevention of waste through re-use, recycling and recovery (including energy recovery) through to the least desirable option of disposal. New development should be designed to prevent waste, for example by using standard size building components, designing for deconstruction and using recycled materials. Unused materials should be reused on, or close to the site if possible, or sold on as a valuable resource. Recycling materials is the final option for waste management.

7.6.10 Buildings should also be designed to facilitate waste minimisations, for example through installing grey-water recycling where possible, promoting composting and providing convenient recycling facilities.

7.6.11 Kent County Council is the minerals and waste planning authority for Kent. They are currently preparing the [Minerals and Waste Local Plan, 2013-2030](#) which will set out the vision and strategy, development management policies and strategic site provision for minerals and waste management facilities in the county.

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Policy DM 19

Sustainable design and construction

1. Development proposals will include measures to address and adapt to climate change in accordance with national planning policy and, where appropriate, will incorporate the following:
 - a. Use of materials and construction techniques which increase energy efficiency and thermal performance, and reduce carbon emissions in new development over the long term unless considerations in respect of the conservation of heritage assets indicate otherwise;
 - b. Promotion of waste reduction, re-use, and recycling and composting where appropriate during both construction and the lifetime of the development;
 - c. Recognition that retaining and upgrading existing structures may be more sustainable than building new whilst making the most of opportunities to improve water and energy efficiency in the existing stock;
 - d. Design of buildings which will be adaptable to change and reuse over the long term and which include features which enable energy efficient ways of living (e.g. adequate drying space, cycle storage, home working and good daylighting);

- e. Demonstration of a contribution to the network of green infrastructure and biodiversity, including through tree planting, green roofs and walls, soft landscaping and sustainable drainage systems as appropriate in accordance with **Could not findcopy_3721912_ID_4132**;
 - f. Encouragement of, where appropriate, mixed-use development where a range of uses provide a variety of heat loads and where local facilities serve local people at scales and layouts which are accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport;
2. Development proposals should, where appropriate, be located, oriented and designed to take advantage of opportunities for decentralised, low and zero carbon energy and, where appropriate, connect to existing or planned decentralised heat and/or power schemes.
 3. All new non-residential developments will aim to achieve BREEAM 'Good' standard or equivalent as a minimum. All new non-residential developments over 1,000 sq m gross floor area should aim to achieve the BREEAM "Very Good" standard or equivalent as a minimum.
 4. ~~Until proposed Government changes to housing standards come into effect, all new residential developments will meet the full Code for Sustainable Homes standards Code Level 3 or above.~~

Renewable and low carbon energy

7.6.12 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the responsibility that all communities have in contributing to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources and that local planning authorities should have a positive strategy to promote energy from these sources whilst ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed. The NPPF also asks local authorities to consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy and its infrastructure to help secure the development of such sources, as well as where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy and the co-location of potential heat customers and suppliers. Furthermore, the NPPF urges local authorities to support community-led initiatives for such schemes. ^(7.32)

7.6.13 The NPPF also explains how applicants for energy developments do not need to demonstrate the need for renewable and low carbon energy and that local planning authorities should approve applications if impacts are acceptable as even small-scale projects make a contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

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7.6.14 Planning Practice Guidance aims to assist local councils in developing policies for renewable energy in their local plans, and identifies the planning considerations for a range of renewable sources such as active solar technology, solar farms and wind turbines. It points out that increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. It stresses the role of the planning system in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable and sets out particular considerations for different renewable energy typologies and sets out particular considerations for different renewable energy typologies.

7.6.15 The Climate Change Act 2008 set a legally binding greenhouse gas emission reduction target of 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels, with at least 34% of that reduction to be achieved by 2020. ^(7.33)

7 Development management policies

The UK has also signed up to the EU Renewable Energy Directive, which includes a UK target of 15% of energy from renewables by 2020. This target is equivalent to a seven-fold increase in UK renewable energy consumption from 2008 levels. ^(7.34)

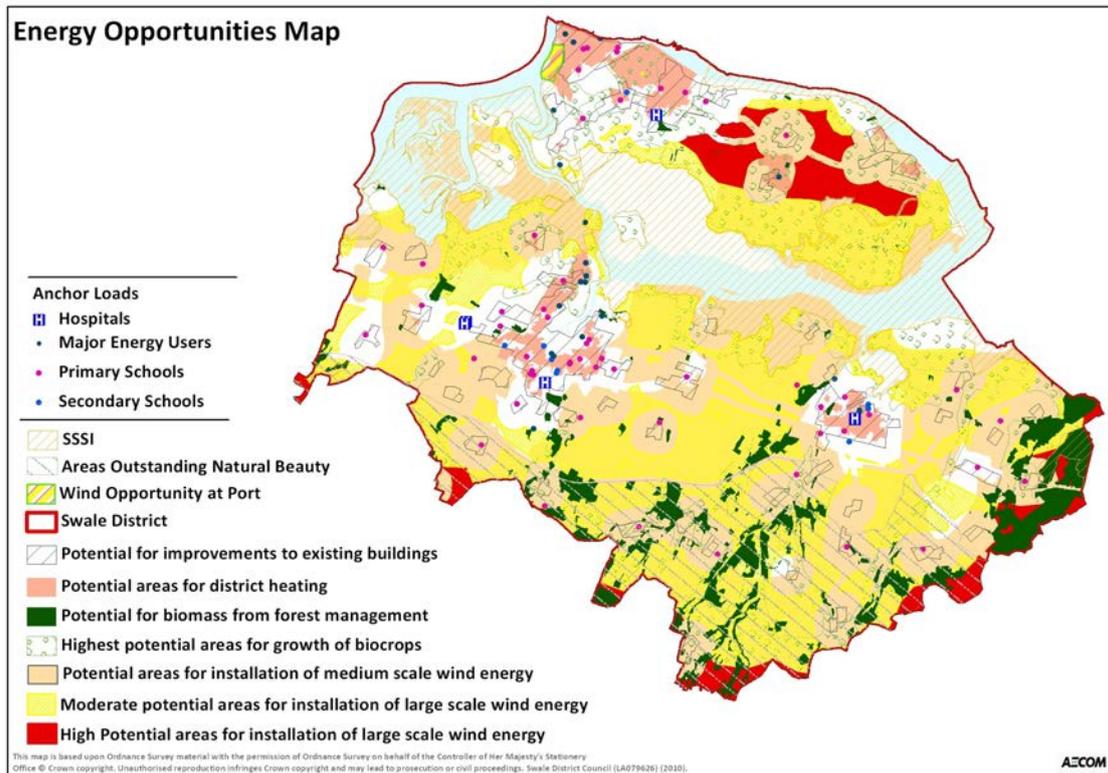
7.6.16 Kent County Council (KCC) commissioned AECOM to undertake a renewable energy resource and opportunity study for Kent. As a result of this study, which was completed in 2012, and together with actions from the County Council's Renewable Energy Select Committee and priorities from the [Kent Environment Strategy, Renewable Energy for Kent: An Action Plan for Delivering Opportunities, 2013-18](#) has been produced. In an effort to realise the County's renewable energy potential and achieve Kent's commitment to a 60% reduction in carbon emissions on 1990 levels by 2030 the plan sets out a series of work packages which include: skills and training; public sector leading by example; planning and development; business and innovation; community energy; focus on wind energy and focus on bioenergy. The plan has a five year time horizon from 2013-18 and lead partners have agreed to take on respective work packages and work with other stake holders on delivery.

7.6.17 Swale Borough Council's Sustainable Design and Construction Guidance and the [Swale Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development Study](#) both demonstrated that there are considerable resource opportunities across the Borough through biomass, wind, solar, Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and micro-generation. ^(7.35) The existing town centres offer opportunities for district heating networks, whilst biomass (e.g. from waste wood from the paper industry and woodland management arisings) is a widespread potential resource across the south east of the Borough alongside solar energy exploitation across the Borough. There are particular opportunities for wind energy generation on the Isle of Sheppey, (a number of turbines are already operating there) and in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, although here there are national landscape constraints to be considered. ^(7.36) Map 7.6.1, below, produced as part of the Swale Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development Study, demonstrates the potential within the borough for renewable and low-carbon energy.

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7.6.18 The Renewable Energy study concluded that Swale could achieve 30% of its electricity and 12% of its heat from renewables by 2020 to contribute to the Government's renewable energy target. ^(7.37) The study did not recommend a local percentage target for renewables on individual developments promoting instead the use of energy efficiency as a first step in reducing carbon ~~whilst promoting and using the former~~ Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM levels as methods to promote renewables. An Addendum to the Renewable Energy Study looked at large sites proposed by the Local Plan and these are reflected in the relevant allocations for new development.

7.6.19 Whilst the Swale Energy Opportunities Map demonstrates the potential for renewable and low-carbon energy within Swale, it should be noted that this map highlights opportunities for energy generation and not the full range of requirements and impacts that would need to be taken into account before planning permission were granted. The map should be read in the context of the full report and the constraints set out there (e.g. urban buffer areas as set out in Chapter 4 of the [Swale Renewable Energy and Sustainability Development Study](#)). The requirements of the technology could include such issues as siting, design, transport needs and electric grid connections and the full range of impacts of schemes will be need to be taken into consideration when preparing planning applications, alongside national policy and guidance and the other policies in the local plan.



Map 7.6.1 Swale Energy Opportunities Map (Swale Renewable Energy and Sustainability Development Study, AECOM, 2011)

7.6.20 Applicants should use the full range of resources available when preparing planning applications including the [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal](#), the [Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan](#) and its position statement and companion report on [renewable energy](#). A range of useful documents exist. These, along with their updates and other relevant publications should be referenced in applications:

- Natural England technical note on maximising the environmental benefits of solar parks. (7.38)
- BRE National Solar Centre with Cornwall Council 'Planning guidance for the development of large scale ground mounted solar PV systems' and 'Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments'.
- Department of Energy & Climate Change 'UK Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future' and subsequent updates.
- Solar Trade Association 'Solar Farms:10 Commitments'.

7.6.21 Swale Borough Council have also prepared two Renewable Energy Planning Guidance Notes, one on [The Development of Domestic and Medium Scale Solar PV Arrays up to 50kW and Solar Thermal](#) and the other on [The Development of Large Scale \(>50kW\) Solar Arrays](#). These documents have been prepared to assist all parties involved in the renewable energy development process and discuss the issues to be addressed in solar schemes. These Guidance Notes have been approved by the Council and will assist decision makers when determining applications.

7.6.22 The development of renewable and low-carbon energy schemes on agricultural land is particularly sensitive in Swale where we benefit from a high proportion of best and most versatile agricultural land. Applicants for development on agricultural land should note that the search for suitable sites should not be limited to land within the control of the applicant, and, as set out in the NPPF, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of higher quality.

7.6.23 Applicants should also note that the planning concerns of local communities should be considered prior to any planning application being made. Opportunities for community gain should also be sought.

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Policy DM 20

Renewable and low carbon energy

Planning permission will be granted for the development of renewable and low carbon energy sources where:

1. Analysis of all impacts and methods to avoid and mitigate harm from these impacts is fully addressed in any planning application for such proposals;
2. Demonstrating how opportunities highlighted in the Borough's Energy Opportunities Map have been exploited, in particular in the delivery of district heating, where shown to be financially viable and technically feasible;
3. Priority will be given to development on previously developed land or buildings and proposals which incorporate renewable, decentralised and low carbon energy as integral to new commercial or residential schemes;
4. For schemes on agricultural land, it has been demonstrated that poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality. In exceptional cases, where schemes are demonstrated as necessary on agricultural land, that they fully explore options for continued agricultural use;
5. ~~Schemes which involve a marked reduction in the potential for agricultural productivity and/or where the range of the potential types of farming would be greatly reduced are avoided;~~
6. Opportunities to enhance biodiversity are exploited;
7. Landscape, visual and heritage impacts as well as impacts on geology, soils and flood risk, including cumulative impacts, are minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels;
8. Impacts on residential amenity and safety, including noise, air quality, tranquillity and transport are minimised and mitigated to acceptable levels;
9. Applications demonstrate evidence of local community involvement and, ~~where relevant,~~ and/or leadership;
10. All relevant plans, policies, appraisals and associated guidance, including landscape appraisals and designations and biodiversity management plans, are referenced in any planning application to ascertain the appropriate type and scale of development for any particular location; and
11. In cases of temporary planning permission, detailed proposals for the restoration of the site at the end of its functional life are set out as a part of any application.

Water, flooding and drainage

7.6.24 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) explains that local planning authorities should adopt proactive strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change, taking full account of flood risk, coastal change and water supply and demand considerations.^(7.39) The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development adding to or being at risk from pollution including water pollution.^(7.40)

7.6.25 The NPPF also states that planning policies should take account of climate change over the longer term including factors such as flood risk.^(7.41) Development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided, but where development is necessary it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Local Plans should be supported by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources. A sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development is advocated whereby

new development is steered towards areas of the lowest probability of flooding. If all development cannot be located in areas of lower probability of flooding then the Exception Test can be applied. For the Exception Test to be passed, development must provide wider sustainability benefits to the community and be demonstrated to be safe and not increase flood risk.^(7.42) Relevant Flood Risk Assessments must be used to inform all decision making.

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7.6.26 Alongside the NPPF sits the [Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance](#). ~~These set~~ This sets out in more detail how planning can take account of the risks associated with flooding and coastal change in plan-making and the application process. It explains the approach to the Sequential and Exceptions tests, flood risk assessments and managing residual flood risk. ~~They also advise on how planning can take account of the risk associated with flooding and coastal change in plan-making and the application process.~~

7.6.27 The [Water Framework Directive](#) aims to improve and integrate the way water bodies are managed in Europe. It is designed to enhance the status of aquatic ecosystems and wetlands, promote the sustainable use of water and reduce pollution including groundwater pollution.

7.6.28 The Water Framework Directive requires a management plan for each river basin to be developed every six years, in England by the Environment Agency. Swale is within the Thames River Basin District (North Kent catchment) and its River Basin Management Plan, Water for Life and Livelihoods, defines the particular issues for this catchment as water quality, physical modifications to rivers and invasive non-native species. The plan looks to local authorities to help meet its objectives, for instance through the use of sustainable drainage, the promotion of water efficiency, through spatial planning decisions, the incorporation of green infrastructure and by working with the Catchment Partnership.^(7.43)

7.6.29 The [Flood and Water Management Act \(2010\)](#) takes forward the recommendations from the Pitt Review of 2007. It establishes the Environment Agency as responsible for developing and applying a flood risk management strategy for England and Wales which other relevant agencies must take into account.

7.6.30 The Act defines the Lead Local Flood Authority at county or unitary local authority level. For Swale, Kent County Council (KCC) is the lead local flood authority. The lead local flood authorities have responsibilities to investigate flooding incidents and maintain a register of structures and features which have a significant effect on flood risk in their area. KCC have led the preparation of the [Swale Surface Water Management Plan](#) (SWMP). The purpose of the SWMP is to identify what the local flood risk issues (from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses) are, what options there may be to alleviate the risk and who should take these options forward. This is presented in an Action Plan agreed by partners including the Local Authority and the Sewerage Undertaker.

7.6.31 The Shoreline Management Plans (SMP) for Swale are the [Medway Estuary and Swale](#) and the [Isle of Grain to South Foreland](#). These plans, prepared by the South East Coastal Group, identify sustainable long-term management policies for the coast for the next 100 years in order to prevent the loss of coastal environments and protect coastal communities. The coastline is divided into a number of policy units within which a given policy is applied. In Swale these vary from 'Hold the line' around the main built up areas, through 'No active intervention' to 'Managed realignment' in the rural areas.

7.6.32 The Council's own [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) (SFRA) looked at the current risk of flooding as well as flood risk in 70 and 100 years time – taking into account the effects of climate change. The SFRA examined the entire Borough with a broad assessment (Level 1) and looked at nine potential development areas in more detail (Level 2). It identified tidal over-topping and potential breaches as the main risk of flooding likely to be exacerbated in the future as sea levels rise. Since the Swale SFRA was completed new tidal flood modelling of the North Kent Coast, including the whole of the Swale Borough coastline, has been completed by the Environment Agency and [Page 443](#) from them on request. This new modelling

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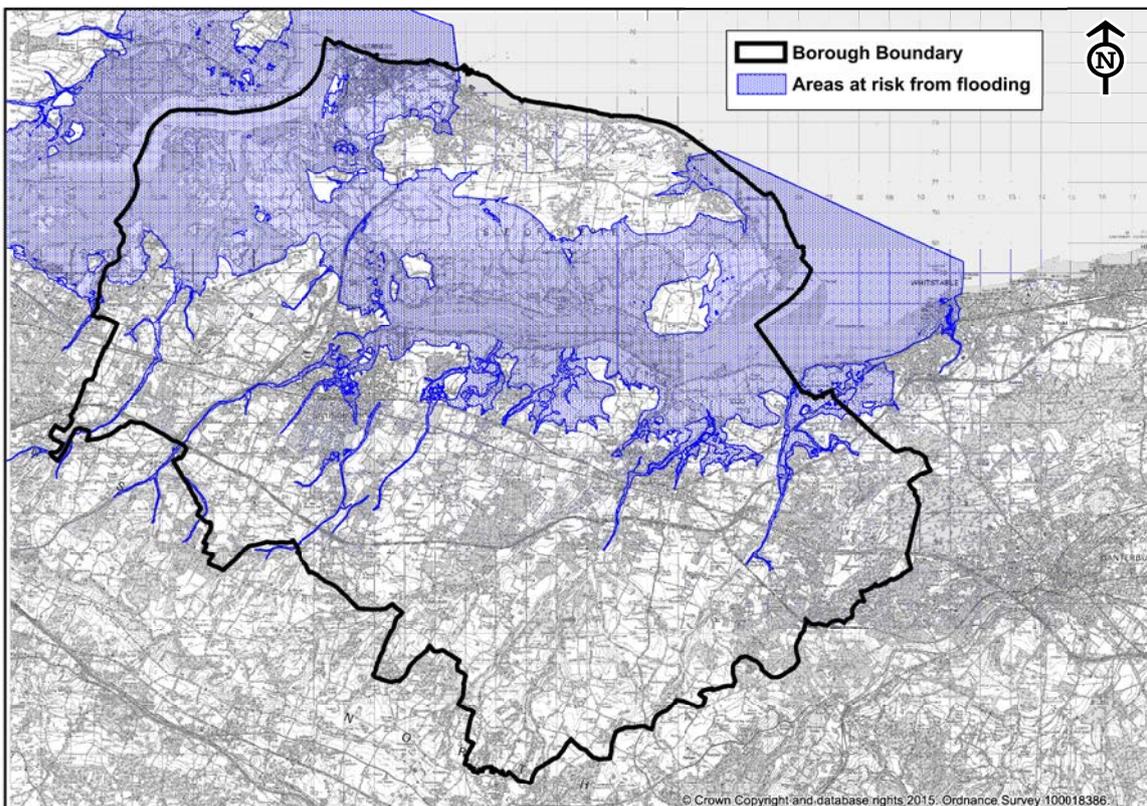
provides updates to the information available in the SFRA. However, modelled data within the SFRA - particularly breach mapping - is still considered by the Environment Agency to be valid. It is likely that the Environment Agency will advise that the Swale SFRA should be reviewed in 2016-2017.

7.6.33 The Swale SFRA data informed the Environment Agency's flood zone maps, as shown on the [Environment Agency](#) website. These maps are updated quarterly by the Environment Agency with the latest flood information. The areas at risk of river and tidal (not surface water) flooding in Swale are broadly indicated in Map 7.6.2.

7.6.34 In 2010 a [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Supplementary Statement for Faversham Creek](#), was developed and agreed by the Environment Agency.^(7.44) It provides guidance on the change of use or redevelopment of previously developed land within the 1:20 year flood risk area along the town's creek. Given the relatively confined nature of the floodplain in this area, which should enable safe access and escape in most instances, as well as the need for regeneration of the creek, a special designation was given to this area – Flood Zone 3a(i). This means that whilst there is an acknowledgement of the high flood risk in these areas, the strict national policy restrictions associated with functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b) do not automatically apply. All development proposals will need to meet the requirements of the SFRA Supplementary Statement and be agreed by the Environment Agency as well as by Swale Borough Council.

Managing flood risk

7.6.35 In cases where flooding is an issue, the Council will seek the advice of the Environment Agency and, where appropriate, the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board (who are responsible for management of the smaller watercourses in Swale), Kent County Council (the Lead Local Flood Authority), the Emergency Services and its own Emergency Planners (who are responsible for establishing safe access and emergency escape routes). It will also be guided by the coastal management policies within the Medway Estuary and Swale and Isle of Grain to South Foreland Shoreline Management Plans.



7.6.36 The Environment Agency (EA) is currently working with partners on the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy, which is due for completion in 2017. This will contain the overall strategy for the coastline and will identify areas in need of flood defence improvement works.

7.6.37 Some incidents of flooding along minor watercourses have occurred in the Borough as a result of unauthorised works and blockages. To ensure that development does not increase the risk of flooding or cause harm to the water environment, Land Drainage Consent, Flood Defence Consent or Flood Risk Activity Permits may be required for works near watercourses. The relevant authorities are:

- Environment Agency - main rivers;
- Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board - ordinary watercourses within their boundaries;
- Kent County Council - ordinary watercourses which are outside the boundary of the internal drainage board; and
- Marine Management Organisation - for works including construction and dredging (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/do-i-need-a-marine-licence>)

7.6.38 The policy set out in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance will be used when determining planning applications relating to water, flooding and drainage, supplemented by Policy DM21. As explained in the NPPF, a site specific flood risk assessment will be required for all proposals of 1 hectare or greater in Flood Zone 1, all proposals for new development in Flood Zones 2 and 3, or in an area within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems and where development or a change of use to a more vulnerable class may be subject to other sources of flooding.

Sustainable drainage

7.6.39 The NPPF highlights the priority which should be given to sustainable drainage systems. Within Swale, the [Thames River Basin Management Plan](#) explains that water quality is a particular issue.^(7.45) In order to protect water quality and reduce flood risk this policy seeks to promote the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

7.6.40 Sustainable drainage systems provide a more natural approach to managing water close to its source. They can reduce the impact of development by slowing runoff to greenfield rates, encouraging infiltration, trapping pollutants, providing habitats for biodiversity, increasing amenity for residents through the provision of open space and increasing the potential for grey water recycling. These benefits also make an important contribution to local authority responsibilities under the Water Framework Directive. Drainage must be considered at the earliest stages of the development process to ensure that the most sustainable option can be delivered in all cases.

7.6.41 Development has the potential to change surface water and ground water flows, depending on how the surface water is managed within the development proposal. Site specific Drainage Strategies should be submitted to the local planning authority along with planning applications for major development (as defined within the Development Management Procedure Order 2015). The Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent is Kent County Council (KCC) and, therefore, KCC is required to provide the local planning authority with a consultation response on the surface water drainage provisions of such applications. Developers should refer to KCC's [Drainage and Planning Policy Statement - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Guidance](#) and the [Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems - Design and Best Practice Manual](#) produced by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association. The submitted Drainage Strategy must demonstrate that the drainage scheme is in compliance with KCC's drainage policies as outlined in their policy statement. The drainage strategy must also demonstrate that the proposed surface water management proposal is consistent and integrated with any other appropriate planning policy and flood risk management measures that are required. Incorporating sustainable drainage is easier if planned at an early stage and as such KCC welcomes pre-application consultation.

7.6.42 Consultation with KCC may also occur for planning applications that are not for major if they are in areas which may have a higher level of local flood risk or within areas that are 5 metres of an ordinary

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watercourse. Consultation on flood risk could also occur with other risk management authorities including the Environment Agency (tidal and fluvial flood risk). If a drainage scheme requires connection to a public sewer, additional approval will be required from the appropriate sewerage undertaker.

7.6.43 It should also be noted that SuDS schemes can impact on heritage such as archaeology, building foundations and historic drainage ditches. Therefore, when SuDS are planned it is important that any potential impact on the historic environment is fully considered and any unavoidable damage mitigated. Kent County Council's Heritage Conservation group can offer further guidance.

Water resources and water efficiency

7.6.44 Swale lies within an area of serious water stress as classified by the Environment Agency ^(7.46). Water resources are likely to become more stretched within Swale as the population continues to grow. Both water companies which serve Swale are committed to putting in place the necessary mechanism to support the development proposed by the Local Plan, following their twin-track approach of reducing demand and developing new resources. This strategic approach is supported at the local level by Policy DM21.

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7.6.45 All new development has a responsibility to seek to manage demand for water and make efficient use of this resource. In this way the reliance on new water resources is reduced and less demand is placed on the environment and water bill payers. Southern Water encourage local authorities to promote levels 3 to 6 of the former Code for Sustainable Homes (these stipulate from 105 litres/person/day to 80 litres/person/day). Their Water Resources Management Plan assumes new development will be built to at least ~~Code Level 3~~ (105 litres/person/day) and ask that the planning authority ensure that this design and construction standard is enforced. South East Water also advise that, as Swale is within an area of water stress, new homes should be built to at least ~~Code Level 4~~ (also 105 litres/person/day (the former Code Level 4 limit)). Policy DM 21 promotes water efficiency in new development, requiring new homes to be designed to achieve a minimum water efficiency of ~~105~~ 110 litres per person per day ~~(equivalent to former Code for Sustainable Homes Levels 3 and 4)~~ in advance of mandatory requirements; the most efficient level enforceable under the government's Housing - Optional Technical Standards and a standard that has been endorsed by the two water companies within Swale, the Environment Agency and the Medway and Swale Catchment Partnership. This policy also addresses the issue of water resources in new development by requiring applicants to secure the agreement of water companies with regards to water supply before development commences. Applicants should also be aware of section 7.7.7 and 7.7.8 of this document on groundwater protection.

7.6.46 The Environment Agency has also published a range of documents to help people and businesses conserve water and better manage their water demand. ^(7.47)

Connection to the foul water drainage system

7.6.47 Southern Water provide waste water treatment in Swale. Whilst connection to the surface water system is not an automatic right, developers do have an automatic right to connect to the foul water system. However, the closest point of contact from development sites to the foul system may not always have adequate capacity. If new development connects where capacity is insufficient, both new and existing customers may experience problems such as poor drainage and/or foul water flooding. This issue is addressed by Policy DM 21.

7.6.48 The water companies carry out capacity checks for allocations within the borough and have identified areas where the existing sewerage and/or water supply network is insufficient to meet anticipated demand. It is, therefore, very important that early dialogue with the appropriate water company takes place

to ascertain any water supply and treatment issues which may affect a site, including ensuring that development proposals allow future access to sewerage and water supply infrastructure for maintenance and up-sizing purposes.

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Policy DM 21

Water, flooding and drainage

When considering the water-related, flooding and drainage implications of development, development proposals will:

1. Accord with national planning policy and technical planning practice guidance;
2. Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and where development would increase flood risk elsewhere;
3. Provide site specific flood risk assessments, as required, carried out to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and, if relevant, the Internal Drainage Board. These will, where necessary, include details of new flood alleviation and flood defence measures to be installed and maintained by the developer;
4. Include, where possible, sustainable drainage systems to restrict runoff to an appropriate discharge rate, maintain or improve the quality of the receiving watercourse, to enhance biodiversity and amenity and increase the potential for grey water recycling. Drainage strategies (including surface water management schemes) for major developments should be carried out to the satisfaction of the Lead Local Flood Authority;
5. Integrate drainage measures within the planning and design of the project to ensure that the most sustainable option can be delivered, especially where, exceptionally, development is to be permitted in an area of flood risk;
6. Within areas at risk of flooding, submit a suitable flood warning and emergency plan that has been approved by the relevant emergency planning regime and, where appropriate, the emergency services;
7. Where necessary, demonstrate that adequate water supply and wastewater connection and treatment infrastructure is in place before construction commences and that these details have been approved by the appropriate water company and funded by the development where appropriate;
8. Ensure future unconstrained access to the existing and future sewerage and water supply infrastructure for maintenance and up-sizing purposes;
9. Make efficient use of water resources and protect water quality the yield of local public water supplies including. For new residential development, all homes to be designed to achieve a minimum water efficiency of ~~405~~ 110 litres per person per day, in line with the Government's Housing Optional Technical Standard for water efficiency. (equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes Levels 3) in advance of any alternative national, mandatory, requirements which may be applied; and
10. Protect water quality, including safeguarding ground water source protection zones from pollution, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency.

The coast

7.6.49 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes and improve public

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access and enjoyment of the coast.^(7.48) Local planning authorities should take account of the UK Marine Policy Statement and marine plans and apply Integrated Coastal Zone Management across local authority and land/sea boundaries, to ensure integration of the terrestrial and marine planning regimes.^(7.49) It should be noted that the boundary for marine plans extends up to the level of the mean high water spring mark and therefore there will be overlap with terrestrial plans, which generally extend to the mean low water spring mark.



Picture 7.6.2 Shellness and The Swale

7.6.50 There are a wide range of other plans, policies, processes and projects that also feed into decisions affecting the coast, including:

1. The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) establishes a legal framework to protect and restore clean water across Europe and ensure its long-term and sustainable use. Its aim is to establish a community framework for the protection of the water environments (rivers, coasts, estuaries, lakes, streams and groundwater) with the aim of returning our water environments to 'good environmental status' by 2027.
2. The European Marine Strategy Framework Directive sits alongside the WFD. The Directive requires Member States to prepare national strategies to manage their seas to achieve 'good environmental Status' by 2020. Major emphasis is placed on international co-operation.
3. The Environment Agency (EA) is currently working with partners on the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy. Due for completion in 2017 it will contain the overall strategy for the coastline, and identify areas in need of flood defence improvement works.
4. [The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#):
 - a. requires a publicly accessible long distance route and land for open-air recreation around the coast of England and defines arrangements for the system of marine management and planning in the UK and the creation of the Marine Management Organisation (MMO);
 - b. the MMO will deliver UK marine policy objectives for English waters through statutory Marine Plans and other measures. Swale is within the South East Inshore Marine Plan area and a plan for this area will be prepared at a future date. Until a Marine Plan has been prepared, the Marine

Policy Statement should be referenced for guidance on any planning activity that includes a section of coastline or tidal river;

- c. designates and protects Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) which exist alongside European sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protected Areas (SPAs)), SSSIs and Ramsar sites. The Medway Estuary became a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in 2013 and the Swale Estuary became an MCZ in 2016;
 - d. the MMO is responsible for issuing marine licences which may be needed for activities involving the deposit or removal of substances or objects in any tidal river. These may also require consideration under The Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007 (as amended). The MMO also issue consents under the Electricity Act 1989 (as amended) for offshore generating stations (1-100 megawatts) and are a statutory consultee to the Planning Inspectorate for relevant nationally significant infrastructure projects. Early consultation with the MMO is advised to ensure the effect on coastal processes are minimised or mitigated.
5. [The UK Marine Policy Statement](#) (MPS) is the framework for preparing Marine Plans.
 6. Integrated Coastal Zone Management is the broad, long-term approach to adaptive coastal management which aims to offer specific solutions and flexible measures whilst working with natural processes.
 7. [The Coastal Concordat](#) is an agreement between the Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, the Department for Transport, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Marine Management Organisation, Natural England, the Environment Agency, the Local Government Association and National Parks England. Council's are encouraged to adopt the Concordat and its principles.
 8. [The Isle of Grain to South Foreland and the Medway Estuary and Swale Shoreline Management Plans](#) (SMPs) have been prepared by the South East Coastal Group and identify sustainable long-term management policies for Swale's coast in the face of climate change and sea-level rise.
 9. The Environment Agency's National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping Project aims to improve public access to the latest knowledge on coastal erosion via an [online information tool](#).
 10. Strategic studies on the North Kent Marshes. The North Kent Recreational Disturbance Study (Footprint Ecology, 2013) has examined the combined effects of development across districts for their effects on the Special Protection Areas (SPA). The North Kent Environmental Planning Group have recently completed a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy and are currently looking at mechanisms to enable a process by which development contributions can provide funding for implementation on the North Kent Marshes.
 11. [The Swale Strategic Flood Risk Assessment](#) (Halcrow, 2009) has determined the extent of flood risk in Swale.
 12. [The North Sheppey Erosion Study](#) (Canterbury City Engineers, 2011) assesses cliff erosion along the North Sheppey coast from Minster to Leysdown, in particular undefended frontage where the Shoreline Management Policy is for 'no active intervention'. Cliff erosion is predicted to increase significantly over the next 100 years as a result of climate change. It also looks at options for managing action.
 13. [The Coastal Communities 2150](#) project aims to develop community resilience to the risks and opportunities presented by potential changes to the climate along the Kent coast through improving knowledge and disseminating climate change projections, developing adaptation strategies and engaging communities.
 14. The management objectives, published by Natural England, for the internationally and nationally designated biodiversity sites which stretch along the Borough's coast; and
 15. [The Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area](#) is a partnership to improve the wildlife, resilience, public understanding and enjoyment of the Greater Thames Marshes.

7 Development management policies

Statement 9

Swale's coastal assets

The Borough's 111km of coastline is the longest of any Kent district and combines a wide range of coastal assets:

- Sheerness Docks - a natural deep water harbour and historic former naval dockyard.
- Fishing port at Queenborough.
- Docks at Ridham.
- Leisure oriented marina and repair facilities at Otterham Quay.
- Harty and Oare landing stages.
- The seaside resorts of Sheerness, Minster, Warden and Leysdown.
- Water sports along the north Sheppey coast and in the borough's creeks.
- Swathes of wetlands and marshes, designated internationally and nationally for their biodiversity interest.
- Creeks, including Queenborough, Milton, Conyer, Oare, Lower Halstow and Faversham
- Geologically important cliffs on Sheppey.
- Local coastal paths and the regional Saxon Shore Way.

7.6.51 Policy DM22 is intended to support the national policy for the protection, enhancement, management and development of the coast in a way that has taken into account the Borough's assets whilst ensuring integration with the wide range of other agencies, plans and policies at work at the coast. It is also important in meeting the Local Plan vision of coastal rejuvenation.

7.6.52 For this policy, both the developed and undeveloped coasts have been considered. The developed coast is represented by that inside the defined built up area boundaries shown on the Proposals Map, whilst the undeveloped coast is that beyond it, and its hinterland is defined as the land which directly relates to this coastline in terms of landscape or land use. The policy also references seascape and coastal processes. Seascape is defined in the Marine Policy Statement, 2011, as landscapes with views of the coast or seas, and coasts and the adjacent marine environment with cultural, historical and archaeological links with each other. Coastal processes can be described as the processes of erosion, transportation and deposition in which coasts are shaped by the sea and the action of waves.

Policy DM 22

The coast

Planning permission will be granted for development proposals at or near the coast subject to:

1. Maintaining or enhancing access to the coast where it can be appropriately managed;
2. The protection, enhancement or management as appropriate of biodiversity, landscape, seascape and coastal processes;
3. Enabling wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change, contributing towards the Local Plan's Natural Assets and Green Infrastructure Plan provided by Policy CP 8;
4. No overriding conflict with the policies and proposals of the Shoreline Management Plans;
5. Proposals within the built up area boundaries as defined on the [Proposals Map](#), contributing to the rejuvenation of the developed coast, particularly where enhancing either existing industrial and maritime infrastructure, coastal heritage, tourism or environmental management;

6. Proposals at the undeveloped coast and its hinterland, supporting conservation and enhancement; and
7. Compliance with Policy DM 23 for the Coastal Change Management Area.

Coastal Change Management

7.6.53 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifies that local planning authorities should identify Coastal Change Management Areas and avoid inappropriate development in these vulnerable areas. Local planning authorities should set out what development will be appropriate in Coastal Change Management Areas (CCMA).^(7.50) [Planning Practice Guidance](#) also gives advice on how to define a CCMA, what development would be appropriate within a CCMA as well as guidance on vulnerability assessments and the relocating of development away from CCMA's.

7.6.54 The Coastal Change Management Area has been defined as the areas of coastline likely to be affected by physical changes to the coast, such as erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation (i.e. land lost permanently to the sea) and accretion (land increasing due to addition of sediment).^(7.51) It has been defined within Swale and shown on the Proposals Map with the agreement of the Environment Agency, using the experience gathered from the relevant Shoreline Management Plans, the North Sheppey Erosion Study, Swale's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping project. For details of how the CCMA has been defined for Swale and to view more detailed maps of the CCMA, see the [Coastal Change Management Area Technical Paper No.1, Swale Borough Council, 2013](#). The definition of the boundary to the CCMA has been relatively high level in nature. In cases where more detailed technical evidence is provided as part of a planning application, the Council will consider these issues in consultation with the Environment Agency.

7.6.55 The CCMA includes an area along Sheppey's north coast where erosion occurs. This erosion area is separated into:

- Erosion Zone 1 (defined as land between the low water mark and the 50 year indicative erosion line on the Proposals Map); and
- Erosion Zone 2 (defined as land between the 50 year indicative erosion line and the 100 year indicative erosion line on the Proposals Map).

7.6.56 Within each zone different types of development may be appropriate. For example, within the 50 year zone, Erosion Zone 1, development directly related to the coast, but less permanent and readily moveable, such as beach huts, cafés, car parks and sites for holiday caravans and camping may be permitted. Within the 100 year zone, Erosion Zone 2, more substantial development may be appropriate, although here proposals will need to be accompanied by an assessment of how the impact of coastal change on the development and the service it provides will be managed.



Picture 7.6.3 Coastal holiday area on the Sheppey coast

7.6.57 Within both Erosion Zones 1 and 2, a Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Assessment will need to accompany planning applications. This should include the requirements set out in [Planning Practice Guidance](#) for vulnerability assessments as well as:

7 Development management policies

- the level of vulnerability to coastal erosion (as assessed through site history, site inspection and site investigation) and how this will be mitigated;
- the predicted lifetime of the development and the impact of coastal change on the development and the service it provides;
- plans for managing the cessation or relocation of the development, including clearing the site;
- details of responsible parties and what role they will play; and
- costs for managing the impact of coastal change on the site and who will be responsible for these.

7.6.58 Some water-compatible development may be permitted within the CCMA. For the purposes of this policy water-compatible development is defined as:^(7.52)

- flood control infrastructure;
- water transmission infrastructure and pumping stations;
- sewage transmission infrastructure and pumping stations;
- sand and gravel working;
- docks, marinas and wharves;
- navigation facilities;
- Ministry of Defence installations;
- ship building, repairing and dismantling, dockside fish processing and refrigeration and compatible activities requiring a waterside location;
- water-based recreation (excluding sleeping accommodation);
- lifeguard and coastguard stations;
- amenity open space, nature conservation and biodiversity, outdoor sports and recreation and essential facilities such as changing rooms; and
- essential ancillary sleeping or residential accommodation for staff required by uses in this category, subject to a specific warning and evacuation plan.

7.6.59 On a case by case basis, Policy DM23 sets out criteria for when provision needs to be made for development and infrastructure to be relocated away from Coastal Change Management Area. It also ensures that development in a CCMA is not impacted by coastal change by limiting the planned life-time of the proposed development through temporary permission and restoration conditions where necessary to reduce the risk to people and the development.

Policy DM 23

Coastal change management

Within the Coastal Change Management Area (CCMA), as defined on the [Proposals Map](#), planning permission will be granted for development proposals subject to:

1. It being demonstrated that the proposal will not result in an increased risk to life, nor a significant increase in risk to property;
2. The proposal comprising:
 - a. essential infrastructure; or
 - b. a Ministry of Defence installation; or
 - c. an agricultural building(s); or
 - d. water-compatible development; or
 - e. (within Erosion Zones 1 or 2) a use as defined by criterion 3 or 4, below, as appropriate.
3. Proposals within Erosion Zone 1 being directly related to the coast and less permanent in nature, construction and value; or⁽¹⁾
4. Proposals within Erosion Zone 2 may additionally be permitted when comprising:⁽²⁾

- a. commercial or leisure activities requiring a coastal location and providing substantial economic, social and environmental benefits to the community; or
 - b. key community infrastructure, which has been demonstrated as needing to be sited within the CCMA to provide the intended benefit to the wider community; or
 - c. the subdivision of properties, including residential subdivision; or
 - d. domestic extensions to residential properties.
5. Proposals within Erosion Zones 1 and 2, submitting a Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Assessment showing the development will be safe throughout its planned lifetime and will not increase risk to life or property elsewhere without the need for new or improved coastal defences; and
 6. A temporary planning permission being sought where necessary, together with, as appropriate, a legal agreement to secure the long term management of the site.
 7. Proposals seeking to relocate development away from the CCMA will:
 - a. be forecast to be affected by erosion or permanent inundation within 20 years from the date of the planning application, as determined by a Coastal Erosion Vulnerability Assessment or Flood Risk Assessment;
 - b. be of a similar scale, nature and character as the development it is replacing and be of a scale appropriate to its new context;
 - c. be located at an appropriate location inland from the CCMA and, where possible, remaining close to the coastal community from which it was displaced;
 - d. demonstrate that no suitable site is available within a built up area boundary or on previously developed land; and
 - e. at its current site, ensure that it is cleared, made safe or put to a temporary use beneficial to the local community who will take long term responsibility for it.

7.7 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Pollution, land contamination and unstable land

7.7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution and sets out a suite of policies to address air, noise and light pollution, land contamination and unstable land.^(7.53) Planning Practice Guidance provides more detailed advice on issues including [Air Pollution](#), [Hazardous Substances](#), [Land Affected by Contamination](#), [Land Stability](#), [Light Pollution](#), [Noise](#) and [Water Supply, Wastewater and Water Quality](#). Planning matters related to these issues in Swale will therefore be dealt with via reference to the NPPF, Planning Practice Guidance and other relevant policies within this Plan, informed by the technical advice of the Council's Environmental Protection Team and the Environment Agency.

7.7.2 Unstable land, pollution, including air pollution, and land contamination issues are relevant within Swale, particularly due to the legacy of past industrial uses and its economic strengths in manufacturing and distribution. Pollution can be site specific, but its impacts can also be widespread, for instance downstream of source, effecting sites designated for their environmental quality. Noise, light and air quality are also important concerns for residents.

Air quality

7.7.3 Transport and industry are the Borough's main air pollution emitters and a number of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared at Newington, Teynham, Ospringe, St Paul's Street and at East Street/Canterbury Road in Sittingbourne. Applicants proposing development that could have an

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impact on air quality levels within the AQMAs should contact the Council's Environmental Protection Team regarding the preparation of an Air Quality Impact Assessment. Developers should also refer to The Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership's document, [Air Quality and Planning Technical Guidance, July 2011](#).

Noise and vibration

7.7.4 Assessing developments for noise and vibration - both from noise generated from new developments affecting existing development and new development close to existing noise sources - can be complex. The relevant British Standards and guidance, including BS4142, BS8233 and BS7445 need to be considered. The Council's Environmental Protection Team has published a guidance document, [Noise and Vibration: Planning Guidance Document, 2013](#). Developers should refer to this guidance in their planning applications.

Land contamination

7.7.5 Any development on previously developed land to a more sensitive use should follow the guidelines contained in the Council's Environmental Protection Team's [Land Contamination: Planning Guidance Document, 2013](#). The Council's [Contaminated Land Strategy](#) (2010) should also be referred to by developers.

7.7.6 Where development is approved on previously developed land and made subject to a land contamination condition, the risk assessment undertaken should follow guidance contained in the Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination - Contaminated Land Report 11 ([CLR 11](#)). Ultimately, the land will be remediated to an acceptable standard and suitable for the new proposed use and as a minimum, land should not be capable of being determined as contaminated land under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Groundwater

7.7.7 [Source Protection Zones](#) (SPZs) are used to control activities close to drinking water supplies. Developments proposed in sensitive groundwater areas, such as SPZs, or close to any controlled water features, need to be assessed for the risk the development may have on the immediate and surrounding water quality. This will involve assessing current water quality and the effect the physical development may have on water quality (e.g. reducing infiltration to groundwater or introducing a pollutant linkage).

7.7.8 The principles and guidelines contained in the Environment Agency's [Groundwater Protection: Principles and Practice GP3](#) (November 2012) should be followed. The Environment Agency will need to be satisfied that development will not harm groundwater.

Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes

7.7.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the planning system should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes.^(7.54) The NPPF requires local authorities to set out criteria based planning policies against which proposals for development on or affecting protected landscapes can be judged and that these policies should make appropriate distinctions between international, national and locally designated sites, offering protection that is appropriate for their status and importance and the contribution that they make to establishing and improving wider ecological networks.^(7.55) [Planning Practice Guidance](#) gives advice on landscapes, including how the character of landscapes can be assessed, the legal duties related to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the regard local planning authorities should have to their Management Plans.

7.7.10 Natural England's [National Character Areas](#) (NCAs) divide England into 159 distinct natural areas each defined by their unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, cultural and economic activity. Their boundaries follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision making framework for the natural environment. Within these NCAs, the Borough's varied landscape is reflected in three distinct broad character types - the flat, open marshland of the Greater Thames Estuary, the orchards, arable land, woodland and dry valleys of the North Kent Plain and the dipping slope, valleys and woodland of the North Downs.

7.7.11 The modern landscape of Swale is also a product of man made influences over a long period of time. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Survey (2001) has identified a number of key character areas in Swale:

- Central North Downs: a zone at the highest point of the Borough with a mixed character of fields and other types and a general north-east to south-west alignment;
- Northern Horticultural Belt: a large wide area crossing the north Kent plain primarily defined by horticultural activity with a predominance of orchards;
- The Forest of Blean and areas that were formerly part of the Forest, and remains mostly woodland today but where fields encroach into woodland;
- The Northern Coast and Marshland: a visually distinctive area consisting of a relatively balanced mix of reclaimed marsh and coastal landscape; and
- The Isle of Sheppey: itself broken into three sub-areas consisting of reclaimed marsh, post-medieval field systems and urban and industrial development.

7.7.12 A number of areas within Swale have been formally designated because they are landscapes of great value and/or scenic beauty and because they have a particular value for the conservation of selected species, habitats, historic and cultural assets. Within these designations priority will be given to the long term conservation and enhancement of these landscapes relative to their status, whilst having regard to the economic and social wellbeing of their communities.

Landscape Designations

7.7.13 The NPPF looks to Local Plan policies to make distinctions between the hierarchy of national and locally designated sites so that protection is commensurate with their status.^(7.56)

National landscapes - the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

7.7.14 In 1968 a large part of the North Downs within the Borough was designated as part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The aim of this national designation was to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape. The aim of the [Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan](#) is to secure conservation and enhancement within the AONB while supporting local communities. The plan is adopted by the relevant Kent Districts and London Boroughs as a material consideration in planning applications and it is afforded similar weight to a Supplementary Planning Document.

7.7.15 Accompanying the AONB management plan are a number of supporting guidance documents which should be taken into account in relevant cases. These include the AONB's: Farm Diversification Toolkit; Kent Downs Farmsteads Guidance; Managing Land for Horses; Rural Streets and Lanes - A Design Handbook; Position Statement on Renewable Energy and its Companion Report and the Landscape Design Handbook.

7.7.16 The NPPF states that great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and that they have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. The Council will apply national policy which is to refuse proposals for major development unless in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest and based on an assessment of:

- national need for the development and the impact of permitting or refusing it on the local economy;
- the scope and cost of placing the development outside the AONB or meeting the need for it in another way; and
- the extent to which any detrimental impacts could be moderated.^(7.57)

7.7.17 The importance of the setting of the Kent Downs has been emphasised by the AONB management plan and in development management decisions taken in Kent. Where referring to the AONB in this document, this refers also to its setting. The setting is broadly speaking the land outside the designated

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area which is visible from the AONB and from which the AONB can be seen, but may be wider when affected by intrusive features. Proposals which would affect the setting of the AONB are not subject to the same level of constraint as those which would affect the AONB itself. The weight to be afforded to setting issues will depend on the significance of the impact and will be greater where the qualities of the AONB which were instrumental in reasons for its designation are affected.

7.7.18 In terms of what may constitute 'major development', for purposes of this Local Plan, it will be a matter of judgement based on all circumstances, it will not be made by reference to the definition of major development in the Development Management Procedure Order 2015 or for purposes of determining whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. If only part of a larger scheme is within the AONB, the judgement may be based on the whole of the scheme.

Local Landscape Designations

Areas of High Landscape Value - Kent Level

7.7.19 Special Landscape Areas were first designated 30 years ago (as Kent-wide strategic policy) and their detailed boundaries defined by successive Local Plans. For this Local Plan they are described as *Areas of High Landscape Value - Kent Level*. Three are present in Swale reflecting the broad landscape types in the Borough - the North Downs, Blean Woods and North Kent Marshes. These landscapes are considered to be scenically important in a county-wide context and their boundaries were reviewed in 2008.^(7.58) A desk top review was undertaken in 2014 and can be found in [Technical Paper No.6](#). Their boundaries remain unchanged from 2008 (with the exception of a small section at Cowstead Corner, between Queenborough and Minster, as outlined in Technical Paper No. 6) and are consistent with those of neighbouring Council's.

Areas of High Landscape Value - Swale Level

7.7.20 Following a 2008 landscape assessment a number of areas were considered worthy of designation due to their significance within Swale and were included for the 2008 Local Plan.^(7.59) For this Local Plan they are described as *Areas of High Landscape Value - Swale Level* with their coverage remaining unchanged and comprising land between:

- Tonge and Luddenham;
- Iwade, Newington and Lower Halstow;
- Boughton Street, Hernhill, Dargate and Staplestreet; and
- Sheppey Court and Diggs Marshes.

7.7.21 A desk top review was undertaken in 2014 and can be found in [Technical Paper No.6](#). Their boundaries remain unchanged from 2008.

7.7.22 Within these Local Landscape Areas, Policy DM 24 requires development proposals to be considered in relation to the extent to which they would protect the local landscape character and enhance the future appearance of the designated landscape and, where relevant, its nature conservation interest. If, after adverse landscape impacts have been minimised, mitigated and compensated for, further adverse impacts still remain, the Policy requires the social and/or economic benefits of a proposal to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the local status of the designation for planning permission to be granted.

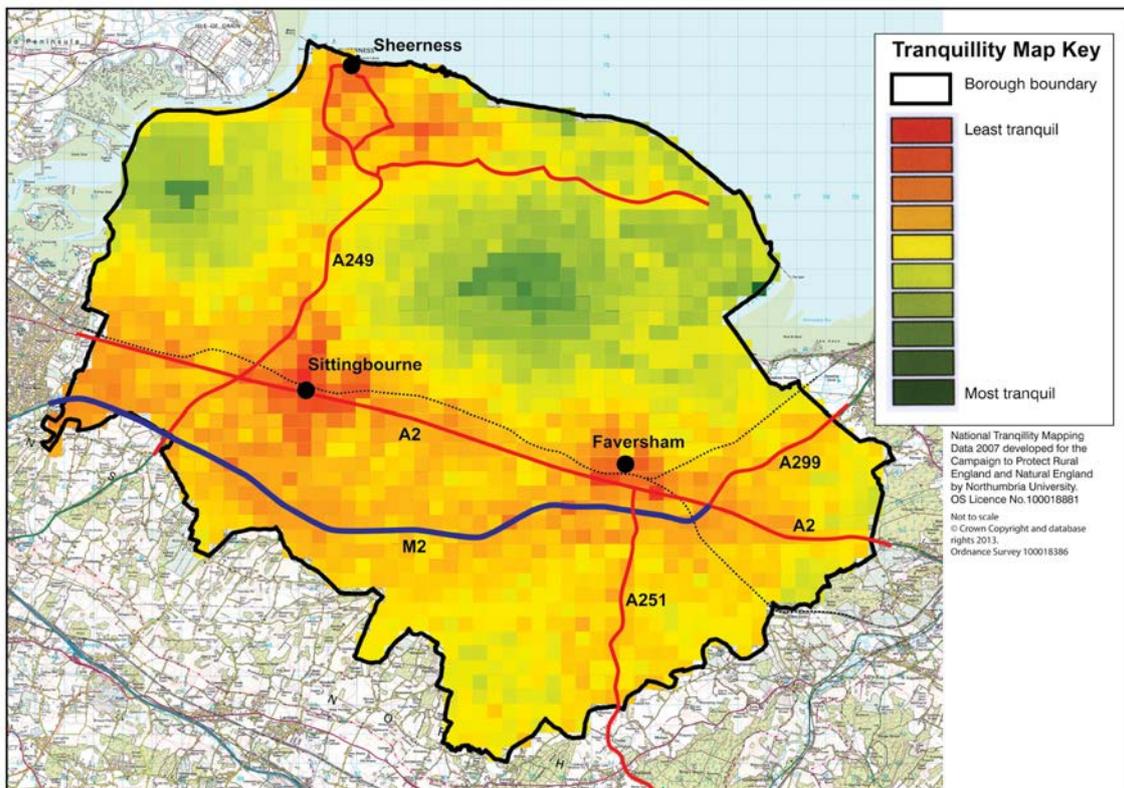
Tranquillity

7.7.23 The NPPF explains that planning policies should aim to identify and protect areas of tranquillity which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason^(7.60) It also emphasises the role good design can have on protecting dark landscapes.^(7.61)

7.7.24 Tranquillity is a valuable resource that once lost is difficult to regain, it having benefits to health and well being as well as to green infrastructure. It is associated with quiet places, surrounded by elements

of nature and is most commonly found in an uncluttered and peaceful countryside, but also within urban areas – for instance in a leafy urban square or park where birdsong is audible. Tranquillity is also often associated with dark skies and the absence of light pollution from roads and built up areas.

7.7.25 The Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011 highlighted tranquillity as a feature of several areas of the Borough, whilst the Campaign to Protect Rural England have also drawn up a [Tranquillity Map for Kent](#) and using this data a Swale section of this map has been developed as a pictorial guide to areas of higher or lower tranquillity, indicative and relative tranquillity in Swale (CPRE Map localised by SBC). Although tranquillity exists in a broad brush fashion within the greener areas on the map, it will not be locally uniform; likewise it may also be present locally beyond the identified more tranquil areas. Applicants should demonstrate how development will affect tranquillity and aim to at least maintain it or improve it when seeking to comply both with national planning policy and Policy DM 24.



Map 7.7.1 Indicative and relative tranquillity in Swale (CPRE Map localised by SBC).

7.7.26 The impact of lighting from development has a significant effect on tranquillity. Planning Practice Guidance's chapter on [Light Pollution](#) gives advice on when lighting is relevant to planning and the factors to consider when assessing schemes where lighting is an issue. The Institute of Lighting Professionals has produced many free resources to enable lighting to be sympathetically integrated into development, such as [Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light](#) which should be referenced in relevant applications. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Campaign for Dark Skies and the Institute of Lighting Professionals has also collaborated to produce an information leaflet, [Getting Light Right](#), designed to demonstrate how to install their security lights effectively to reduce light pollution.

The appraisal of landscape character and biodiversity

7.7.27 As well as designated landscapes, the NPPF outlines the importance of protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Natural England's approach to landscape is that all landscapes matter and that many are highly valued by local people, both those which have historical significance to the community and those

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which are newly created or recognised. Natural England also advocate the use of a landscape character approach which not only helps us to understand our landscapes, but also assists in informing judgements and decisions concerning the management of change.^(7.62)

7.7.28 The Council has an adopted [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal](#) (2010) Supplementary Planning Document to ensure the protection and enhancement of the whole of the Borough's landscapes and habitats. It has identified and assessed the condition and sensitivity of 42 landscape character areas and set out guidelines for action for all countryside across the Borough. It will be used to determine whether development is appropriate and, if so, how it might be accommodated within the landscape and mitigated sensitively. The Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal values all landscapes in the Borough and gives guidance for improvement and enhancement, including habitat enhancements, – providing a positive approach to the restoration and enhancement of landscapes. Planning applications will take this document into account when preparing development proposals and it is a key part of determining planning applications, in accordance with Policy DM 24.



Picture 7.7.1 Montage of landscapes in Swale

7.7.29 The [Swale Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study](#) (2010) examined 27 study areas surrounding the built up areas of Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness and Minster and considered the landscape significance and implications of extending these urban areas.^(7.63) Through an analysis of landscape sensitivity and value the study gives commentary as to each area's capacity to accommodate change and offers guidelines and mitigation should development be proposed. Where development is proposed within these areas, the findings and guidelines will be taken into account.

Policy DM 24

Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes

The value, character, amenity and tranquillity of the Borough's landscapes will be protected, enhanced and, where appropriate, managed.

Part A. For designated landscapes areas:

Within the boundaries of designated landscape areas, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), together with their settings, the status given to their protection, enhancement and management in development decisions will be equal with the significance of their landscape value as follows:

1. The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally designated site and as such permission for major developments should be refused unless exceptional circumstances prevail as defined by national planning policy. Planning permission for any proposal within the AONB will only be granted subject to it:
 - a. conserving and enhancing the special qualities and distinctive character of the AONB in accordance with national planning policy;
 - b. furthering the delivery of the AONB's Management Plan, having regard to its supporting guidance documents;
 - c. minimising the impact of individual proposals and their cumulative effect on the AONB and its setting, mitigating any detrimental effects, including, where appropriate, improving any damaged landscapes relating to the proposal; and
 - d. being appropriate to the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area or being desirable for the understanding and enjoyment of the area.
2. Areas of High Landscape Value (Kent and Swale Level) are designated as being of significance to Kent or Swale respectively, where planning permission will be granted subject to the:
 - a. conservation and enhancement of the landscape being demonstrated;
 - b. avoidance, minimisation and mitigation of adverse landscape impacts as appropriate and, when significant adverse impacts remain, that the social and or economic benefits of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh harm to the Kent or Swale level landscape value of the designation concerned.

Part B. For non-designated landscapes:

1. Non-designated landscapes will be protected and enhanced and planning permission will be granted subject to:
 - a. the minimisation and mitigation of adverse landscape impacts; and
 - b. when significant adverse impacts remain, that the social and or economic benefits of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the harm to the landscape character and value of the area.

Part C. For all landscapes:

1. The scale, layout, build and landscape design of development will be informed by landscape and visual impact assessment having regard to the Council's Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study and Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal SPD, including, as appropriate, their guidelines, and the key characteristics, sensitivity, condition and capacity of character area(s)/landscapes, taking opportunities to enhance the landscape where possible, including the removal of visually intrusive features.

The separation of settlements - Important Local Countryside Gaps

7.7.30 With the settlement strategy of the Local Plan focusing development pressures at the major settlements in the Borough, there is a need to prevent the coalescence and the erosion of the intrinsic character of settlements close by.

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7.7.31 The identity, character, and setting of settlements are formed, in part, by their physical separation from one another. Whilst the use of Landscape Character Assessments assist in safeguarding the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, in areas where development pressures could lead to coalescence or erosion of settlement separation, the definition of those gaps provides additional emphasis when considering allocations and development management issues.

7.7.32 Within Swale, Important Local Countryside Gaps (ILCGs) were defined and set out in the 2008 Local Plan. They comprised the gaps between:

- Sittingbourne and the satellite villages of Bapchild, Rodmersham Green, Tunstall, Borden, Chestnut Street, Bobbing and Iwade;
- Upchurch and the administrative boundary with Medway Council; and
- settlements on Western Sheppey (The West Sheppey Triangle).

7.7.33 The boundaries of ILCGs are defined on the Proposals Map and follow recognisable physical features, the defined built-up area boundaries or the boundaries of allocations. The boundaries have been reviewed and this can be found in [Technical Paper No.6](#).

7.7.34 The purposes of ILCGs (and Policy DM25) are to:

- maintain the separate identities and character of settlements by preventing their merging;
- safeguard the open and undeveloped character of the areas;
- prevent encroachment and piecemeal erosion by built development or changes to the rural open character; and
- influence decisions on the longer-term development of settlements through the preparation and review of Local Plans.

7.7.35 Not all forms of development are discouraged within the ILCGs. For instance, agriculture, waste management and mineral recycling facilities, public open space, community woodland, nature reserves, recreation, allotments and burial grounds are all uses which could be conducted provided that their purpose are not undermined or the need to protect the countryside compromised. However, there may be instances within ILCGs where even modest development could impact upon their purpose, particularly where there may be:

- actual (or the perception of) coalescence;
- the loss of a critical part of the gap;
- resultant pressure arising from a development or an allocation that would be difficult to contain; or
- where the extent of the land remaining undeveloped would not function as maintaining the sense of separation.

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Policy DM 25

The separation of settlements - Important Local Countryside Gaps

To retain the individual character and setting of settlements, the following Important Local Countryside Gaps are defined on the [Proposals Map](#) as gaps between:

1. Sittingbourne and the satellite villages of Bapchild, Rodmersham Green, Tunstall, Borden, Chestnut Street, Bobbing and Iwade;
2. Upchurch and the administrative boundary with Medway Council; and
3. ~~settlements on Western Sheppey.~~ Queenborough, Sheerness, Minster and Halfway.

Within these gaps, unless allocated for development by the Local Plan, planning permission will not be granted for development that would undermine one or more of their purposes.

Rural lanes

7.7.36 Swale possesses a rich heritage of rural lanes that contribute to rural amenity, nature conservation and the character of the landscape. A study undertaken in 1997 by Kent County Council identified the top 20% of these lanes against environmental criteria, and these are shown on the Proposals Map. Many are experiencing pressures from the rapid rise in rural traffic, urbanisation and changes in the management of verges.

7.7.37 In order to safeguard these lanes, the Council will not permit development that would harm their identified qualities, and will implement traffic restraints, speed restrictions, routing agreements with businesses, and tree and hedgerow preservation orders. Development proposals may similarly bring forward such proposals as mitigation of adverse impacts, together with measures such as landscape or historic features restoration.

7.7.38 Given the age of the rural lanes study, applicants may be required to provide further evidence as to the landscape, amenity, biodiversity, historic and archaeological importance of the lane(s) in question.

7.7.39 The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) unit have published [Rural Streets and Lanes: A Design Handbook \(2009\)](#) which identifies the characteristics of the rural road network and promotes its conservation and maintenance through detailed design guidance and case studies. This guide has been adopted by Kent County Council and should be referenced for all relevant applications both within and outside the AONB.

Policy DM 26

Rural lanes

Planning permission will not be granted for development that would either physically, or as a result of traffic levels, significantly harm the character of rural lanes. For those rural lanes shown on the [Proposals Map](#), development proposals should have particular regard to their landscape, amenity, biodiversity, and historic or archaeological importance.

The keeping and grazing of horses

7.7.40 The keeping of horses and ponies is a popular leisure activity and land for the grazing and keeping of horses has become a source of income to farmers and others in parts of the Borough. Whilst these activities can bring economic benefits to the rural area, they can, individually, and especially cumulatively, adversely change the rural character of the area with stables, paddocks, fencing, on-site riding facilities and other visual clutter. These same concerns apply to commercial equestrian activities, such as riding schools and livery stables, particularly due to the greater intensity of use and increased traffic generation.

7.7.41 In many parts of the Borough, such as between Newington, Upchurch, Lower Halstow and the Borough boundary with Medway and between Chestnut Street and Oad Street, within the setting of The Blean and around the north coasts of Sheppey. In these locations, the levels of equestrian activity has had a negative impact upon the landscape and in these locations. Further proposals will be only allowed exceptionally where additional cumulative harm would not occur. In all locations landscapes with an open

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character are less likely to be capable of accommodating such development. The use of higher standards of design on stable buildings, fencing, landscaping and parking that has been achieved in some locations will enable proposals to better reflect and enhance the character of the area.

7.7.42 The Council's [Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document 2011](#), will be used to guide the acceptability of proposals in terms of their individual or cumulative impacts upon the landscape along with the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance [Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document 2010](#), which is a material consideration. Applicants should reference these documents in applications. Within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the AONB Unit's document, [Managing Land for Horses](#), will be a further consideration.

Policy DM 27

The keeping and grazing of horses

Planning permission will only be granted for development involving the use of land for the keeping or grazing of horses and ponies in connection with riding or other non-agricultural purposes, if they are of high quality design and of a scale and intensity that is acceptable in landscape character, biodiversity, amenity and highways terms. In considering proposals, the Borough Council will have regard to the cumulative effect of such uses in the local area, the sites' accessibility to the bridleway network (having regard to potential conflicts with other path users), or the ability to provide on-site riding facilities.

Biodiversity and geological conservation

7.7.43 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out how the planning system should conserve and enhance the natural environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity - including providing net gains in biodiversity where possible – and by protecting and enhancing geological conservation interests.^(7.64)

7.7.44 The NPPF states that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for development affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites will be judged. It calls for distinctions to be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites so that protection of sites will be appropriate to their status.^(7.65)

7.7.45 The NPPF expects Councils to apply the following principles:^(7.66)

- refusing planning permission if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for;
- for land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest development likely to have an adverse effect on the SSSI should not normally be permitted unless specific circumstances arise;
- development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted;
- opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged; and
- planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (including ancient woodland and aged/veteran trees) unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.

7.7.46 The NPPF calls for planning policies to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries. It requires identification of local ecological networks, connecting designated sites with sites identified for habitat restoration or creation via wildlife corridors and stepping stones. In this way the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations will be enabled.^(7.67)

7.7.47 Planning Practice Guidance provides more information on [Biodiversity, Ecosystems and Green Infrastructure](#). It explains the statutory basis for seeking to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, stressing the commitments within [Biodiversity 2020](#) - the government's strategy for biodiversity and ecosystem services. It sets out how local planning authorities should plan for biodiversity and geodiversity and work collaboratively with partners. It gives advice on ecological evidence and the importance of ecological networks as well as how biodiversity can be taken into account in preparing planning applications so that development can protect and enhance biodiversity. It sets out details of how the mitigation hierarchy, established by the NPPF, would work in practice and explains how mitigation and compensation measures can be achieved, as well as setting out where information on ancient woodland and aged and veteran trees can be found.

Designated sites

7.7.48 Large areas within Swale are formally designated because they contain habitats or support species which are endangered at international, national or local level. Designation provides long term protection as well as opportunities to introduce management measures to conserve features considered to be of value.

7.7.49 The hierarchy of designations within Swale is outlined below, starting with international and European, through national to local level. The policy reflects this hierarchy of importance. Further detail on the range of sites, their statutory obligations and their impact on the planning system can be found in Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (due to be replaced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in the near future).

Internationally designated sites

7.7.50 The most important sites for biodiversity have statutory protection under international legislation and in Swale comprise Ramsar sites, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation.

7.7.51 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated by international agreement and ratified by the UK Government. This international designation provides for the conservation and good use of wetlands. Ramsar sites in the Borough are the Swale and the Medway Estuary and Marshes. They are designated for their high plant and invertebrate species diversity and internationally important numbers of many bird species.

7.7.52 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds found within European Union countries. They are European designated sites, classified under the 'Birds Directive 1979'. SPAs designated within Swale are the Swale SPA and the Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA (both designated for overwintering, on-passage and breeding birds) as well as the Outer Thames Estuary SPA (designated for the red-throated diver).

7.7.53 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are areas which have been given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive. They provide increased protection to a variety of wild animals, plants and habitats. SACs are designated at Queendown Warren and the Blean complex. The Blean is a designated SAC due to its ancient oak and hornbeam woodland and because it supports a good population of the rare heath fritillary butterfly. Queendown Warren is designated as SAC for its chalk grassland and due to the site supporting a number of orchid species.

7.7.54 As set out in the NPPF, the following wildlife sites should be considered to have the same protection as European sites: potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and listed or proposed Ramsar sites. ^(7.68)

7.7.55 If there is a risk that a plan or project may affect an internationally designated site an Appropriate Assessment will be required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. If the

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Council and other bodies are unable to conclude that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, the plan or project will have to be refused. Applicants should provide information regarding the possible impacts on these sites and appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures should be incorporated into developments to reduce any impacts identified.

7.7.56 The Council will also use a precautionary approach in requiring Habitats Regulations Assessment to be prepared for individual development proposals until a strategic solution has been prepared or where effects of a proposal are deemed to be uncertain. The Council will consider the need for Habitats Regulations Assessment to be undertaken at the reserved matters stage for sites where outline planning permission has already been granted.

7.7.57 Local Authorities across North Kent have joined Natural England and other agencies and organisations within the North Kent Environment Planning Group to identify the impacts of recreational disturbance on SPA birds. Following on from a Visitor and Bird Disturbance Survey, a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) has been completed. This looks at ways to ensure that development contributions provide funding for implementation of the SAMMS on the North Kent Marshes. In the interim period before this process is in place, some high level mitigation elements have been identified:

1. protect and improve high tide roosts and the current least disturbed areas;
2. manage the visitor impact around popular locations;
3. identify all access points and suggest measures proportionate to the risk of disturbance arising from each one;
4. monitor impacts to assess effectiveness and review if appropriate;
5. require at least those developments likely to increase visitor numbers significantly to undertake a bespoke assessment of their impact, and provide developers with a method for doing so; and
6. provide developers with options to contribute to the cost of 1 to 4 above.

7.7.58 Once the strategy and its mechanism for seeking developer contributions is adopted by the partner Councils, on appropriate sites financial contributions to wider mitigation measures within and adjacent to the SPA will be required.^(7.69) This will be achieved by Section 106 Agreements prior to the introduction of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy.

Nationally designated sites

7.7.59 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are the country's best wildlife and geological sites. They are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. SSSIs are designated within the Borough for the Swale, the Medway Estuary and Marshes and the Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore (for geological as well as nature conservation), Church Woods (Blean), Ellenden Wood, Queendown Warren (Hartlip) and a small section of nearby Purple Hill.

7.7.60 National Nature Reserves (NNR) represent many of the finest wildlife and geological sites in the country. They are used to manage some of most the pristine habitats, rarest species and most significant geology as well as promoting public access to natural heritage. NNRs in Swale are at the Swale, Elmley and Blean Woods.

7.7.61 Marine Conservation Zones are a type of marine protected area, which exist alongside international and national designations to form an ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas. The Medway Estuary was designated a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) in 2013 and the Swale Estuary was designated as an MCZ in 2016.

Locally designated sites

7.7.62 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are managed by local authorities, often in partnership with other bodies, to maintain and enhance their special wildlife and geology and provide access to nature and education for local communities. Local Nature Reserves in Swale include those at Oare Marshes, the South Bank of the Swale, Seasalter Levels and Queendown Warren.

7.7.63 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) (formally known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)) are identified by the Kent Nature Partnership which includes all Local Authorities, Kent County Council and a number of conservation organisations. The LWS network is administered and monitored by Kent Wildlife Trust on behalf of the partnership. Site selection takes into consideration the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context, making the LWSs some of Kent's most valuable urban and rural wildlife areas. There are 36 LWSs within Swale. The majority of these sites contain habitats and species that are priorities under the county or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) and/or the Biodiversity Strategies.

7.7.64 There are currently 13 Roadside Nature Reserves in Swale. These have been identified through the Road Verge Project (a partnership between Kent County Council, Kent Highways and Kent Wildlife Trust) because they contain rare or threatened habitats or species. They are managed by the County Highways Department and monitored by the Kent Wildlife Trust.

Protected species

7.7.65 A series of international conventions, European directives and national laws protect species of animals and plants in the UK, notably the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The status of species on development sites must be assessed through appropriate surveys undertaken to clarify constraints and requirements that could apply to development on these sites.

Landscape scale biodiversity networks

7.7.66 The NPPF urges local planning authorities to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.^(7.70) This is important as it enables wildlife to move through the landscape and species to colonise new areas, increase their genetic diversity and adapt better to climate change. Designated sites contain the most valuable habitats and species but links between these sites and the wider countryside are also imperative as they enable larger areas of important Biodiversity Action Plan habitat to be restored and created as well as connect up fragmented habitats (seen 7.7.71 below on Biodiversity Opportunity Areas). Landscape scale biodiversity networks also secure natural habitat which can be accessed by the local community. Research has shown access to the natural environment increases mental and physical wellbeing.

7.7.67 The Council's Supplementary Planning Document [Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal](#) (2011) includes an assessment of the current distribution of priority habitats, and identifies opportunities for linking these areas to form a more coherent, extended and enhanced biodiversity network to better cope with future environmental change.

7.7.68 Biodiversity 2020 is a national strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services. The strategy sets out the Government's ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020, support healthy, well-functioning, ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. It aims to deliver these outcomes through action in four



Picture 7.7.2 Honey bee

7 Development management policies

areas: a more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea; through putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy; through reducing environmental pressures; and improving our knowledge through better researching, monitoring and reporting.

7.7.69 The decline of pollinators is a global issue, but of importance to Swale given the reliance placed upon them by its fruit industry. The Council will support the [national strategy for pollinators](#) and look for opportunities through development proposals to enhance foraging habitat.

7.7.70 Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP), for key habitats and species within Swale, were prepared at the [national](#), Kent and local levels (see Statement 10). They covered both designated and non-designated sites and habitats and species populations outside these areas. Of these BAP habitats, Swale is particularly important for its mudflats, sandflats, wetlands and grazing marsh. The [Swale Biodiversity Action Plan](#) provides a basis for local action to conserve, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the Borough and focuses on a number of BAP habitats of importance to the Borough. The Kent Nature Partnership is now working towards the Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets which supersede the BAPs, however, the BAP habitats remain relevant. The targets of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy are expressed spatially through the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.

Statement 10

Biodiversity Action Plan habitats in Swale

UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats: Chalk grassland, acid grassland, neutral grassland, wood-pasture and parkland, vegetated shingle, maritime cliffs, reedbeds, arable field margins, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, intertidal mudflats (littoral sediment), saltmarsh, ponds, traditional orchards and hedgerows.

Kent Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats: Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows, built-up areas and gardens, cereal field margins, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, coastal saltmarsh, coastal vegetated shingle, standing open water, wet woodland, lowland calcareous grassland, maritime cliff and slope, mixed broadleaved woodland and plantations, lowland wood-pasture and parkland, mudflats, old orchards, reedbeds, and lowland meadow.

Swale Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats: Orchards, estuary habitats, woodlands, wildflower grassland, farmland, built-up areas and gardens.

For UK, Kent and Swale BAP species see the relevant websites for further details.

7.7.71 The Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) maps are a spatial reflection of the [Kent Biodiversity Strategy](#). They show where the greatest gains can be made from habitat enhancement, restoration and recreation, as these areas offer the best opportunities for establishing large habitat areas and/or networks of wildlife habitats. As such, they are useful to local planning authorities in the development and delivery of green infrastructure and resilient ecological networks. The latest maps and statements were issued in August 2015. The BOAs encompass most of the designated sites and much of the BAP habitat in Kent and Medway as well as identifying connections between these habitats and sites. Biodiversity Opportunity Statements have been prepared to accompany each BOA, identifying specific targets and conservation priorities to ensure delivery of the BOAs and promote opportunities to implement the Kent Biodiversity Strategy. They indicate where the delivery of Biodiversity Action Plan targets should be focused to secure maximum benefits to biodiversity. Four Biodiversity Opportunity Areas are identified for Swale and are included in the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy Map 5.6.1

- Medway Gap and North Kent Downs;
- North Kent Marshes;

- Mid Kent Downs Wood and Scarp; and
- The Blean.

7.7.72 There are a number of resources available which applicants should use in developing their planning applications. These include:

- The ARCH Kent Habitat Survey 2012 presents new data on the extent of natural habitats in Kent, identifies areas of importance for wildlife and measures habitat changes since the Kent Habitat Survey of 2003. Other outputs of the ARCH project were a Planning Screening tool to establish whether planning applications require further ecological investigation, and a software tool which identifies where work should take place to re-connect fragmented habitats. An online data portal on the [ARCH website](#) gives access to the habitat data and enables queries by location or by habitat.
- The Kent Landscape Information System (K-LIS) is a web-based map system that sits alongside ARCH's data portal and aims to enable better informed decision-making by providing detailed information on Kent's landscape and biodiversity. It contains details on countryside access, landscape character, opportunities for habitat creation and landscape restoration and the 2012 Kent habitat survey as well as areas designated for their conservation value.
- The [MAGIC website](#), managed by Natural England, provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment from across government. Using an interactive map, it presents information on rural, urban, coastal and marine environments across Great Britain.

Local supplementary planning documents for biodiversity

7.7.73 The following adopted supplementary planning documents should also be taken into account when formulating development proposals:

- The [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal](#) (2011) presents guidelines on a character area basis for improvements to biodiversity; and
- The [Kent Design Guide](#) specifically the appendix: Making it Happen – Landscaping and Biodiversity) is a Supplementary Planning Document adopted by the Council which demonstrates how developments can create features such as bird roosting/nesting places, aids to hibernation, green and brown roofs, habitats on railways, road and cycle path verges, connected hedgerows, wildlife underpasses and green bridges.

7.7.74 When submitting planning applications the Council will, as appropriate, require the submission of ecological assessment to determine the extent and importance of habitats and species present and to make recommendations for their avoidance, mitigation and, where appropriate, compensation.

Other initiatives

7.7.75 The [Medway Swale Estuary Partnership](#) is a not-for-profit organisation whose work is centred around the understanding, conservation and promotion of the estuary's natural and historical environments. It hosts the North Kent Catchment Improvement Group, which is developing catchment improvement plans for North Kent (estuarine and freshwater).

7.7.76 [Local Nature Partnerships](#) (LNPs) were set up through the Environment White Paper (2011). Their purpose is to drive strategic and positive change to the local natural environment to benefit nature, people and the economy. LNPs play a specific role in achieving the Government's environmental objectives locally, including identifying local ecological networks and in being local champions influencing local decision-making.

7.7.77 There are two LNPs relevant to Swale, the [Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership](#) and the [Kent Local Nature Partnership](#).

7 Development management policies

7.7.78 The National Planning Policy Framework outlines that where [Nature Improvement Areas](#) are identified in Local Plans, planning policies should consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these areas. Part of the [Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area](#) (NIA) falls within Swale. The Greater Thames Marshes NIA was a three year project which has now ended. However, future actions from the project are embedded within the objectives of the Thames Gateway Local Nature Partnership. Useful information is also available on the [NIA website](#), including development management advice for applications within the Nature Improvement Area.

Local Plan policy for biodiversity

7.7.79 Policy DM 28 seeks to reflect the relative weight to be applied to the range of international, national and local designations and irreplaceable habitats present within Swale with the aim of requiring development to include the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. In line with national planning policy it looks for any harm from development to be avoided, mitigated or as a last resort, compensated for. The Council will consider whether to roll out [Biodiversity Offsetting](#) once national pilots are completed and assessed. If so, it will develop its approach via a technical guidance note. Planning permission will be granted where a primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and will promote net gains in biodiversity where possible. The policy requires developers to use relevant supplementary planning documents to support and encourage the incorporation of biodiversity in and around developments.

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Policy DM 28

Biodiversity and geological conservation

Development proposals will conserve, enhance and extend biodiversity, provide for net gains in biodiversity where possible, minimise any adverse impacts and compensate where impacts cannot be mitigated.

Part A. For designated sites

Development proposals will give weight to the protection of the following designated sites for biodiversity, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), which will be equal to the significance of their biodiversity/geological status, their contribution to wider ecological networks and the protection/recovery of priority species as follows:

1. Within internationally designated sites (including candidate sites), the highest level of protection will apply. The Council will ensure that plans and projects proceed only when in accordance with relevant Directives, Conventions and Regulations. When the proposed development will have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European site, planning permission will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, where there are no less ecologically damaging alternatives, there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest and damage can be fully compensated.
2. Within nationally designated sites (including candidate sites), development will only be permitted where it is not likely to have an adverse effect on the designated site or its interests (either individually or in combination with other developments) unless the benefits of the development at this site clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the designated site that make it of national importance and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Where damage to a nationally designated site cannot be avoided or mitigated, compensatory measures will be sought.

Development will also accord with and support the conservation objectives of any biodiversity site management plans;

3. Within locally designated sites (including draft published sites), development likely to have an adverse effect will be permitted only where the damage can be avoided or adequately mitigated or when its need outweighs the biodiversity interest of the site. Compensation will be sought for loss or damage to locally designated sites.

Part B: All Sites

Development proposals will:

1. Apply national planning policy in respect of the preservation, restoration and re-creation of:
 - a. the habitats, species and targets in UK and local Biodiversity Action Plans and Biodiversity Strategies;
 - b. linear and continuous landscape features or those acting as stepping-stones for biodiversity;
 - c. aged or veteran trees and irreplaceable habitat, including ancient woodland and traditional orchards;
2. Be informed by and further the guidelines and biodiversity network potential of the Council's Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment SPD;
3. Support, where appropriate, the vision and objectives of the ~~Greater Thames Nature Improvement Area~~ and other relevant environmental and biodiversity management and action plans;
4. Be accompanied by appropriate surveys undertaken to clarify constraints or requirements that may apply to development, especially where it is known or likely that development sites are used by species, and/or contain habitats, that are subject to UK or European law;
5. When significant harm cannot be avoided through consideration of alternative sites or adequate mitigation provided on-site or within the immediate locality, compensatory measures will be achieved within the relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Area, or other location as agreed by the Local Planning Authority;
6. Provide, where possible, a net gain of biodiversity overall; and
7. Actively promote the expansion of biodiversity within the design of new development and with reference to the wider natural assets and green infrastructure strategy in Policy CP7.

Woodlands, trees and hedges

7.7.80 The NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss.^(7.71)

7.7.81 Trees, in particular ancient woodland and traditional orchards, are of high biodiversity value and can be irreplaceable. These habitats, along with scrub and fruit trees are also important to the local distinctiveness, visual amenity and biodiversity of Swale as well as contributing to a sense of wellbeing.

7.7.82 Ancient and replanted woodland in Swale stretches from the Blean and across the North Downs. Traditional orchards are found in the fruit belt of the Borough - which runs along the A2 corridor and stretches into the North Downs - as well as in isolated locations on the Isle of Sheppey. Scrub is often undervalued but is important as a habitat as well as a nursery for future woodland stocks. Many woodlands and old orchards in Kent are no longer used for timber production in a way that would otherwise ensure their

7 Development management policies

positive long term management for flora and fauna. The Council is keen to support the innovative and sustainable use and management of woodlands for such activities as renewable energy, but also as a resource for education (e.g. forest/wild schools.) Carefully planned appropriate development, the intended purpose of which is to further the sustainable management of woodland/old orchards, may be supported by the Council where in accordance with the Local Plan.

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7.7.83 As well as the potential removal of woodland, development can threaten the sustainable management of woodland. This might be as a result of increased recreational pressures from new residents, the sub-division or lotting of woodland (or development associated with it), or the incorporation of woodland into residential curtilages. Such impacts will need to be assessed as part of a planning application and where the landscape and/or biodiversity interest of woodlands would be threatened, planning permission will be refused unless the benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh these concerns.



Picture 7.7.3 Beech woodland in the Kent Downs

7.7.84 Indigenous hedgerows are important for wildlife as they contain a variety of species, with some containing ancient stock, as well as contributing to the ecological network. They are also important in landscape terms as wildlife and historical features. Hedgerows should be retained and new lengths established where affected by new development.

7.7.85 [Planning Practice Guidance](#) gives advice on Tree Preservation Orders and trees in Conservation Areas. Where it can, the Council will make Tree Preservation or Hedgerow Protection Orders where trees and hedges make a positive contribution to local amenity. Any works to trees within a Conservation area or to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) require consent from the Borough Council. When development proposals are submitted that may affect trees, ancient woodland and hedgerows, the Council will require the submission of a tree survey in accordance with British Standards. Before permitting development proposals, the Council expects any existing trees or cover to have been protected as far as is reasonable. Where it is accepted that development necessitates their removal, the Council will normally require appropriate replacements to be planted. In the case of proposals affecting a tree subject to a

Preservation Order, the Council will only permit it if it is in the interest of good arboricultural practice or public safety. Again, in such cases, replacements will be required.

7.7.86 Planting woodland, trees and hedges in new development can be an essential means to integrate development into its context and enhance quality and character. They can also provide habitats, improve air quality, provide rainwater attenuation and shade – thereby playing an important role in adapting to climate change. New developments should set aside generous space for landscaping and this should be incorporated into applications. Landscaping should include native trees of local provenance (where ecologically appropriate) including [large tree species](#) where possible.

7.7.87 Supplementary Planning Guidance, [Planting on new Developments - A guide for Developers](#) and the [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal Supplementary Planning Document, 2011](#), are both useful resources and should be referred to by applicants when applying for planning permission. [The Trees and Design Action Group](#) have published useful guides including, [Trees in the Townscape](#), [The Canopy](#) and [No Trees, No Future](#), which demonstrate the opportunities and benefits of planting trees including in dense urban environments.

7.7.88 Policy DM 29 seeks to safeguard trees, woodlands, old orchard trees, and hedgerows as features, habitats, and areas to ensure that they continue to be an essential part of the environment. The Policy supports the establishment of new sites and addresses trees that may be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

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Policy DM 29

Woodlands, trees and hedges

1. Carefully planned small scale development, the intended purpose of which is to further the appropriate management of woodland/old orchards, will be supported by the Council.
2. On sites proposed for development, the Council will protect trees (including individual trees, old orchards, fruit trees, hedgerows, woodland and scrub) that make an important contribution either to the amenity, historic, landscape, townscape or biodiversity value of the site or the surrounding area. Development proposals will retain trees as far as possible and provide for new woodland, orchard, tree and hedge planting at sufficient scale to maintain and enhance the character of the locality.
3. The Borough Council will make Tree Preservation and Hedgerow Protection Orders where removal of the tree(s) or hedgerow(s) would have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Where removal is unavoidable, the Borough Council may require appropriate replacements as a condition of a planning permission.

The Borough Council will seek to ensure the protection, enhancement and sustainable management of woodlands, orchards trees and hedges. It will:

1. Support carefully planned appropriate development, the intended purpose of which is to further the sustainable management of woodland/old orchards;
2. Ensure that development proposals take all reasonable opportunities to provide for new woodland, orchard, tree and hedge planting at a sufficient scale (with provision made for appropriate long term management) to maintain and enhance the character of the locality and provide for an attractive living and working environment;
3. Use Tree Preservation and Hedgerow Protection Orders to safeguard species which have a significant impact on the local environment and its enjoyment by the public. Where removal of trees and hedgerows is unavoidable, the Borough Council will require appropriate replacements as a condition of a planning permission; and
4. Unless the need for, and benefits of development in a location clearly outweigh the adverse impacts, planning permission will be refused where there:
 - a. is a loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees; or

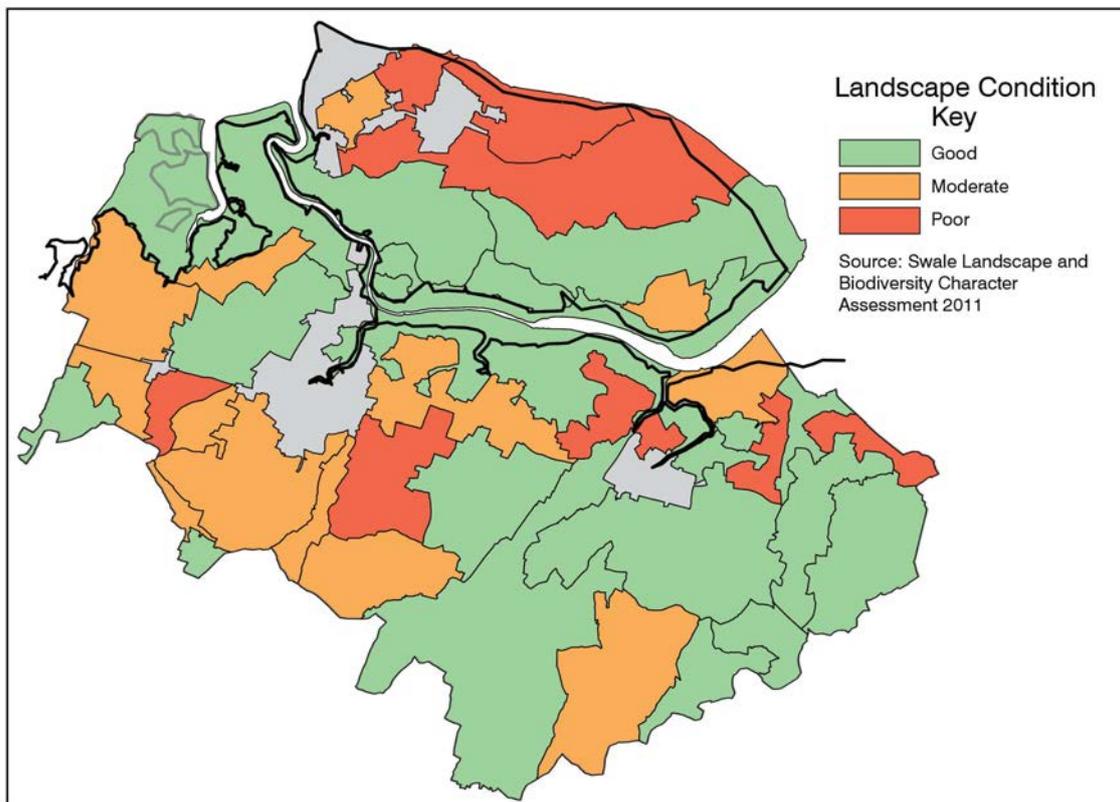
7 Development management policies

- b. would be an inability to secure the beneficial management of woodland, old orchards or hedges for their landscape, historic or biodiversity interest (including as a result of their sub-division/lotting or incorporation into a residential curtilage); or
- c. would be a loss of trees (including individual trees, old orchards, fruit trees, hedgerows and, woodland scrub) that make an important contribution either to the amenity, historic, landscape, townscape or biodiversity value of the site and/or the surrounding area.

Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement

7.7.89 Nationally, biodiversity is in serious decline across a range of species and habitats. In rural areas, this decline is often associated with the condition of local landscapes. The National Planning Policy Framework, states that where the primary objective of a development proposal is to conserve or enhance biodiversity, it should be permitted. ^(7.72)

7.7.90 In response to the England Biodiversity Strategy, the Kent Biodiversity Strategy identifies priorities and targets for action on habitats and species in Swale, whilst the Swale BAP focuses on habitats of importance to the Borough and targets landscapes for action. Like biodiversity, some parts of the landscape within Swale are also under pressure. The [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal](#) (2011) found that of 42 identified character areas, the condition of nine were classed as poor, with a further thirteen as moderate. ^(7.73) To target those areas where enhancements to biodiversity would be most effective, the Kent Wildlife Trust has identified a series of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) that are incorporated within the Council's Green Infrastructure Plan (Map 5.6.1)



Map 7.7.2 Landscape condition in Swale 2011

7.7.91 Carefully planned development can bring biodiversity and landscape benefits that can contribute to the green infrastructure network. However, it is most likely to be focused within and at the urban

edges, rather than areas in need in the wider countryside. This policy looks to facilitate enhancements more widely in a way that does not undermine Policy ST 3 and targets real and substantial benefits to areas identified as a priority for enhancement.

7.7.92 This policy is only likely to be applicable in a relatively small number of exceptional situations, normally involving development that is small in scale and substantial in benefit. The whole purpose of such proposals will be the substantial and disproportionate benefits to landscape and biodiversity that they will provide. These should be such that they decisively outweigh the impacts of potentially breaching other policies.

7.7.93 Development must be otherwise acceptable were it not for policies intended to protect the undeveloped character of the countryside. Central to the proposals will be landscape and biodiversity enhancements targeted at one of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and/or one of the areas whose landscape condition the Council has described as poor or moderate. Legally binding management proposals, with measurable and time-bound targets both aimed at meeting those in Biodiversity Action Plans and/or Biodiversity Strategies and supported by a recognised wildlife body would be expected. They will include measures to ensure implementation, management and review in perpetuity.



Picture 7.7.4 Landscape restoration at Victory Wood

7.7.94 The degree to which the benefits would be both substantial and disproportionate will be a key test and is likely to relate to the scale of the enhancement land in question relative to the development footprint. Other tests will relate to its potential contribution to meeting National, Kent and Swale BAP and/or Biodiversity Strategy priorities and targets for biodiversity, and the degree to which they can be maintained over time.

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Policy DM 30

Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement

Exceptionally, enabling development will be permitted for proposals that contravene planning policies for the protection of the countryside, when it is:

1. Proposing an outstanding design, layout and landscaping scheme that benefits the condition of landscape and biodiversity both substantially and disproportionately;
2. Securing the long-term future and appropriate management of land within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas as identified by Policy CP7 and/or landscapes in poor or moderate condition as identified by the Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011;
3. Contributing significantly to targets identified in UK, Kent and Swale Biodiversity Action Plans and/or Biodiversity Strategies;
4. In the Kent Downs AONB, and is in accordance with its Management Plan and guidance;
5. In accordance with the objectives of any Nature Improvement Area or other relevant environmental management plan for the area;

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6. Wholly necessary to resolve problems arising from the condition of the landscape and its biodiversity, rather than the circumstances of the present owner, the purchase price paid, or to make schemes viable;
7. Demonstrated that sufficient subsidy is not available from any other sources and that the amount of enabling development is the minimum necessary;
8. In locations that do not lead to dispersed development patterns and/or lengthy journeys to access jobs and services;
9. Demonstrated that after any dis-benefits have been minimised and mitigated, the overall landscape and biodiversity benefits of the proposals decisively and disproportionately outweigh harm to other public interests and policies;
10. Subject to legal monitoring and review arrangements intended to secure enhancements in perpetuity against agreed objectives and targets; and
11. Compliant with the criteria for biodiversity as set out in Policy DM 28.

Agricultural land

7.7.95 The National Planning Policy Framework states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where it can be demonstrated as necessary, significant development of agricultural land can take place, but local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.^(7.74)

7.7.96 Swale has a wide area of some of the highest quality of agricultural land in the UK (called best and most versatile). It is found within a broad belt running east-west around the A2. The area is one of the most productive agricultural areas in Kent due to the fine loam soils and favourable climatic conditions. Around 80% of Swale's land is classified as being suitable for agriculture (grades 1-5), with the Borough containing about 17% of Kent's grades 1 and 2 resource.^(7.75)

7.7.97 Agriculture continues to shape the nature and character of the countryside and Swale remains associated with a long history of fruit production. Agriculture shapes much of the diversity of the Borough's environmental resources too, including internationally important estuarine and coastal habitats in the North Kent Marshes, the central plain of orchards and arable land, the wooded clay outcrop of The Blean, and the southern woodlands and dry chalk valleys of the North Downs dip-slope.



Picture 7.7.5 Farmed landscape near Faversham

7.7.98 Policy DM 31, in recognition of the importance of the agricultural sector to the Borough in terms of its identity and economy, looks to safeguard its most important resource – its soils, and in particular the proportion of best and most versatile land that is present here. This is defined as Grades 1, 2 and 3a, by the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, and is recognised as a national resource for the future. This is further emphasised by national concerns over food security and food miles and therefore efforts should be made to protect its best and most versatile farmland whilst meeting other essential needs for jobs and new housing. The policy therefore aims to ensure that the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land on a site is a strong influence on

whether development should be permitted. It is intended to ensure that it is only developed when there is an overriding need, and when other options have been examined first, having regard to other sustainability considerations.

Policy DM 31

Agricultural land

Development on agricultural land will only be permitted when there is an overriding need that cannot be met on land within the built-up area boundaries. Development on best and most versatile agricultural land (specifically Grades 1, 2 and 3a) will not be permitted unless:

1. The site is allocated for development by the Local Plan; or
2. There is no alternative site on land of a lower grade than 3a or that use of land of a lower grade would significantly and demonstrably work against the achievement of sustainable development; and
3. The development will not result in the remainder of the agricultural holding becoming not viable or lead to likely accumulated and significant losses of high quality agricultural land.

7.8 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Development involving listed buildings

7.8.1 Listed buildings are a finite resource and are provided with special statutory protection and procedures requiring consent to alter them in a way that affects their character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Policy CP 8 provides a general presumption in favour of the preservation of a listed building except where a convincing case can be made for alteration or, exceptionally, demolition. Applicants must prepare a heritage statement and a design statement for any proposals for listed building consent, and to justify their proposals, demonstrating why works that would affect the character of a listed building are necessary or desirable. In all cases the policy seeks to safeguard the character and setting of listed buildings.

Extensions and alterations

7.8.2 Extensions and alterations should be sympathetic and not dominate the listed building in scale, material, or situation. Often a building's immediate setting is important to its character so gardens, yards, other spaces, and boundary details are of value in their own right. Proposals to allow car parking can also frequently be damaging to the setting of the building.

Changes of use

7.8.3 The best use for a listed building is usually the use for which it was originally designed, but the overriding consideration is securing the future upkeep and preservation of the building. Thus the Council supports necessary and appropriate changes in use. Particular attention will be paid to ensuring that the proposed use will not be harmful to the character of the building and its surroundings, including any alterations to the building associated with its change in use.

7 Development management policies

Policy DM 32

Development involving listed buildings

Development proposals, including any change of use, affecting a listed building, and/or its setting, will be permitted provided that:

1. The building's special architectural or historic interest, and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, are preserved, paying special attention to the:
 - a. design, including scale, materials, situation and detailing;
 - b. appropriateness of the proposed use of the building; and
 - c. desirability of removing unsightly or negative features or restoring or reinstating historic features.
2. The total or part demolition of a listed building is wholly exceptional, and will only be permitted provided convincing evidence has been submitted showing that:
 - a. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or viable new uses and have failed;
 - b. Preservation in charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable; and
 - c. The cost of maintaining and repairing the building outweighs its importance and the value derived from its continued use.
3. If as a last resort, the Borough Council is prepared to consider the grant of a listed building consent for demolition, it may, in appropriate circumstances, consider whether the building could be re-erected elsewhere to an appropriate location. When re-location is not possible and demolition is permitted, arrangements will be required to allow access to the building prior to demolition to make a record of it and to allow for the salvaging of materials and features.

Development affecting a conservation area

7.8.4 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character, or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The character of conservation areas can be fragile, and their distinctive quality and character can be damaged by new development, or by other more subtle means such as increased traffic, car parking, signs and noise, or piecemeal changes to doors and windows. They are not, though, areas where change will not occur. New development within, or adjacent to, a conservation area is expected to be both of an appropriate use, of a very high standard of design, and to respond positively to the grain of the historic area by preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the place. Applicants must prepare a heritage statement and a design statement for any proposals in or adjoining a conservation area that will additionally assess the likely impact of their proposals on the significance of any heritage assets or their settings.

7.8.5 There are currently 28 conservation area appraisals prepared within Swale and these contain useful guidance for developers, householders and public bodies.

Spaces and settings

7.8.6 The spaces and settings around and between buildings, other features and conservation areas, together with views to and from the area, are frequently as important as the buildings and areas themselves. They should be protected from unsympathetic changes and, where possible, enhanced.

Non-listed buildings (Heritage Assets)

7.8.7 Many buildings and features in a conservation area are not listed as being of special architectural or historic interest. Nevertheless, they may make a valuable contribution to the character of a conservation area individually, or as part of a group. If so, their demolition is only permitted in exceptional circumstances. In so deciding, the Council will examine the cost of maintaining and repairing the building or feature in relation to its importance and the value derived from its use, the adequacy of efforts to continue the building in an acceptable use, and the merits of alternative proposals for the building. These must demonstrably preserve or enhance the area in a way that the former building did not. Fundamentally, consent will normally only be given for demolition when a detailed scheme for redevelopment has been agreed. Planning conditions or legal agreements will ensure that demolition does not take place without timely redevelopment.

Highway features

7.8.8 Bridges, retaining walls, signs, footpaths, kerb lines, and milestones are part of the Borough's history. Unsympathetic highway or traffic management works, including signage and alterations to traffic flows, can have adverse impacts. Those carrying out such works will ensure the protection of the character and setting of these features, together with conservation areas, historic buildings, and ancient monuments.

Policy DM 33

Development affecting a conservation area

Development (including changes of use and the demolition of unlisted buildings or other structures) within, affecting the setting of, or views into and out of a conservation area, will preserve or enhance all features that contribute positively to the area's special character or appearance. The Borough Council expects development proposals to:

1. Respond positively to its conservation area appraisals where these have been prepared;
2. Retain the layout, form of streets, spaces, means of enclosure and buildings, and pay special attention to the use of detail and materials, surfaces, landform, vegetation and land use;
3. Remove features that detract from the character of the area and reinstate those that would enhance it; and
4. Retain unlisted buildings or other structures that make, or could make, a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites

7.8.9 The Borough is rich in archaeological sites. The Historic Environment Record (formerly known as the Sites and Monuments Record), is an extensive database relating to Kent's heritage, which Kent County Council maintain. Some nationally important sites and monuments are given legal protection by being placed on a list, or 'schedule'. English Heritage takes the lead in identifying sites in England which should be placed on the schedule by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

7.8.10 This Policy affords protection to these sites, together with other nationally important monuments or archaeological sites not scheduled.

7.8.11 The Policy also sets out the Council's approach to dealing with development proposals that may affect known, or potentially important, archaeological sites and maritime remains. The Council will consult with the County Archaeologist and, in certain cases, a developer may be required to supply information that will help the archaeological evaluation of the site. Where necessary, the Council will specify the standard of, and the methodology for obtaining, such information as will be needed for determining a planning application. In certain cases this may involve field evaluation.

7 Development management policies

7.8.12 The Council seeks to avoid harmful or physically destructive development on important archaeological sites, and there is a preference for the preservation of important remains in situ. Where this is not possible, and the Council considers that the case for the development is such that important remains would be damaged or destroyed, appropriate archaeological investigation and recording will take place with publication of the results. Planning conditions, or in appropriate circumstances, legal agreements, will be used as required.

7.8.13 Within the central areas of Faversham, Sheerness, Sittingbourne, Queenborough and Milton Regis, the 'Kent Historic Towns Survey' and the County Council Supplementary Planning Guidance on urban area archaeology will provide a more detailed interpretation of Policy DM34.

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Policy DM 34

Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites

1. Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect a Scheduled Monument, and/or its setting, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), or subsequently designated, or any other monument or archaeological site demonstrated as being of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments. Development that may affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset of less than national significance will require a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
2. Whether they are currently known, or discovered during the Plan period, there will be a preference to preserve important archaeological sites in-situ and to protect their settings. Development that does not achieve acceptable mitigation of adverse archaeological effects will not be permitted.
3. Where development is permitted and preservation in-situ is not justified, the applicant will be required to ensure that provision will be made for archaeological excavation and recording, in advance of and/or during development, including the necessary post-excavation study and assessment along with the appropriate deposition of any artefacts in an archaeological archive or museum to be approved by the Borough Council.

Historic parks and gardens

7.8.14 Historic Parks and Gardens are a fragile and finite resource which can easily be damaged beyond repair or lost forever. From town gardens and public parks to the great country estates, such places are an important, distinctive, and much cherished part of our inheritance and we have a duty to care for them. In order to identify those sites which are of particular historic importance, English Heritage is enabled by government to compile the 'Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England'. Inclusion in the Register recognises that the site is of national importance. They comprise a variety of features including open space, flora, water features, archaeological remains and buildings.

7.8.15 Inclusion on the Register is a 'material consideration' in the planning process, meaning that planning authorities must consider the impact of any proposed development on the landscapes' special character.

Policy DM 35

Historic parks and gardens

1. The Borough Council will seek to protect registered Historic Parks and Gardens, as shown on the [Proposals Map](#), or which are registered during the Plan period.
2. Development that would adversely affect the landscape character, layout and features of a Historic Park and Garden, or its setting, will not be permitted.
3. Development that would adversely affect a non-Registered Historic Park or Garden will only be permitted where the loss of significance is unavoidable.

Area of high townscape value

7.8.16 Outside the designated conservation areas, parts of the Borough may become of sufficient value in the future to be worthy of conservation area designation. Within the urban areas, such areas may, in the meantime, be subject to development pressures and other change. To the south of Sittingbourne town centre areas of Victorian and Edwardian housing, parks cemeteries, trees and open spaces mark an important period in the town's post industrial expansion and many of its street trees are a poignant reminder of the town's marking of The Great War. These characteristics are recognised by its identification as an Area of High Townscape Value. The Council's objectives in this area are to encourage a high standard of design of new development, the retention and reinstatement of original features and the preservation of the spaces between buildings, landscaping and parks, alongside the retention and expansion of its street trees.

Policy DM 36

Area of high townscape value

Within and adjacent to the Area of High Townscape Value, as defined on the [Proposals Map](#), the Borough Council will not grant planning permission for development proposals unless they provide for the conservation or enhancement of the local historic and architectural character, together with its greenspaces, landscaping and trees.

7 Development management policies

End Notes

- 7.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 23
- 7.2 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 28
- 7.3 The Future of Farming in Kent and Planning Matters of concern for farmers 2009. NFU
- 7.4 Swale Borough Council monitoring and GIS data
- 7.5 Calculated from statistics from the British Holiday & Home Parks Association
- 7.6 British Holiday & Home Parks Association
- 7.7 Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Assessment 2011. Landscapes on north Sheppey coast generally classed as being in poor condition e.g. Character Area 13
- 7.8 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Paras 29-41
- 7.9 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG 2013. Para. 32
- 7.10 End note DfT para. 9-10
- 7.11 The Strategic Road Network and Delivery of Sustainable Development Annex B
- 7.12 Extant vehicle parking standards comprise: Kent County Council Residential Parking, Interim Guidance Note 3: and Kent County Council SPG4: Non Residential Parking
- 7.13 Laying the Foundations. Her Majesty's Government. Para. 78
- 7.14 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 54
- 7.15 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 55
- 7.16 Housing Strategy 2010-2015. SBC. Page 4
- 7.17 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 55
- 7.18 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 56
- 7.19 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 67
- 7.20 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 73
- 7.21 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 74
- 7.22 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 76
- 7.23 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Paras. 93-94
- 7.24 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 95
- 7.25 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 96
- 7.26 Planning Practice Guidance, Climate Change
- 7.27 HM Treasury, Fixing the Foundations: Creating a More Prosperous Nation, July 2015.
- 7.28 AECOM, Nov 2011, Swale Renewable Energy & Sustainable Development Study, for SBC
- 7.29 English Heritage, Climate Change and the Historic Environment, 2008
- 7.30 Environment Agency Water Conservation publications
- 7.31 www.sustainablebuild.co.uk/ReducingManagingWaste.html
- 7.32 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 97
- 7.33 HM Government, Climate Change Act, 2008 1 (1), HM Government, Climate Change Act, 2008 (2020 Target, Credit Limit Definitions) Order 2009 and HM Government, UK Low Carbon Transition Plan
- 7.34 Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources
- 7.35 March 2010, Creative Environmental Networks and Swale Renewable Energy & Sustainable Development Study Nov 2011 AECOM for Swale Borough Council
- 7.36 Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Renewable Energy Position Statement, Updated 2011
- 7.37 AECOM, Swale Renewable Energy & Sustainable Development Study, Nov 2011. Page vi
- 7.38 Natural England Technical Information Noted TIN101, 2011
- 7.39 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 94
- 7.40 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 109
- 7.41 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 99
- 7.42 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 102
- 7.43 Environment Agency, River Basin Management Plan, Thames Region Basin District, 2015.
- 7.44 Tony Fullwood Associates, Faversham Creek, AAP: Developing proposals and future planning policy options to deliver regeneration of the Creek area, October 2010
- 7.45 Environment Agency, River Basin Management Plan, Thames Region Basin District 2015.

- 7.46 Water stressed areas: final classification, 2013 Environment Agency
- 7.47 Environment Agency Water Conservation publications
- 7.48 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 114
- 7.49 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 105
- 7.50 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 106
- 7.51 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para 106 and Glossary
- 7.52 Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework
- 7.53 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 17
- 7.54 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 17
- 7.55 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 113
- 7.56 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 113
- 7.57 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 115
- 7.58 Swale Landscape Assessment Recommended Amendments to Landscape Designations 2008. Babtie Group for SBC
- 7.59 Swale Landscape Assessment Recommended Amendments to Landscape Designations 2008. Babtie Group for SBC
- 7.60 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 123
- 7.61 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 125
- 7.62 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/landscape-character-assessments-identify-and-describe-landscape-types>
- 7.63 Swale Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study 2010. Jacobs for SBC
- 7.64 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Paras. 17 and 109
- 7.65 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG. Para. 113
- 7.66 National Planning Policy Framework. CLG. Para. 118
- 7.67 The National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 114
- 7.68 National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Para 118
- 7.69 This is likely to be for sites within 6 km of an access point onto the designated habitat
- 7.70 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 117
- 7.71 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 118
- 7.72 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 118
- 7.73 Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity Appraisal 2011
- 7.74 National Planning Policy Framework 2012. CLG. Para. 112
- 7.75 Natural England website accessed January 2013

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

8.1 The implementation and delivery plan

Introduction

8.1.1 This chapter sets out our implementation and delivery plan. It sets out our approach toward ensuring that the strategy of the Local Plan is delivered, what the risks to it are and how they will be minimised. It also ensures the co-ordination and delivery of the necessary infrastructure. This feeds into our implementation and delivery schedule which we have provided in a separately published document. We have also provided a monitoring framework which provides those indicators we intend to use to measure the success or otherwise of key policies in the Local Plan.

The implementation and delivery plan

8.1.2 The Local Plan implementation and delivery plan (IDP) sets out the main actions needed to achieve the Local Plan's aim and objectives. It assesses the most important of the relationships between the policies and proposals, examining who does what, recognising the key role of the Council as planning authority as well as an implementation agency in its own right. This will involve strong working and robust actions with the Council's full range of partners to deliver the levels of growth envisaged. Key milestones are identified which will be subject to monitoring by the Council and its partners to trigger intervention if required.

8.1.3 The IDP:

- sets out the delivery framework within which the strategy of the Local Plan will be delivered, including the main activities and time-frames to achieve the plan's aim and objectives;
- covers the delivery mechanisms that will be used for the implementation of proposals to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan's aims and objectives;
- identifies a delivery programme and critical path for proposals, a sequence of events in which proposals must occur for Swale to function and grow, including key housing, employment and supporting infrastructure projects;
- identifies the infrastructure priorities for the first five years of the Local Plan;
- outlines the key risks involved in the delivery of the Local Plan and the actions that will be undertaken to mitigate these risks plus contingencies which might be employed if required; and
- details the programme management, monitoring and review processes that will be used by the Council, including the use of key indicators, time scales and milestones that will be managed by the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

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8.1.4 A separate [implementation and delivery schedule](#) (IDS) is published alongside the Local Plan which sets out the key pieces of infrastructure that will be required, including who the responsible parties are for its delivery, its indicative costs and funding sources (as far as we are able), and when we expect to be able to bring the infrastructure forward. This will be updated annually as part of the Council's Annual Monitoring Report. The IDS will be used as the basis to justify the Council's future proposed Community Infrastructure Levy schedule (CIL). At this stage the IDS does not ~~identify~~ specify those matters likely to be funded by CIL, ~~or those likely to involve a Section 106 agreement or Section 278 agreement (Highways contributions).~~ suffice to say that prior to the introduction of CIL, the means for collection will be Section 106 Agreements. However, the Council is pursuing preparation of a CIL Charging Schedule and preparation of a Regulation 123 list will specify those matters expected to be funded from CIL contributions.

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Delivery mechanism and priorities

8.1.5 The IDP has been developed to demonstrate how planning objectives can be delivered by showing how public policy, and particularly planning policy, can shape development implementation through:

- developing and creating new partnerships to work to a single agenda and planning policy frameworks;
- ensuring that partnerships assist the Council in securing major infrastructure investment, both public and private, for the implementation of key strategic development sites;
- ensuring a supply of land is readily available for development, and where necessary, the Council using its powers, including site acquisition, to ensure this land can come forward; and
- ensuring planning procedures assist in the timely and efficient delivery of development and the establishment of specific arrangements to work on the most complex strategic development sites.

8.1.6 The Council will take a business planning perspective on achieving growth. This will entail understanding how and when key infrastructure proposals will be paid for and by whom. The Council will continue to seek to secure public sector infrastructure funding through, for example, lobbying through the Local Economic Partnership. ~~It is likely that the primary means of delivery will be via the S106/Community Infrastructure Levy processes.~~ However, this will be within the context of a time of considerable constraint on the public sector purse and development viability in Swale.

8.1.7 Whilst every opportunity will be taken to bid for appropriate funding and to co-ordinate investment plans of public and private bodies, ~~it is unlikely that public funding will not be available to meet all infrastructure requirements. The Council intends to prepare a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule at the earliest opportunity, which would be likely to be applicable to most new development. In the interim, the Council will continue to seek Section 106 contributions to meet infrastructure needs arising from new development, either financially or through land and build costs. Where site viability issues would occur as a result of seeking the full requirement of planning obligations, the Council will be likely to prioritise contributions according to the circumstances of the site, or consider deferral of some payments. It will therefore be necessary for the Council to both continue to pursue the use of Section 106 and 278 agreements to secure appropriate developer contributions and put in place a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). These mechanisms will be subject to viability concerns in the early years of the Local Plan, affecting the amount of CIL that can be charged and, the priorities for the use of S106 monies. In the short term, the Council's priorities for developer S106 contributions will be transport, education and social care.~~

8.1.8 Through its evidence prepared to justify the imposition of the CIL, the Council is able to show a shortfall in funding against the the Council's provisional list of infrastructure projects that CIL could potentially fund. This so-called Regulation 123 list includes:

- Construction costs associated with the Quinton Road primary school (phase 1) and secondary school (phase 2) as part of the North West Sittingbourne Housing allocation.
- New burial plots on Sheppey.
- Townscape improvements grants scheme for Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne Town Centres.
- Bus and cycle schemes in accordance with the Swale Transport Strategy.
- Non site specific additional GP health provision.
- Habitat creation for specified projects not related to Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (See Policy CP7).
- Off-site sports facilities provision.
- Open spaces improvement grant scheme

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

8.1.9 S106 agreements will not be able to be used in support of the above projects, whilst for projects outside of the 123 List, S106 agreements are subject to a pooling restriction by which only five such agreements may be used to fund a single item. S106 agreements will continue to be used by the Council to address site specific developer contribution issues and are most likely to include open space provision, more localised or site specific transport issues and contributions to NHS and County Council infrastructure requirements.

8.1.10 In the case of major highway projects, such as the proposed improvements to the Grovehurst Interchange on the A249, the primary funding mechanisms will be the use of S278 of The Highways Act 1980 which are not subject to the same restrictions as S106 agreements. In addition, the Council and its partners will also utilise bids for funding from such initiatives as the Local Growth Fund operated by the SE Local Enterprise Partnership.

8.1.11 Sitting outside of both the CIL and S106 mechanisms, are the tariff payments required to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Directive. These are used where potential likely significant effects are identified, particularly as a result of recreational pressures on Special Protection Areas/Ramsar sites, and the tariff payment is applied to deal with mitigation off-site. As this enables the development to comply with European Law, these payments are not classed as developer contributions for infrastructure or subject to the restrictions affecting CIL and S106; neither are they taken into account for purposes of assessing the viability of development. Currently the most convenient mechanism for paying this tariff are S106 agreements, but over time, the north Kent Council's will put in place a different vehicle for making this payment.

8.1.12 The Council cannot implement the Local Plan strategy alone. It will work with public, private and voluntary sector agencies to draw together resources and priorities to deliver growth. This may include the need to identify alternative and creative funding sources for infrastructure provision. The Council has established strong partnerships, which have assisted in the process of producing the Local Plan and its supporting evidence base. It will continue to strengthen these arrangements.

8.1.13 The Council proposes to develop a number of existing mechanisms to assist delivery of Local Plan objectives, with particular focus on key sites and infrastructure. These include:

- Major Sites and Infrastructure Group: The Borough and County Councils meets quarterly to discuss the progress on major sites and their support with County services and any joint funding bids. The Council is to request that NHS England join this grouping.
- North Kent Environmental Planning Group: Will continue to operate to ensure that developer contributions are steered toward implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.
- Development Partnership for Sittingbourne town centre regeneration: Will continue to meet monthly to review progress and ensure co-ordination between development and infrastructure providers.
- Queenborough-Rushenden Steering Group: Will continue to meet quarterly to review progress with the Homes and Communities Agency and Kent County Council to ensure co-ordination between development and infrastructure providers. A separate sub-group will continue to monitor the spending of developer contributions within the regeneration area.

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8.1.14 To narrow the likely funding gaps, the Council will work with its partners to secure funding for its infrastructure priorities from a number of potential sources. Currently, these include:

- Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan: Provides the overall framework and basis for bids for transport funding of major projects.

- Kent & Medway’s Growth & Infrastructure Framework: Likely to provide the overall framework and basis for bids for funding for all infrastructure priorities.
- Local Growth Fund: The Government fund for the bidding of major and local infrastructure projects. In the case of the large local major schemes element, funding will be allocated via Local Enterprise Partnerships.

Public Sector Intervention

8.1.15 To deliver the Local Plan, the Council may be required to intervene to ensure that key proposals come forward. Examples of this will include:

- promoting development opportunities through effective marketing and promotion;
- developing closer working arrangements between public sector organisations and with the private sector;
- developing and implementing strategies to tackle particular issues, such as affordable housing and Gypsy and Traveller issues;
- aligning priorities and using existing public sector funding to meet common objectives;
- preparing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Masterplans to investigate and identify the issues of developing a particular site and provide a clear and more detailed level of planning policy guidance on how they should be resolved. This also enables local communities to be more involved and prepares the way for the submission of a planning application;
- buying land by agreement in order to make it available for development or compulsorily purchase it when agreement is not possible;
- preparing land for development e.g. removing contamination or providing new infrastructure;
- securing public sector funding as ‘enabling development’;
- entering into development partnerships with the private sector and/or other public bodies to implement key development proposals; and
- carrying out development directly or with partners.

Phasing, milestones and contingencies

Main Modification 254

8.1.16 There is a relationship between the different types of development proposed in the Local Plan and the provision of infrastructure. More specifically, there is a relationship between job creation, new homes, labour supply, town centre improvements and infrastructure. Establishing the actual relationships and the timings arising from them is challenging, however, for purposes of this section, the period covered by the Local Plan is divided into four five-year periods:

- Phase 1 - ~~2011-2015/16~~ 2014-18/19
- Phase 2 - ~~2016-2020/21~~ 2019-23/24
- Phase 3 - ~~2021-2025/26~~ 2024-28/29
- Phase 4 - ~~2026-2030/31~~ 2029-31 (onwards)

Main Modification 255

8.1.17 It seems likely that the small to medium scale developments will proceed across the plan period without encountering major infrastructure difficulties that cannot be resolved at the site level through direct provision and development contributions. For the first period of the plan, it is likely to be mostly those sites that already benefit from a planning permission that will come forward, although

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

the lingering effects of the recession of the early plan period years and on-going viability difficulties are likely to affect the pace at which they are commenced and built out. However, the final years of the first phase should also be characterised by the commencement of many of the major development sites allocated by the Local Plan.

Main Modification 256

8.1.18 Assuming an up-lift in the economy is established toward the end of the first five years of the Local Plan a recovery in the overall viability of development across the Borough in time for the start of phase 2, this should represent the primary period within which the larger sites will deliver completions within the Local Plan will start to come forward in phase 2, but their scale, reliance upon larger infrastructure projects and the longevity of any economic recovery state of the economy will all have a bearing upon the pace of build out. Uncertainties will also arise over the capacity of the housing market to deliver the annualised rate of completions that are expected and any reduced overall performance could lead to more protracted development time scales. In any event, the scale of some sites will mean their development will continue into phases 3 and 4 of the plan period. This will be a particular feature of the Council's urban regeneration sites in central Sittingbourne and at Queenborough-Rushenden, together with the largest greenfield allocated sites at Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheppey.

Main Modification 257

8.1.19 An important element within the Local Plan milestones will be the commencement and delivery of improvements by Highways England at Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249, expected for completion by 2024, together with improvements by Kent County Council to A249 junctions to the west of Sittingbourne. Delivery of Junction 5 by the start of phase 3 will be critical if the scale and pace of development at Sittingbourne and Sheppey is not to be slowed. Policy ST2 indicates that a deferral of the project may be a matter that indicates the need for a Local Plan review. For the other A249 junctions, it is anticipated that they will be delivered during phases 2 and 3, subject to the scale and pace of development.

8.1.20 It is important for the Local Plan not to be over-prescriptive in its phasing. Therefore, once the market has determined that a site can come forward, the Council will not place any artificial barriers on holding a scheme back, unless there are solid grounds for so doing, such as the absence of a critical piece of infrastructure or a need to sequence growth relative to another land use on the site.

8.1.21 At Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey, where our strategy requires the most action, there are important relationships between regeneration, infrastructure and growth in jobs and housing. Significant improvements to Sittingbourne town centre need to be made early on to improve its attractiveness and performance and act as a solid base for an uplift in jobs and housing. This is not a separate process though, as the necessary improvements to the centre will in themselves result in job creation and provide housing. This is likely to be a process that continues throughout the Local Plan period, but it is important that the main uplift in housing and population around the town, as proposed by Local Plan allocations, should occur either after, or in tandem with, significant improvements to the centre.

8.1.22 On the Isle of Sheppey, it is strongly desirable that employment development should proceed on the outstanding parts of the Neatscourt Business Park, especially given the growth in housing that has occurred on Sheppey since its inception and the increases in out-commuting from the Island.

8.1.23 Sequencing both these projects ahead of major new housing is desirable but difficult. The complexities and viability issues surrounding them and the national planning policy requirement to maintain a five-year supply of housing land, means that the phasing of sites until economic development occurs is a sustainable desirability rather than a requirement.

Main Modification 258

8.1.24 A further issue impacting on timing of growth at Sittingbourne and Sheppey will be improvements to the A249, including those at Junction 5 of the M2 and at junctions to the west of Sittingbourne. Further work will be necessary to determine whether growth may need to be phased at key sites such as SW and NW Sittingbourne, Iwade and Barton Hill Drive so as to avoid severe highway issues ahead of pending improvements to junctions.

8.1.25 Beyond the broad desirability of phasing growth so that it is relative to the objectives of the plan and infrastructure needs, it not possible to assign with certainty broad percentages of programmed employment and housing growth by five year plan periods. Although likely to be affected by economic conditions, all phasing and timing should be regarded as a set of relationships which will broadly stay the same, although actual timings may differ due to market conditions over the lifetime of the Local Plan.

8.1.26 Table 8.1.1 illustrates a series of milestones to help monitor overall progress on delivering the Local Plan Strategy. Only the larger scale projects and infrastructure are included. The Local Plan needs to be flexible enough to consider whether additional public sector intervention is possible and justified or whether another development might be advanced faster to compensate for major development projects that may have stalled or halted. This will be essential to ensuring that implementation is flexible and can respond to changing circumstances, whilst still ensuring that essential infrastructure is provided in a timely way.

Main Modification 259

8.1.27 Longer term projects not required to meet Local Plan growth, such as completion of the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road ~~and improvements at Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249, and improvements at Junction 7 of the M2,~~ are not included at this stage.

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Table 8.1.1 of submission Local Plan to be deleted and replaced as follows:

NOTE TO MEMBERS: THIS TABLE IS WORK IN PROGRESS AND WILL BE FINALISED FOR THE CONSULTATION ONCE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION IS IN PLACE

Local Plan Milestones		
Phase	Progress of major development	Progress of infrastructure
Phase 1 - 2014-18/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sittingbourne town centre - completion of retail and leisure phases and commencement of new housing, cultural and civic facilities and improvements to public realm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place in national roads programme major improvement for Junction 5 of the M2. Minor interim transport improvement at Junction 5 of M2 completed. Finalisation of developer contributions approach across North Kent to secure

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Local Plan Milestones		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>New retail provision on west Sheppey complete. Employment sites commence at Eurolink V, land north of Swale Way, south of Kemsley Mill and industrial development at Neatscourt.</u> • <u>Planning permissions in place for regeneration at Queenborough-Rushenden to the west of Rushenden Road and at Istil. Commencement of first phase.</u> • <u>Planning permission(s) in place for NW and SW Sittingbourne, at Crown Quay Lane and Iwade expansion.</u> • <u>Development commences at Milton Pipes and Stones Farm, Sittingbourne</u> • <u>Planning permission(s) in place for land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster.</u> • <u>Planning permission(s) in place at Preston Fields, Faversham.</u> • <u>Development commencements at Western Link, Oare gravel workings, Perry Court Farm and land east of Love Lane allocations at Faversham.</u> • <u>Housing completions on outstanding planning permissions on-going.</u> • <u>Employment provision completed at Lady Dane Farm and Perry Court Farm, Faversham.</u> 	<p><u>implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Quality Bus Partnership for Swale in place.</u> • <u>One to two form entry expansion of primary schools at Iwade and Tunstall.</u> • <u>On-going investment in improvements/extensions of existing County Council services (arising from committed housing sites)</u> • <u>Investment in existing GP surgeries at Minster and Sheerness (arising from committed housing sites).</u>
<u>Phase 2 - 2019-23/24</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Main housing development phases with significant completions at:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Central Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Queenborough-Rushenden;</u> • <u>NW and SW Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Stones Farm, Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Barton Hill Drive, Minster;</u> • <u>Perry Court Farm, Faversham;</u> • <u>Preston Fields, Faversham;</u> • <u>Oare gravel workings, Faversham;</u> • <u>Frogna Lane, Teynham;</u> • <u>Iwade expansion; and</u> • <u>Newington.</u> • <u>Completion of housing sites at:</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Enhancements to create public space and public transport interchange at Sittingbourne station completed.</u> • <u>Commencement of primary and secondary schools at NW Sittingbourne.</u> • <u>New GP surgery complete at The Meads, Sittingbourne.</u> • <u>Implementation of early phases of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</u> • <u>Strategic open space provided at NW Sittingbourne.</u> • <u>Extension to Milton Creek Country park secured.</u> • <u>Strategic open space between Sittingbourne and Bapchild (as part of Stones Farm allocation) complete.</u>

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Local Plan Milestones		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Milton Pipes, Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Western Link, Faversham.</u> • <u>Employment sites completed at Eurolink V, south of Kemsley Mill, Neatscourt and Ridham and Kemsley.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Implementation of ecological management plan at Oare gravel workings commencing.</u> • <u>Primary school, GP surgery and community facilities complete at Queenborough-Rushenden.</u> • <u>Land secured for primary school at Faversham (as part of Love Lane allocation).</u> • <u>Minor interim transport improvements at Junction 5 of the M2 completed.</u> • <u>Securing land for junction improvements at A249 at Grovehurst.</u> • <u>On-going investment in improvements/extensions of existing County Council services (as a result of housing allocations).</u> • <u>Investment in existing GP surgeries at Sittingbourne, Iwade, Minster, Sheerness and Faversham.</u>
<u>Phase 3 - 2024-28/29</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Central Sittingbourne regeneration continues with focus on new housing offer.</u> • <u>On going housing completions at:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Queenborough-Rushenden;</u> • <u>NW and SW Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne</u> • <u>Stones Farm, Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Barton Hill Drive, Minster; and</u> • <u>Iwade expansion</u> • <u>Housing developments completed at:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Preston Fields, Faversham;</u> • <u>Perry Court Farm, Faversham;</u> • <u>Oare gravel workings, Faversham;</u> • <u>Frogna Lane, Teynham</u> • <u>Newington.</u> • <u>Outstanding large site planning permissions completed.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>A2 Key Street and Grovehurst A249 junction improvements complete.</u> • <u>Civic, health and further education provision completed within Sittingbourne town centre.</u> • <u>On-going implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</u> • <u>New primary school complete at Faversham (as part of Love Lane allocation).</u> • <u>Provision of open space and footbridge across Milton Creek (as part of Crown Quay Lane and Milton Pipes allocations).</u> • <u>Improvements at A249 Key Street junction completed (if required as a result of town centre regeneration and other growth).</u> • <u>New GP and primary school investment made at Teynham (as a result of Local Plan allocations at the village).</u> • <u>On-going contributions toward improvements/extensions of existing County Council services (as a result of housing allocations).</u> • <u>Investment in existing GP surgeries at Sittingbourne, Iwade, Minster, Sheerness and Faversham (as a result of housing allocations).</u>
<u>Phase 4 - 2029-31 (onwards)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Housing developments complete at:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Queenborough-Rushenden;</u> • <u>NW and SW Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne;</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>On-going implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.</u> • <u>On-going contributions toward improvements/extensions of existing County Council services (as a result of housing allocations).</u>

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Local Plan Milestones

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Stones Farm, Sittingbourne;</u> • <u>Barton Hill Drive, Minster; and</u> • <u>Iwade expansion.</u> 	<u>Council and NHS services (as a result of housing allocations).</u>
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Table 8.1.1

8.1.28 A change in the delivery of one or more of the Key Local Plan Milestones milestones may reflect matters which the Council will need to respond to. For example, in the case of housing, other sites may need to be brought forward, but a wider persistent and widespread structural problem either with a site or sites or in the wider economy may be clear signals of a need to review the Local Plan.

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Infrastructure critical for the five year period following adoption of the Local Plan

8.1.29 Based on adoption of the Local Plan in ~~2015~~ 2017, Table 8.1.2 is intended to illustrate the most critical infrastructure needing to be in place during that period.

Table 8.1.2 of submission Local Plan to be deleted and replaced as follows:

NOTE TO MEMBERS: THIS TABLE IS WORK IN PROGRESS AND WILL BE FINALISED FOR THE CONSULTATION ONCE THE NECESSARY INFORMATION IS IN PLACE

Infrastructure project	Cost	Lead Agencies	Commentary
<u>Quality Bus Partnership improvements (bus priority and punctuality improvements)</u>	<u>£1,000,000</u>	<u>KCC, SBC, developers, bus operators.</u>	<u>Already in place.</u>
<u>Interim transport improvement at Junction 5 of M2 with A249.</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>Highways Agency and developer of Watermark allocation.</u>	<u>Monies already secured through planning permission.</u>
<u>Reserving land for Junction improvements at A249/Grovehurst Road junction.</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>KCC, HA, SELEP, developers.</u>	<u>Improvement not triggered within 5-year period, however, land is likely to be reserved as part of planning permissions at NW Sittingbourne.</u>
<u>At NW Sittingbourne, land for 421 places for primary education via provision of one new two form entry and site.</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>KCC, developers.</u>	<u>Will be achieved by securing land from NW Sittingbourne allocation. Provision of school in post 5-year period from Govt. Allocation to KCC with remainder from S106 Agreements within northern Sittingbourne or CIL once finalised.</u>
<u>At NW Sittingbourne, land for 950 places for secondary education via new 5 form entry and land.</u>	<u>£0</u>	<u>KCC, developers.</u>	<u>Will be achieved by securing land from NW Sittingbourne allocation. Provision of school in post 5-year period and from Govt. Allocation to KCC with remainder from S106 Agreements within northern Sittingbourne or CIL once finalised.</u>

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Infrastructure project	Cost	Lead Agencies	Commentary
At The Meads, an additional 3,742 patients requires an extension to new surgery coming on stream in 2015.	£0	NHS, CCG, developers.	Will be established by 2015 via committed NHS funding to address initial growth in North and NW Sittingbourne. Expansion of facility required in post 5-year period to be achieved by S106 Agreements and/or CIL.
Temporary GP surgery at Queenborough-Rushenden	£0	NHS England.	Funding in place for temporary facility.
Securing tariff/CIL mechanism for implementation of the management measures in accordance with the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries Strategic Access and Monitoring Strategy 2014.	TBC	North Kent Environmental Planning Group, developers.	Required to meet requirements of Habitats Regulations Assessment. Will need to be in place to address growth in early phase of Local Plan from qualifying sites.
One to two form entry expansion of primary schools at Iwade and Tunstall.	£246,090 (Iwade only as Tunstall has funding)	KCC, developers	To be achieved from existing housing commitments.
On-going contributions toward improvements/extensions of existing County Council and NHS services (as a result of housing allocations).	NA	SBC, KCC, developers	Will need to be in place to address growth in early phase of Local Plan arising mostly from committed sites.

Table 8.1.2 Infrastructure necessary to deliver the Local Plan planned growth for 2015-2020 2017-2020

Main Modification 262

8.1.30 The Council believes that the five year period from adoption ~~first part~~ of the development strategy to ~~2020~~ 2017-23 is deliverable despite the current poor market viability of a significant part of the Borough, without the need for major items of strategic infrastructure to be provided in full. It does however, present the starting point for a number of infrastructure projects that need to support the main phase of growth in the Local Plan period post ~~2020~~ 2023. These include, in particular, the infrastructure associated with growth at NW and SW Sittingbourne and Iwade, notably the improvements at the Grovehurst Interchange and Junction 5 of the M2. Beyond this point, deliverability will be much less certain, particularly if poor viability persists. Proposals to manage these risks are outlined in paragraph 8.1.39 onwards.

Main Modifications 1

Infrastructure priorities for the Council

8.1.31 ~~Priorities for the use of S106 or CIL monies will change over time. In the short to medium term, the viability issues affecting the Borough increases the need for priorities to be set.~~

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8.1.32 For GIL, prioritising the most essential strategic infrastructure will be achieved by placing those items on a Regulation 123 List. However, ahead of this process, the short term priorities for developer contributions are likely to be:

1. Transport – given those matters needed to unlock the growth for the remaining period of the Local Plan.
2. Education – given the forecast need for Sittingbourne and at Queenborough-Rushenden.
3. Social care – given the forecast rising proportion of older persons and demands arising from increases in those with specialist needs and how these may manifest themselves for those parts of the Borough with high levels of deprivation.
4. Protecting European biodiversity habitats – given that evidence confirms the need to mitigate the recreational pressures on these areas arising from future growth. It is, in effect a requirement of European Law to address this issue.

8.1.33 These priorities are likely to be most relevant to areas currently with poor viability, elsewhere, affordable housing is likely to assume a greater priority. Beyond this first five year period, the provision of affordable housing across all areas will be a priority.

Main Modification 263

Existing Strategic Employment Sites Longer term development opportunities

8.1.34 There are two of the 'Existing Strategic Employment Sites' identified by Policy CP1, the large scale development of which do not currently form part of the Local Plan strategy:

- the Port of Sheerness; and
- the Kent Science Park

8.1.35 The longer term development potential of each is provided by their identification as 'Longer Term Opportunities' where, should their prospects for the delivery improve, they will trigger a review of the Local Plan. Policy New Regen 3 identifies the broad potential that may be present at the Port of Sheerness and Kent Science Park in Sittingbourne. The amount of and location of development that could arise from these longer term proposals do not form part of the Local Plan, however, progress in bringing forward the evidence to secure regeneration at these locations will be monitored and, if necessary, a Local Plan review, will be initiated.

Main Modification 264

Longer term transport infrastructure

8.1.36 The concept for a Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road is represented as a 'Longer Term Opportunity'. Again its formal adoption as a strategic road project with serious prospects for delivery will lead to a Local Plan review:

8.1.37 Within the first phase of the Local Plan, it has been assumed that major improvements to Junction 5 of the M2 with the A249 will be confirmed within the national roads programme and that it will be implemented during the plan period. The inclusion of a major improvement scheme within a confirmed road programme with a timescale for its delivery is likely to be a strong indicator of a need to review the Local Plan.

Contingencies

8.1.38 Even with the highest level of public sector intervention and flexibility there is a possibility that development proposals may fail to come forward due to reasons beyond local control. At this stage a number of strategic areas of risk have been identified along with appropriate contingency measures.

Risk I: Poor growth in private sector employment

8.1.39 Given the portfolio of economic development sites, it is not considered likely that poor growth will be due to any lack of available sites to meet market demands. The following contingencies are identified:

- consider loosening of use class restrictions in policies to allow other commercial uses;
- strengthen inward investment promotional campaign; and
- Council corporate policy initiatives to improve the skills of the local population.

Main Modification 265

Risk II: Fragility in housing market/market capacity delays investment

8.1.40 ~~The risks for Swale are a combination of the timing of the recovery in the housing market as a result of the 2008 recession~~ arise from sluggish levels of completions at the start of the plan period and the impacts that poor viability may have on house construction.

8.1.41 ~~As at 2014 there were encouraging signs in the recovery of the housing market locally, although there remain concerns~~ uncertainties as to its strength, durability and capacity. For Swale, the poor market has already impacted is forecast as impacting upon the performance of the Local Plan in its first three years and given the lead in time of new housing sites to come forward, it seems unlikely that those sites already with planning permission will secure completions at levels experienced prior to 2008 for a few further years. will present challenges moving forward. There are five related risks:

1. With the majority of the housing growth proposed in areas of current poorer viability, this, alongside the more challenging urban regeneration sites of central Sittingbourne and Queenborough-Rushenden mean that early on, a large proportion of the Local Plan housing supply may be vulnerable;
2. National requirements to continuously achieve a 5 year supply of housing land mean that existing shortfalls must be remedied. A failure to do so may lead to sites outside of the Local Plan process coming forward and being permitted, despite the considerable levels of development land allocated by the Local Plan judged as viable and deliverable by developers promoting them;
3. The phasing of completions at key sites on the western side of Sittingbourne, Iwade and, potentially the Isle of Sheppey may be impacted upon by the timing of transport improvements to A249 junctions. This feeds into the fourth risk;
4. Numbers of housing completions from the latter part of phase 1 of the Local Plan onwards, are forecast to be at levels that could challenge both the private and public sectors ability to deliver. Achieving these levels consistently over a significant number of years will be hugely dependent upon both market capacity and the national or regional investment decisions of housing developers that the Council cannot forecast; and
5. Ideally, the Council's projection of housing delivery, taking account of housing market recovery and long lead in times, should provide a smooth transition from current low level of completions in phase 1 of the Local Plan to the peak years of phases 2 and 3. In contrast to the objective of a smooth transition, the immediate forecast for completions in the next few years are at levels below the annualised housing target, which, to achieve the necessary 5 year supply of housing, requires a considerable jump to significantly high levels of completions which then need to be maintained. Whilst the smooth transition could well be the more realistic scenario as the market takes decisions about the totality of the sites likely to be available at the end of phase I, such an

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outcome could well leave the Council with challenges to its 5-year supply over a considerable period of the plan.

Main Modification 266

8.1.42 ~~The headline results of viability evidence for the Local Plan can be found at para. 4.2.18 and in more detail in [The Local Plan Viability Assessment](#) (2014). The risks for the Local Plan are that the majority of the housing growth proposed are in areas of poorer viability. Furthermore, a significant proportion of this supply derives from the urban regeneration of central Sittingbourne and Queenborough-Rushenden which are especially vulnerable to viability concerns.~~

Main Modification 267

8.1.43 In terms of the first risk, it is possible that viability will recover more quickly and not result in significant risks to urban regeneration projects. In the short term, the Council will consider carefully the viability concerns of developers at the planning application stage in order to ensure that completions can proceed as far as possible. In the specific cases of the regeneration projects, However, public sector involvement within both these schemes has increased confidence that they can be delivered, although the compromises that may still be needed to ensure delivery could impact upon the creation of new sustainable communities. In the case of the regeneration of central Sittingbourne, a development partnership involving the Council and The Spirit of Sittingbourne is at an advanced stage in place and local growth fund monies are to fund a significant new area of public realm. A planning permission for phase 1 of the regeneration proposals should also be in place soon. At Queenborough-Rushenden, the involvement of the Homes and Communities Agency is now likely to deliver a first phase of development as a planning application in 2016-17.

8.1.44 The Council will manage any delays in these projects via the mechanisms in paragraph 8.1.13. Any serious deferral may be a matter that leads to a review of the Local Plan. Outside this process, other market delays will be responded to by the following contingencies:

- considering innovative development partnerships and funding initiatives through the Homes and Communities Agency; and
- reviewing previously unavailable and/or unsuitable sites identified by the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

Main Modification 268

8.1.45 Overall, the remaining four risks will be managed by minimising the barriers that may impact upon the phasing of development and permitting other developments where in accordance with the Local Plan. However significant parts of this risk lie outside of the direct control of the Council and rely upon the private sector to deliver the completions that have been indicated as achievable. Policy ST2 indicates that should shortfalls in the five year supply of housing land seriously compromise the ability of the Local Plan to achieve its housing target, this may be a matter for a Local Plan review.

8.1.46 The Council will also monitor its 5 year supply using the 'Liverpool' method, by which any shortfalls in completions will be made up during the remainder of the plan period. This will also minimise the risks associated with unrealistic annualised levels of housing completions. The Council will monitor its use to ensure that it is kept in place for the minimum time possible, having regard to local circumstances on site phasing and viability concerns.

8.1.47 In the specific case of the second and third identified risks, these will be managed, in part, by the proposed 'over-allocation' of sites by the Council as a means to boost the overall supply and address the possibility of delay or other problems with other allocated sites. It is also assisted by the number of individual sites allocated which means there are potentially many outlets which can maximise delivery. Where sites have been phased for reasons of infrastructure provision, the Council will continue to keep these under review and, where justified, allow sites to come forward earlier where this will not result in unsustainable outcomes.

8.1.48 Even with these measures in place, the Council will need to ensure that any planning application on non-allocated sites is considered having regard to the Council's position concerning its 5 year housing land supply. Where there are shortfalls in this supply that are not due to market failure, this may mean that it will be necessary to grant planning permission on sites outside of the local plan framework of allocations where in accordance with national policy and up to date local plan policies.

8.1.49 Whilst these measures are intended to address risks that may lead to slower housing delivery than forecast, the Council will keep all matters under close review. Should this occur, despite clear evidence either of significant land banks of unimplemented permissions or allocated sites not coming forward for no obvious reason, the Council will not release alternative sites, but commence an immediate Local Plan review, as signalled by Policy ST2.

Main Modification 269

Risk III: Investment in central Sittingbourne falls behind investment in urban extensions at Sittingbourne creating further leakage in retail spending

8.1.50 Achieving a sustainable relationship between investment in central Sittingbourne and new development on urban extensions is desirable, but difficult in practical terms. As already indicated, serious deferral of development within the regeneration area is likely to be a key signal to review the Local Plan. ~~The Council has in place a process in this Local Plan to quickly review the way forward for this particular part of the regeneration area.~~ However, outside of this process, the following contingencies are identified:

- review town centre schemes to identify and resolve issues;
- consider increased public sector intervention as required; and
- ensure out of centre proposals do not prejudice the delivery of town centre retail and leisure development.

Risk IV: Key Infrastructure lags behind growth leading to unacceptable consequences

8.1.51 Poor levels of viability could lead to a reduced amount of developer contributions and therefore delays in bringing forward some infrastructure needs. There is some evidence of such deficiencies having arisen from past growth in the Borough that has resulted in congestion in parts of the strategic road network, a shortage of affordable housing and poor access to key community facilities. Deferral in the delivery of infrastructure can also affect the sustainability of development, the quality of the places created and peoples quality of life. In the long term this would ultimately affect and alter perceptions of the area as a place to live, work or invest, even potentially acting as a bottleneck on further development.

8.1.52 Pressures on the Council to ensure a readily available supply of housing land are likely to lead to developer contributions being reduced or deferred. Likewise restrictions on Section 106 Agreements for pooled contributions will also act to curb infrastructure investment ahead of the Council adopting a CIL charging schedule. Once such a schedule is adopted, the overall fund will need to be prioritised and, in the absence of significant public funding, there will be a shortfall against the total infrastructure needed.

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Main Modification 270

8.1.53 These risks may be minimal in the short term as development delivery for the first five years of the Local Plan does not require major levels of infrastructure investment. However, it is in the second period of the plan where a significant burst of development activity is expected and when the most significant infrastructure will be required. The main risk here relates to any significant deferral in the improvement to Junction 5 of the M2. Were such a deferral to lead to significant delays in development coming forward, this may be a strong indicator of a need to review the Local Plan.

Main Modification 271

8.1.54 ~~In managing these risks, the Council has adopted a development target that realistically reflects the local market and manages infrastructure requirements for at least the early part of the Local Plan. Additionally,~~ Through Policy CP6, the Council will build into the legal agreements of developments, where policy requirements have been significantly reduced, the means to claw back contributions at a later date should values improve at levels notably higher than at the point the permission was granted. For affordable housing, Policy DM8 considers the possibility of commuting provision from more viable areas and using the monies to support provision in areas of poorer viability that are those in greatest need.

8.1.55 More generally, the Council will monitor the situation and widening delays in community infrastructure provision relative to new development coming forward will, exceptionally, be a signal to defer other sites or, exceptionally, mean a review of the Local Plan.

Main Modification 272

Risk V: The need for longer-term the alignment of jobs and housing targets homes

8.1.56 Chapter 4 has highlighted the need ~~for a longer term alignment of the Council's jobs and housing targets~~ to maintain the broad relationship between new jobs and homes. This is important to ensure an adequate supply of labour to meet economic needs and to minimise excessive levels of in or out commuting in line with the objective of achieving the sustainable development principles outlined in the NPPF. ~~This risk is minimised by the acknowledgement that this is likely to be a short-term Local Plan and~~ The Council will monitor the take up of land and commit itself to commencing a review of this Local Plan ~~within three years or its adoption, or sooner~~ if the indicators set out in Policy ST2 suggest it.

8.1.57 Key policies within the Local Plan have also been set out with monitoring indicators intended to provide measures of progress. These are set out within the monitoring schedule in Section 8.2 Monitoring arrangements. Should monitoring find that progress is insufficient to meet current targets it may not automatically mean that a review of the Local Plan should take place. The Council will identify the relevant issues, analyse the problem and propose remedial action if necessary.

Main Modification 273

The Housing Implementation Strategy

8.1.58 National planning policy expects Councils to set out a housing implementation strategy for the full range of housing. ^(8.1)

The housing trajectory

8.1.59 Housing trajectories set out a projected schedule of housing delivery across the Borough up to 2031. ~~Figure 8.1.1 indicates total projected completions in relation to the minimum housing requirements (540 dwellings per annum) of the Local Plan. The Council's housing trajectory and 5-year housing supply calculation is included (and updated) within its Annual Monitoring Report.~~

Note that figure 8.1.1 is deleted. Housing land supply data (inc. a housing trajectory) will be provided to the Examination in the light of 2015/16 housing data when available.

8.1.60 This An housing trajectory may not represent a 'real world' programme of housing delivery across the Local Plan period. This is because it can reflects the amalgamated conclusions about market recovery and views on individual sites contained with the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) following consultation. These indicate a potential and significant burst of development activity for the years ~~2016/17~~ 2018/19 onwards, reflecting a return to more stable market conditions, but which are forecast to be at levels previously unseen in that the Borough ~~has never~~ consistently maintained over the previous 30 years.

8.1.61 Conversely, a proposed housing trajectory may attempt to match the aspirations of developers, known infrastructure constraints and their effect on the timing of delivery, whilst generating a smoother transition between expected low levels of completions in phase I of the plan, to peak provision in the middle period. This is challenging because it requires the Council to artificially smooth the level of completions without knowledge of the many individual investment decisions that developers use to decide whether a site in Swale should proceed ahead of another site in a different location. Such attempts may not achieve a 5-year supply of housing as required by national policy.

8.1.62 Swale's housing trajectory will 'blend' these approaches by taking as read the forecast completions, where provided, by developers themselves, except where there may be important infrastructure constraints needing to be addressed - an example being junction improvements on the A249. Even here, the Council knows that in some cases it needs to secure developer contributions toward some of these improvements and as such development cannot always be held back.

8.1.63 Even such a 'blended' trajectory will include very high expectations for levels of completions in certain years and will need to be monitored in accordance as highlighted earlier in this section.

8.1.64 ~~Although the Council has some confidence in its trajectory for the first 3-4 years, it seems likely that it will be subject to change beyond this. The most likely scenario is that development rates, although expected to pick up, will produce a smoother rate of delivery than shown by the trajectory, perhaps resulting in increased levels of completions toward or even beyond the plan period.~~

8.1.65 ~~Despite its current uncertainties, there is some confidence that a five year housing land supply will be achieved within two years of the plan being adopted in 2015. Whilst this does not represent the continuous land supply from the current day as sought by national policy, it is a realistic representation of current market conditions in the Borough.~~

8.1.66 ~~The Council is aware of pending new guidance from the Planning Advisory Service on the preparation of SHLAA. As a result, it intends to prepare a new SHLAA for 2013/14 for publications as~~

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~~part of the evidence base submitted with the Local Plan for examination. This will include a new housing trajectory which may in turn produce improvements in the five year supply and iron out the issues highlighted above.~~

8.1.67 For the Housing Implementation Strategy, for the short term at least, ensuring that a five year supply of housing land is maintained will be a considerable challenge. However, the Council will fully exploit the following measures intended to boost housing land supply by:

1. Not preventing sites phased outside the five year supply from coming forward unless there are critical infrastructure barriers that cannot be resolved within a reasonable timescale.
2. Responding positively to increases in density on sites where environmental quality is not significantly compromised.
3. Allowing windfall sites to come forward unless significantly detrimental to the workings of Policy ST3, or to the supply of employment land critical to the Local Plan strategy, or contrary to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy.
4. Using the 'Liverpool' method of land supply calculation.
5. Despite having already reduced planning policy requirements to support viability, continuing to ensure that policy provisions are applied flexibly unless it would work significantly against the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy.

Main Modification 274

Planning for Gypsies and Travellers

~~8.1.68 Within the housing trajectory is also a target to provide 82 pitches by 2031. This averages at 4.5 pitches per year. The Council will report on its progress within its Annual Monitoring Report. The Council has begun work on Part 2 of the Local Plan which will bring forward a five year supply of sites for this community. Part of the Council's approach within this Local Plan is the identification of sites on mainstream housing developments. The Council is aware that this approach will take time to gain acceptance and that this presents uncertainties as to the rates of provision that can be made. Part of this uncertainty is whether or not the approach will be found sound in the face of objections. In this event, the Council will ensure that the Part 2 Local Plan meets the full provision on bespoke sites.~~

8.1.69 Currently the Council has both a 5-year supply of sites for Gypsies and Travellers and a relatively low residual requirement for pitches in the remainder of the plan period. The Council will report on progress within its Annual Monitoring Report.

Main Modification 275

Affordable housing

8.1.70 Councils are required to produce a trajectory of expected affordable housing completions.^(8.2) For Swale this issue comes at a complicated and uncertain time for policy making at the national and local levels.

8.1.71 At the local level, the variable policy requirement recommended by the viability evidence, and set out by Policy DM8, means that 107 affordable dwellings per annum could be provided for the plan period)^(8.3). Increasing this provision toward the actual affordable provision of 190 dwellings is unnecessary and would undermine the settlement strategy by requiring an increase above OAN in Faversham and the rural areas.

8.1.72 However, the difficulty of setting any form of target or trajectory for expected affordable housing completions is compounded by the uncertainties of national policy which has created a web of policies, the overall impact of which is difficult to estimate. Firstly, the proposed policy changes brings uncertainty which, in turn creates a natural hiatus while they bed in. Secondly, if existing agreements need to be renegotiated, this creates issues of capacity for all parties. Thirdly, policies driven by different goals may have serious and significant consequences in other areas which may impact upon their overall effectiveness.

8.1.73 In conclusion, given these consequences, the Council does not consider it appropriate to set a target or an expected trajectory of completions at this stage; instead this will be set within a review of its Housing Strategy and the Council's Annual Monitoring process.

8.1.74 Current challenges to the delivery of such housing include the reductions in grant to housing providers and developers current inability to fund schemes at the level of need identified by Strategic Housing Market Assessments. In Swale, policy requirements vary from 0-40%, with some 86% of development in the Borough being within the 0%-10% policy requirement.

8.1.75 Based on these reduced levels of provision, some 1,083 affordable housing completions during the plan period is estimated. To illustrate the effects of reduced policy requirements, only 406 of these would be within the growth area of the Borough. The production of a trajectory for affordable housing completions is problematical:

- it assumes policy requirements as applying for the plan period;
- the numbers and timings of affordable housing completions on existing unimplemented planning permissions cannot be accurately determined. Recent trends indicate about 100 dwellings per annum, although only some 394 affordable dwellings can be relied upon; and
- in terms of yearly provision, it is speculation as to when the provision will be made as these are matters for planning applications to resolve. An even distribution of completions is assumed.

8.1.76 Noting these limitations, Table 8.1.3 presents projected completions on Local Plan allocations only for the first 10 years of the plan period.

Table 8.1.3 is proposed for deletion

8.1.77 The table presents a poor trajectory of delivery against total need, although it seems likely that this position would improve over time. These short term problems will cause further backlog and a failure overall of the Local Plan by 2031 to meet even the policy levels of need. Further trajectories will be produced via the Council's Annual Monitoring Report.

8.1.78 The Council has resolved to use Policy DM8 to consider the use of cross-subsidy in order to use commuted sums from more viable areas to secure affordable housing in areas most at need. However, this may not secure increases in provision overall as they would be at the expense of a reduction of provision in the most viable parts of the Borough.

Main Modification 276

Policy Imp 1

Implementation and Delivery Plan

The Council will work with developers and other public agencies to deliver the vision, objectives and strategy of the Local Plan. Partners will:

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

1. Have regard to the priorities set for the first five years of the Local Plan and make provision for the infrastructure intended to deliver it;
2. Review annually the Local Plan implementation and delivery schedule;
3. Monitor the milestones set out by the Local Plan implementation delivery plan. Significant failures within such milestones may act as a need to review the Local Plan and/or a need to bring forward one or more of the following measures identified by the housing implementation strategy Local Plan implementation and delivery plan;
 - a. ~~not preventing sites phased outside the five year supply from coming forward unless there are critical infrastructure barriers to them from coming forward that cannot be resolved within a reasonable timescale;~~
 - b. ~~responding positively to increases in density on sites where environmental quality is not significantly compromised;~~
 - c. ~~allowing for windfall development unless significantly detrimental to the workings of Policy ST3 or the supply of employment land critical to the Local Plan strategy;~~
 - d. ~~allowing for housing development on non-allocated sites unless significantly detrimental to Policies ST1 and ST3 or contrary to the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy; and~~
 - e. ~~continuing to ensure that policy provisions are applied flexibly unless they would work significantly against the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy;~~
4. Address the risks associated with:
 - a. poor growth in private sector employment;
 - b. fragility in housing market/market capacity delaying investment in central Sittingbourne or Queenborough-Rushenden or other major housing sites;
 - c. delays in central Sittingbourne regeneration creating further leakage in retail spending;
 - d. key infrastructure lags behind growth leading to unacceptable consequences; and
 - e. ~~the longer term~~ alignment of jobs and housing ~~target~~.

8.2 Monitoring arrangements

8.2.1 Monitoring is an essential and continuous part of the plan making process. The Council's [Annual Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) will assess whether the Local Plan strategy is being achieved. This will be closely aligned to the Council's corporate performance monitoring. The AMR will be used to identify where existing targets and indicators need to be amended or deleted and/or new ones included. The AMR will also identify the need for, and the scope of, a review of the policies.

8.2.2 Table 8.2.1 sets out our proposed monitoring framework. The monitoring indicators identified are a mix of relevant indicators drawn from a number of sources:

- as required by the National Planning Policy Framework.
- indicators identified in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan; and
- local indicators identified in respect of key policies of the Local Plan.

Policy	Indicator
<p>ST1 Delivering Sustainable Development</p>	<p>Monitored by key indicators from other policies.</p>
<p>ST2 Development targets for jobs and new homes 2014-31</p>	<p>Main Modification 277</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To monitor indicators intended to signal potential review of the Local Plan by reference to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The past five-year moving trend average of 'B' class net employment completions exceeds 24,000 sq m per annum <u>Economic indicators suggesting there is likely to be a significant change in the delivery of jobs or employment floorspace; or</u> b. The past five-year moving average of net housing completions exceeds 600 dwellings per annum <u>Shortfalls in the five year supply of housing land that seriously compromise the ability of the Local Plan to achieve its housing target; or</u> c. Tangible progress on the delivery of one of the longer-term development regeneration opportunities identified by the Local Plan at the Port of Sheerness; or d. A national statement of transport priorities indicates major programmed improvements to Junction 5 of the M2 within 10 years <u>There are significant delays in the commencement of major works to improve J5 of the M2 with the A249; or</u> e. Delays in the delivery of infrastructure within the Local Plan implementation and delivery plan schedule risks significant harm to the creation of sustainable communities; or f. Assessment under the Habitats Regulations indicating that detailed proposals at a Local Plan allocation are unable to protect the integrity and special interest of a European designated site and that this threatens the ability of the Council to maintain a 5-year supply of housing land; or g. Other material changes in national planning policy leave the plan significantly outdated or unable to provide a clear policy context on an important issue. 2. To monitor indicators intended to measure past and future projected completions to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable housing sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against the Local Plan housing target with an additional buffer of 5%. to include the annualised rate at which pitches for Gypsies and Travellers are provided relative to the overall pitch target; 3. To report on the number of affordable dwelling completions that are provided relative to the Council's estimated provision. 4. Annual jobs change as reported by Annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) to demonstrate progress toward meeting the Council's job target. 5. Reporting on the progress of individual allocations relative to their expected rate of delivery as identified by the housing trajectory and Local Plan Implementation and Delivery Plan.

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
ST4 Meeting the Local Plan development targets	<p>1. Detailed reporting of major development sites by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. progress with delivery of development on allocated and sites with planning permission; b. progress that has been made in removing constraints on development and whether a site is now considered to be deliverable or developable; c. unforeseen constraints that have emerged which now mean a site is no longer deliverable or developable, and how these could be addressed; and d. whether the windfall allowance for housing is coming forward as expected, or may need to be adjusted.
CP1 Building a strong, competitive economy	<p>1. Monitoring of economic and workforce structures to demonstrate improvements to the Borough's economy by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. employment by occupation to show stability in manufacturing, increased employment in retail, leisure, office and B1a use class activity; b. economic activity/inactivity/employment/unemployment to indicate change; c. total spend/no. of visitors/percentage of jobs in tourism (subject to release of Cambridge Model); d. change in number of companies/businesses (no. of VAT registered) located in the area; e. education qualifications to indicate improvements; f. job density (number of jobs filled to working age population) as indicator of greater levels of employment being achieved in Swale by locally living people); g. overall amount of floor space developed for employment by type to show on-going net gain; h. employment land availability by type; i. employment land lost to other uses; j. GVA £ per capita; k. change in annual average wage; and l. town centre vacancy rates to show reductions.
CP2 Promoting sustainable transport	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate progress and move to more sustainable transport modes by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. implementation of transport improvement projects from the Implementation and Delivery Schedule; b. change in method of travel to work, distance travelled, car ownership (where data outside Census is available); c. per capita expenditure on roads, parking and traffic services; d. change in extent of public rights of way in the Borough; and e. number of schools with walking/cycling to school scheme.

Policy	Indicator
<p>CP3 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes</p>	<p>Main Modification 278</p> <p>Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate progress on bringing forward a range of housing types by reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. change in the total number of households; b. change in household size and type; c. percentage of homes not meeting the decent homes standard; and d. change in number of empty properties. e. number of homes constructed to lifetime home standards (whilst standard remains):
<p>CP5 Health and wellbeing</p>	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators associated with healthy communities to show improved quality of life with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. population profile (age structure, ethnicity etc.); b. crime statistics and fear of crime; c. life expectancy at birth; d. health deprivation; e. mortality rates, inc. death rates by cause; f. numbers on welfare benefits (with reference to children and over 60s who are income deprived); g. levels of new open space and sports facilities provided; h. percentage of new development completed in Rural Local Service Centres; and i. progress on health facility provision from projects from the Implementation and Delivery Schedule.
<p>CP7 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure</p>	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate that the quality of the natural environment is maintained or enhanced with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. percentage of completions on previously developed land; b. average densities on permitted housing sites; c. amount of best and most versatile agricultural land lost to significant scales of development; d. planning permissions implemented involving planning condition(s) for remediation; e. frequency of air pollution standards violations; f. per capita emissions of 'conventional' air pollutants, including CO₂, together with fuel consumption; g. new designations of Air Quality Management Areas;

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
	<p>h. changes in landscape character area condition; i. change to overall condition of SSSIs; j. levels of new open space provided, especially natural/semi-natural greenspace. Review of open space assessment when required to determine access to local greenspace; and</p> <p>k.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Main Modification 279 the monitoring framework for the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy established by the North Kent Environmental Planning Framework.</p> </div>
<p>DM8 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment</p>	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate the maintenance or improvement to the historic environment with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. number of Conservation Area Appraisals completed; b. number of assets added to the Local List of Heritage Assets; c. change to number of buildings on national and local lists of buildings at risk.
<p>DM8 Affordable housing</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Main Modification 280 Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate affordable housing provision relative to stated targets with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. average house price relative to average income; b. change in number on housing register; and c. affordable housing completions relative to a trajectory set out in the implementation and delivery plan. </div> <p>1.</p>
<p>DM9 Rural exceptions housing</p>	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate an increase in the overall supply of rural affordable housing units and to measure the effectiveness of the policies enabling mechanisms with reference to:</p>

Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
	<p>a. the numbers of affordable housing units relative to the number of market homes provided to achieve this as a percentage.</p>
DM17 Open space, sports pitches and facilities	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate provision in accordance with stated policy standards with reference to:</p> <p>a. the amount of open space/facility established by type relative to the standard.</p>
DM19 Sustainable design and construction	<p>Main Modification 281</p> <p>Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate improved performance in sustainable design and construction standards with reference to:</p> <p>a. the number of post construction Code for Sustainable Homes and BREEAM certificates; and</p> <p>b. the number of permissions granted and implemented for renewable and low-carbon schemes and their expected levels of generation.</p>
DM21 Water, flooding and drainage	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to ensure that the risk to communities from flood risk/contamination is not increased with reference to:</p> <p>a. the number of planning permissions granted for residential development in flood risk areas contrary to the advise of the Environment Agency;</p> <p>b. the number of developments which use sustainable drainage systems;</p> <p>c. the number of applications which do not receive approval for water supply and wastewater connection from the appropriate water company;</p> <p>d. levels of water quality;</p> <p>e. water consumption per capita (in so far as data collection is possible at Borough level); and</p> <p>f. waste water treatment capacity.</p>
DM23 Coastal change management area	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to ensure that the risk to communities from coastal change is minimised and managed with reference to:</p> <p>a. the number of developments permitted within the CCMA and the number relocated away from it.</p>

8 Implementation and delivery plan and monitoring arrangements

Policy	Indicator
DM24 Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to conserve or enhance landscape condition with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. changes in landscape condition as indicated by a review of the Council's landscape character assessment; b. a formal review of landscape designations undertaken; and c. a review of planning approvals where contrary to Policy.
DM28 Biodiversity and geological conservation	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to conserve or enhance biodiversity within the overall context of achieving a net gain in biodiversity with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a review of planning approvals where contrary to Policy; b. the amount of new habitat created by new development, especially natural/semi-natural greenspace; c. the number of SSSIs in favourable condition and other monitoring of biodiversity designations; and d. any monitoring undertaken of Kent Biodiversity Action Plan/Kent Biodiversity Strategy, including habitats created.
DM30 Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement	<p>1. Monitoring of indicators intended to demonstrate improvements in biodiversity and/or landscape and the effectiveness of the policy with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. number of applications made on the basis of this policy; b. number of applications permitted; c. extent of land proposed for enhancement as a result of the policy; and d. Reporting on implementation of proposals via monitoring arrangements established within planning permissions.

Table 8.2.1 Proposed monitoring framework

End Notes

- 8.1 Para. 47 of National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- 8.2 Para. 47 of National Planning Policy Framework 2012
- 8.3 Swale Borough Council Position Statement

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Introduction

9.0.1 This section details the proposed main modifications to the Proposals Maps of the draft Local Plan. These arise for a number of reasons:

1. In response to representations made;
2. Updating; and
3. Additional allocations for development.

9.0.2 These modifications are addressed in 'plan-order' i.e. relating to the policies as they appear in the Plan.

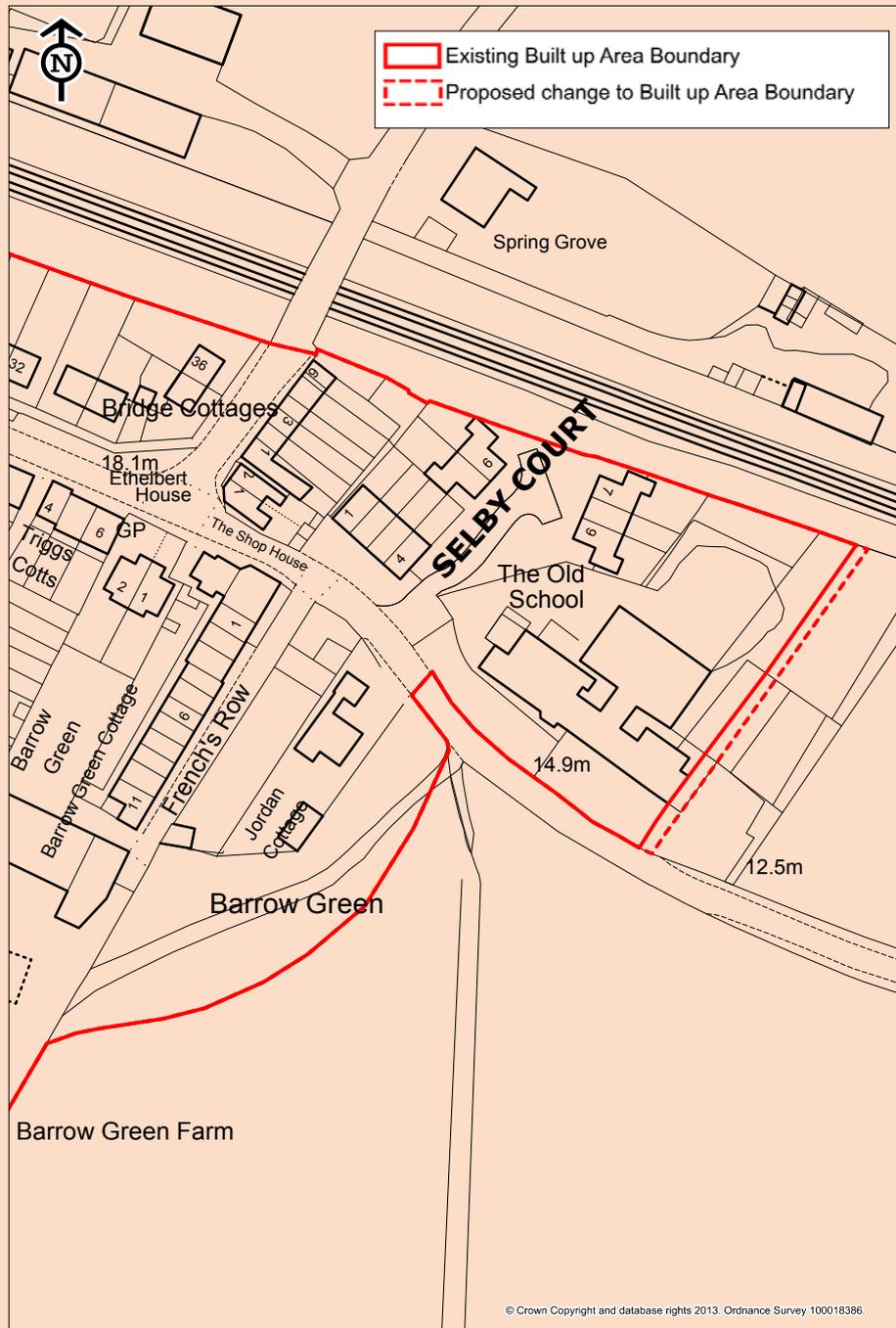
9.0.3 Considering the chapters in turn, the following should be noted.

- Chapters 1-3: No changes are changes to the Proposals Map arising from these chapters.
- Chapter 4: Policy ST3: Changes to the built-up area boundaries. The majority of changes to built-up area boundaries arise as a result of new allocations for development. These are addressed under Chapter 6 changes. The changes within Chapter 4 relate to other changes.
- Chapter 5: There are no changes to the Proposals Map arising from Chapter 5.
- Chapter 6: Here the site allocations, as they would appear on the Proposals Map, are shown. It should be noted that in most instances the built up area boundary would be modified to embrace the allocation in question. These are not shown; rather taken as 'read'. In some cases, where allocations for development are made at the edges of settlements, but where significant elements of the allocation at its rural edges are not proposed for development (e.g. open space), a built up area boundary is shown that does not embrace the full allocation. In these cases, the alignment to the built up area boundary is also shown on the modification alongside the proposed allocation.
- Chapter 7: Modifications relate to changes to policy notations i.e. The area of policy coverage.

Chapter 4 changes to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 282

Proposed change to the built-up area boundary at the Old School, Lower Road, Teynham



Map 9.0.1 Map showing change to built-up area boundary at Teynham (to correct error from current adopted Local Plan)

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Chapter 6 changes to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 283

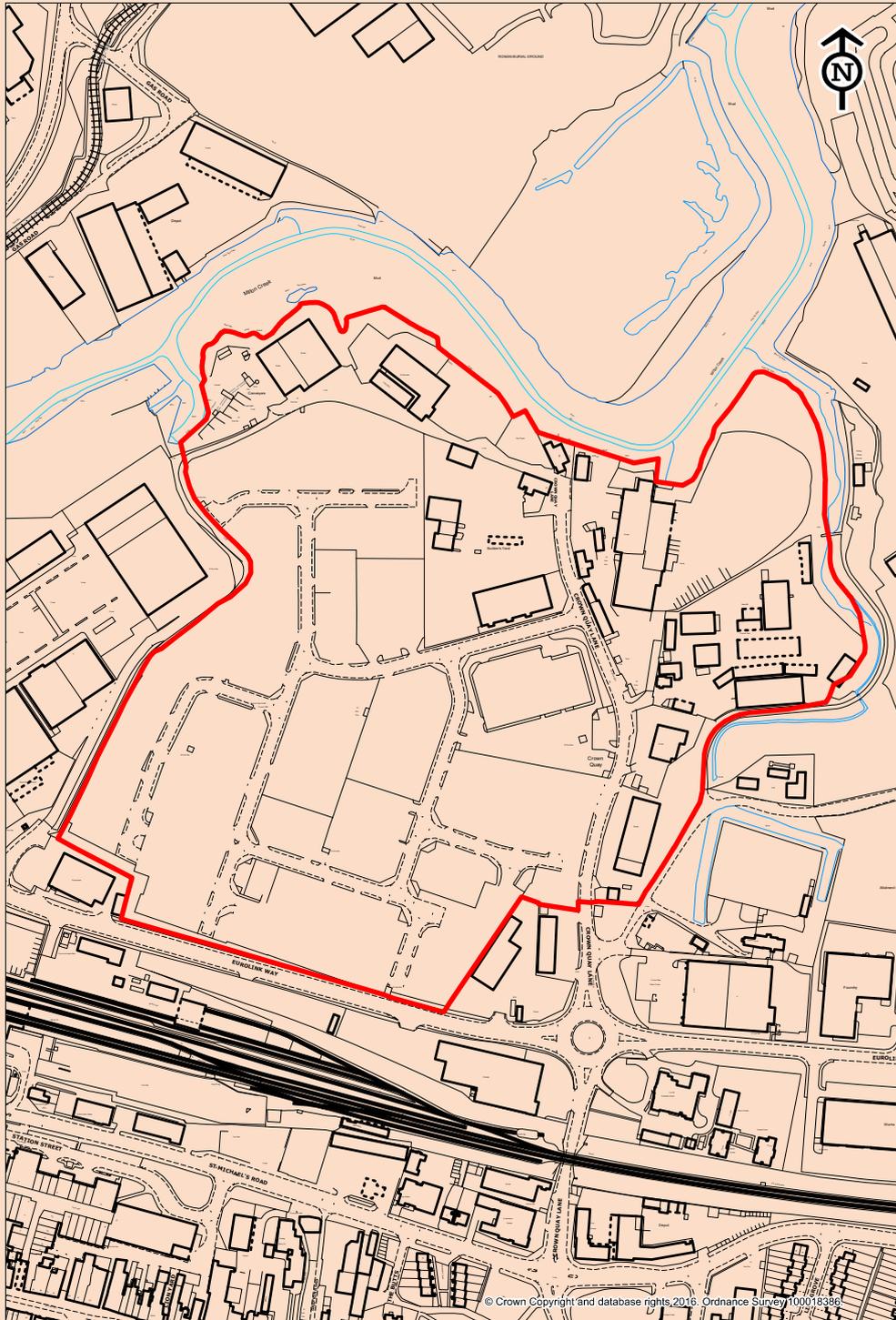
Policy A2 Land south of Kemsley Mill, Sittingbourne



Map 9.0.2 Map showing land south of Kemsley Mill employment allocation (modification shows adjustments to site boundaries of allocation)

Main Modification 284

Policy A9 Land at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne

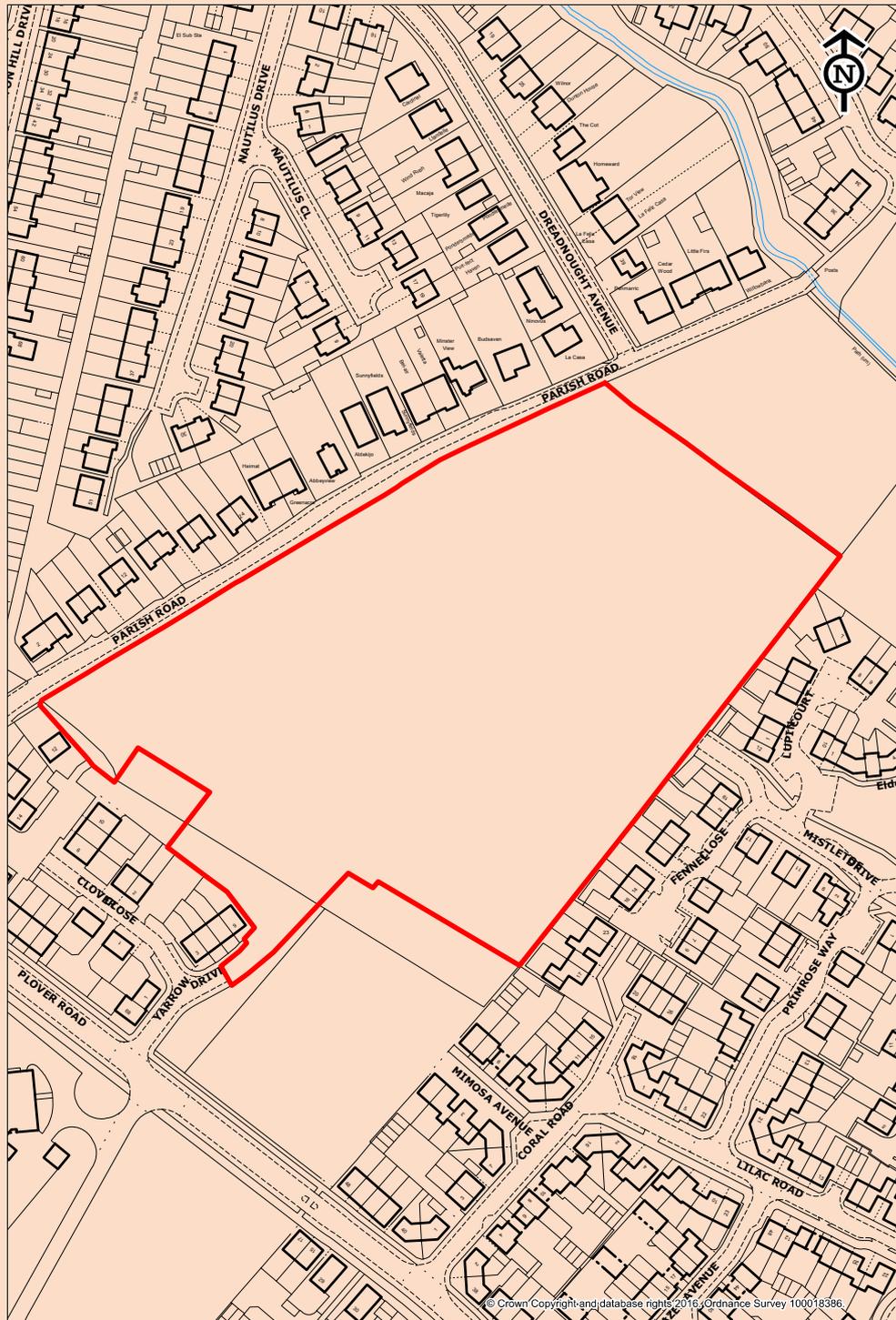


Map 9.0.3 Revised site allocation boundary at Crown Quay Lane Sittingbourne

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 285

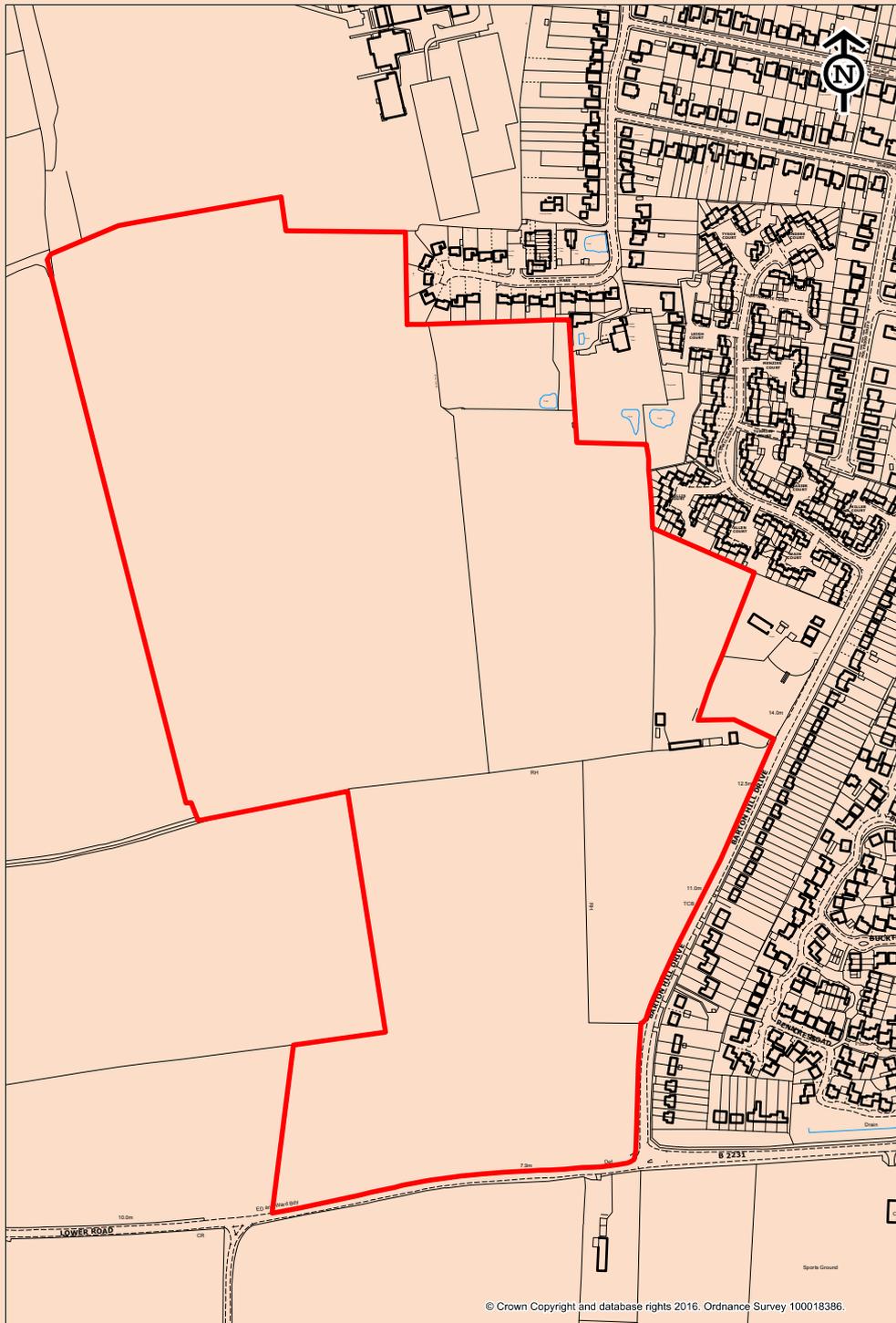
Policy A11 Land at Plover Road, Minster



Map 9.0.4 Land at Plover Road, Minster (revised boundary to allocation)

Main Modification 286

Policy New AX1 Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster

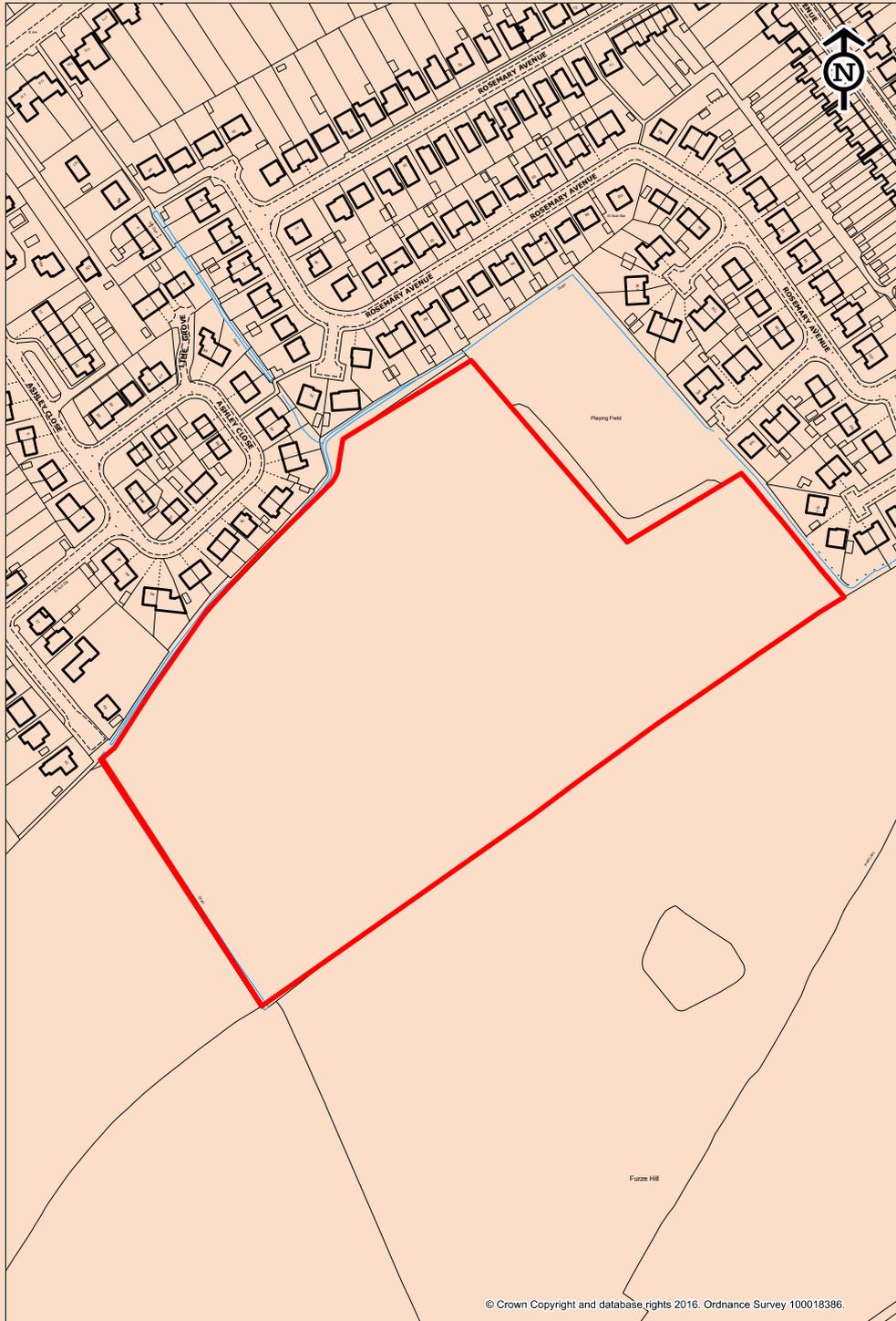


Map 9.0.5 New housing allocation on land to the west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 287

Policy New AX2 Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway

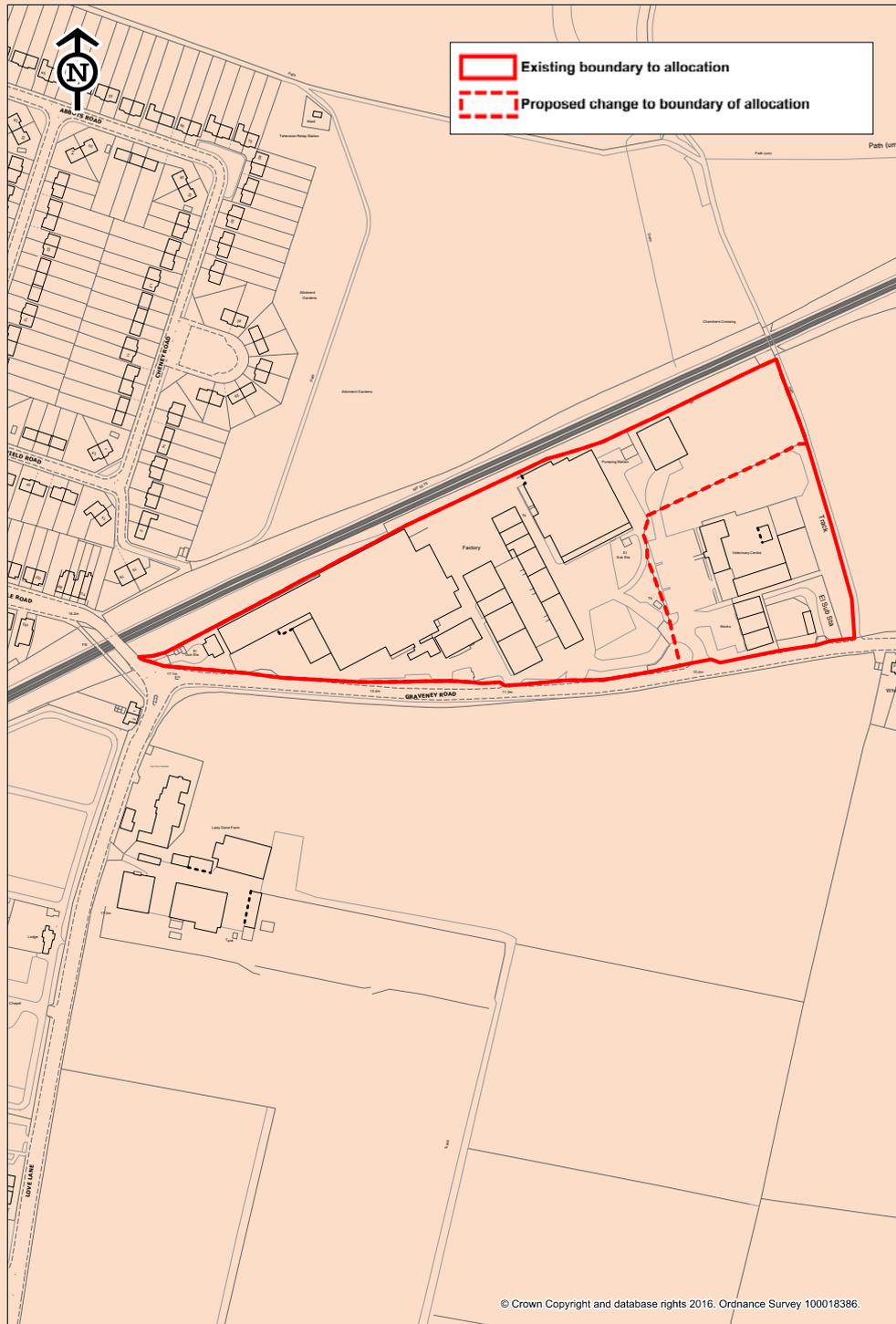


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Map 9.0.6 New housing allocation for land at Belgrave Road, Halfway

Main Modification 288

Policy New AX3 Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham

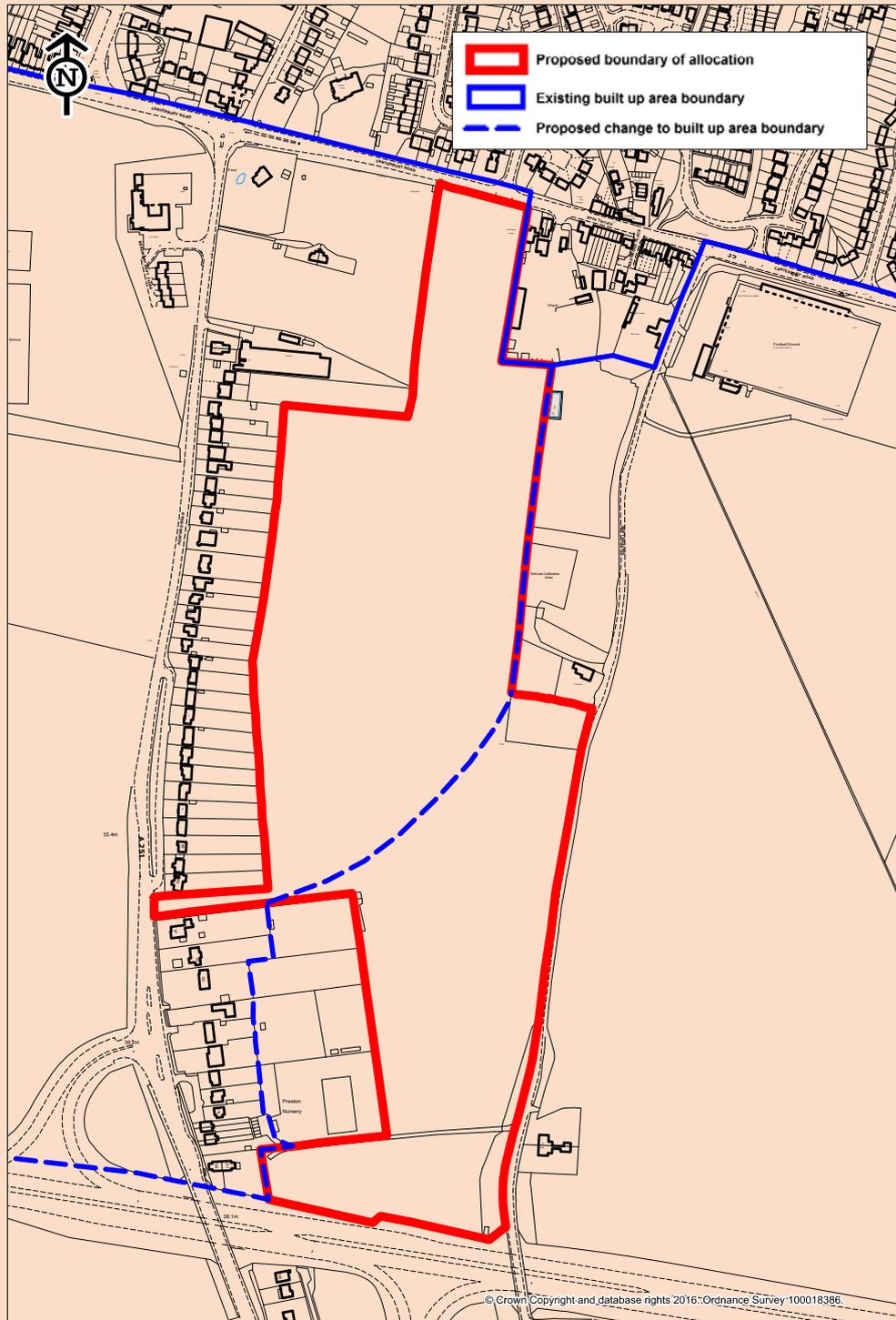


Map 9.0.7 Boundary change at Graveney Road, Faversham

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 289

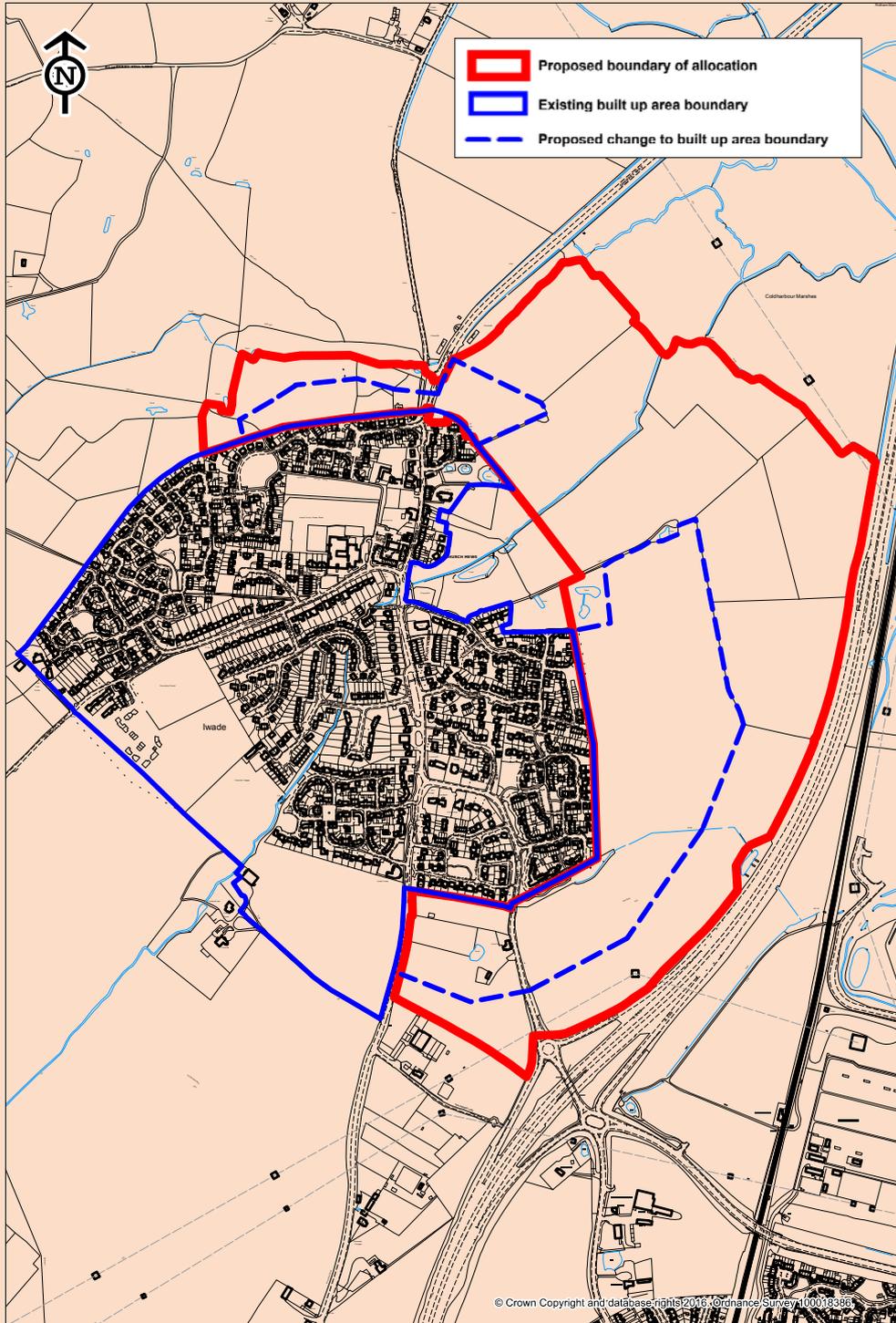
Policy New AX4 Land at Preston Fields, Faversham



Map 9.0.8 New housing allocation for land at Preston Fields, Faversham

Main Modification 290

Policy New AX5 Iwade expansion

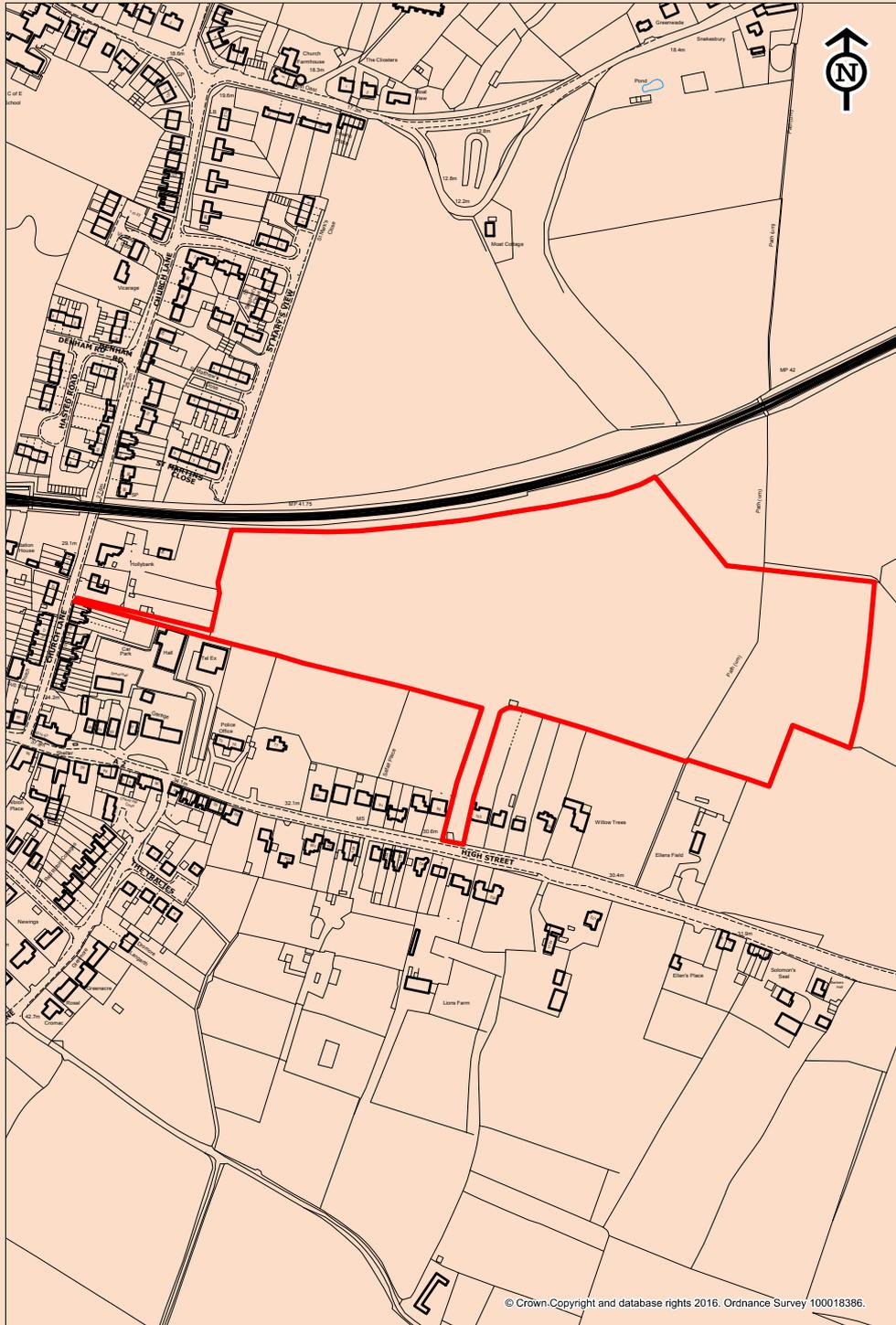


Map 9.0.9 Change to Built-Up Area Boundary at Iwade

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 291

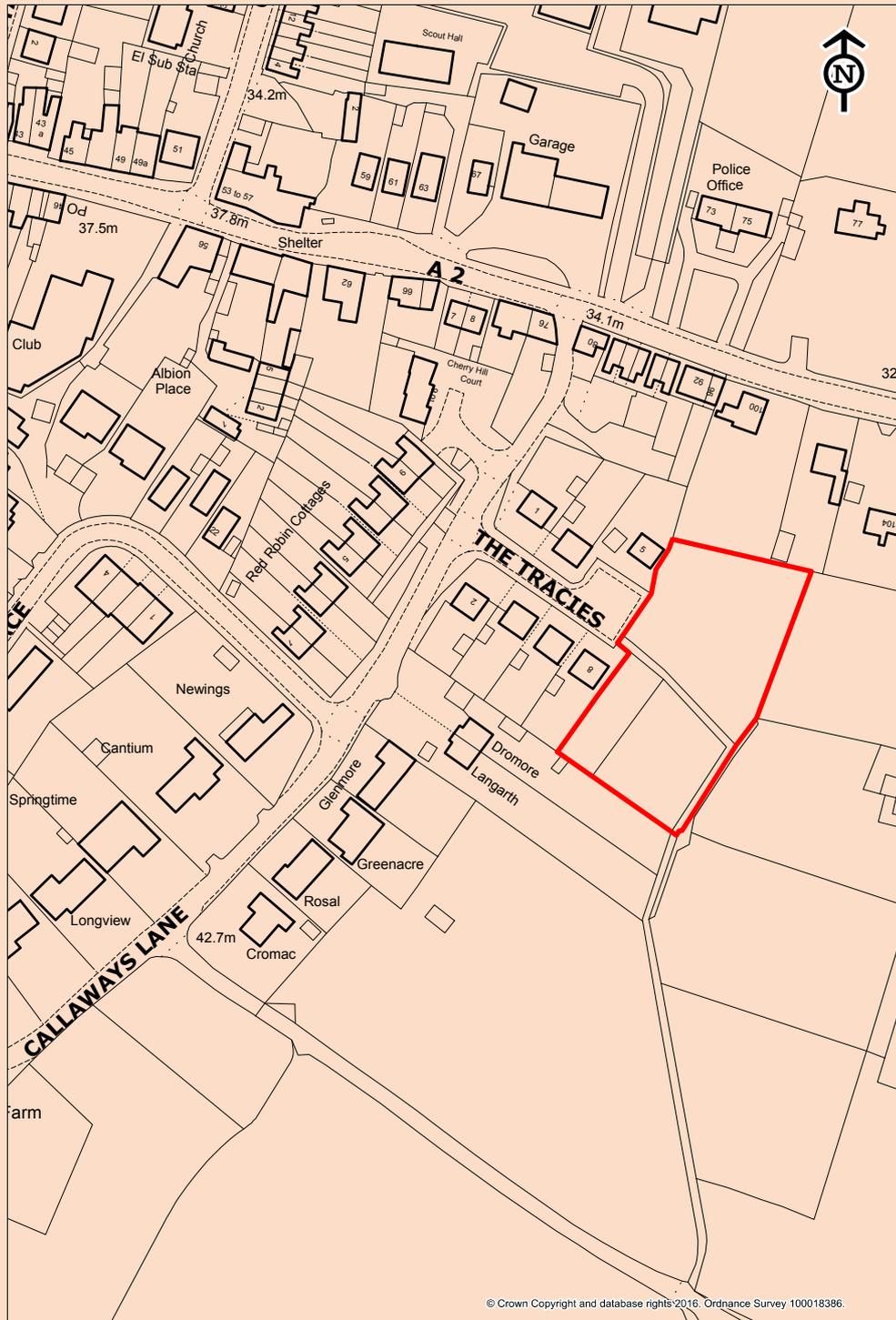
Policy New AX6 Land to the north of High Street Newington



Map 9.0.10 New allocation on land to the north of High Street, Newington

Main Modification 292

Policy A14 Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements - Land at The Tracies, Newington

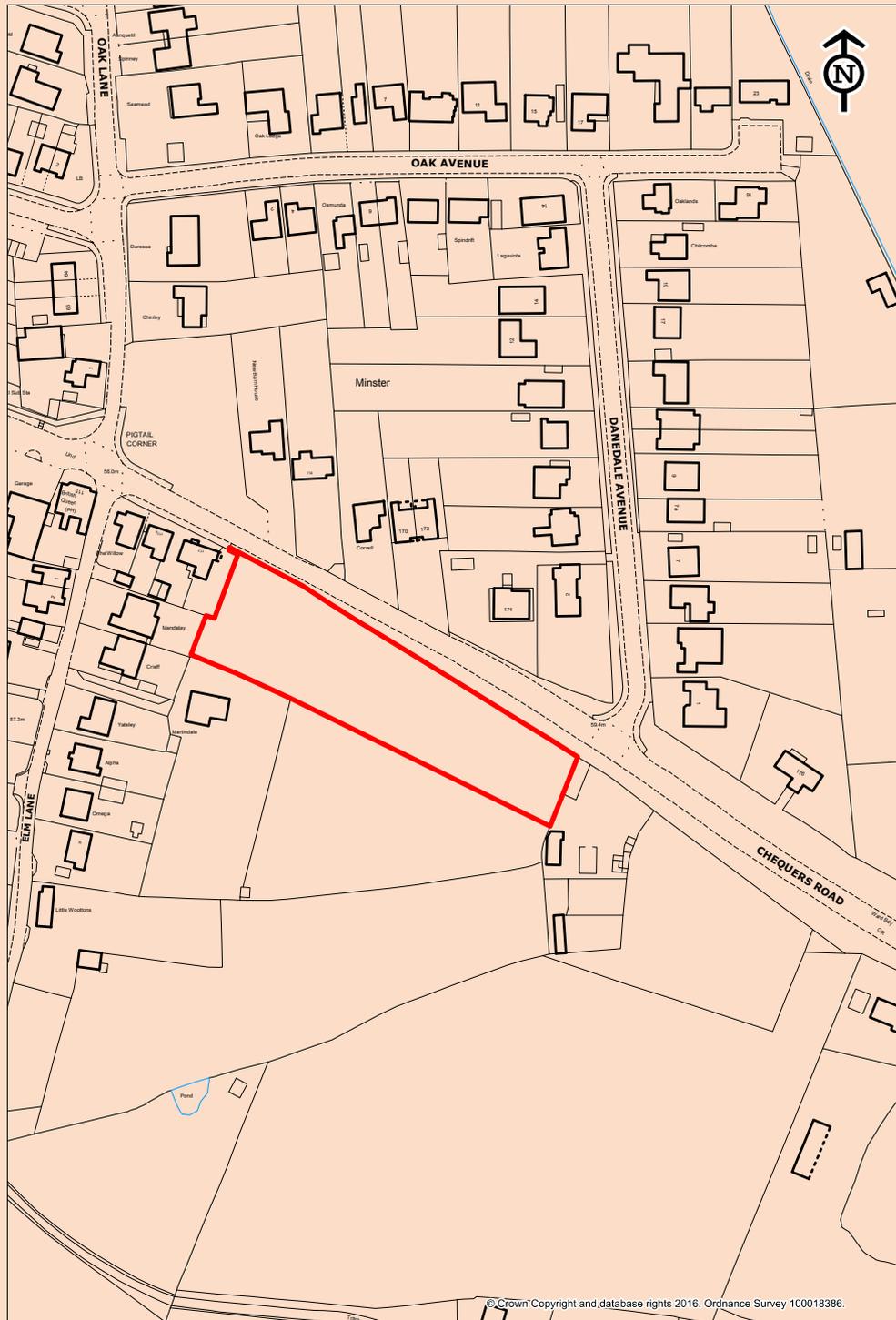


Map 9.0.11 New allocation at The Tracies, Newington

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 293

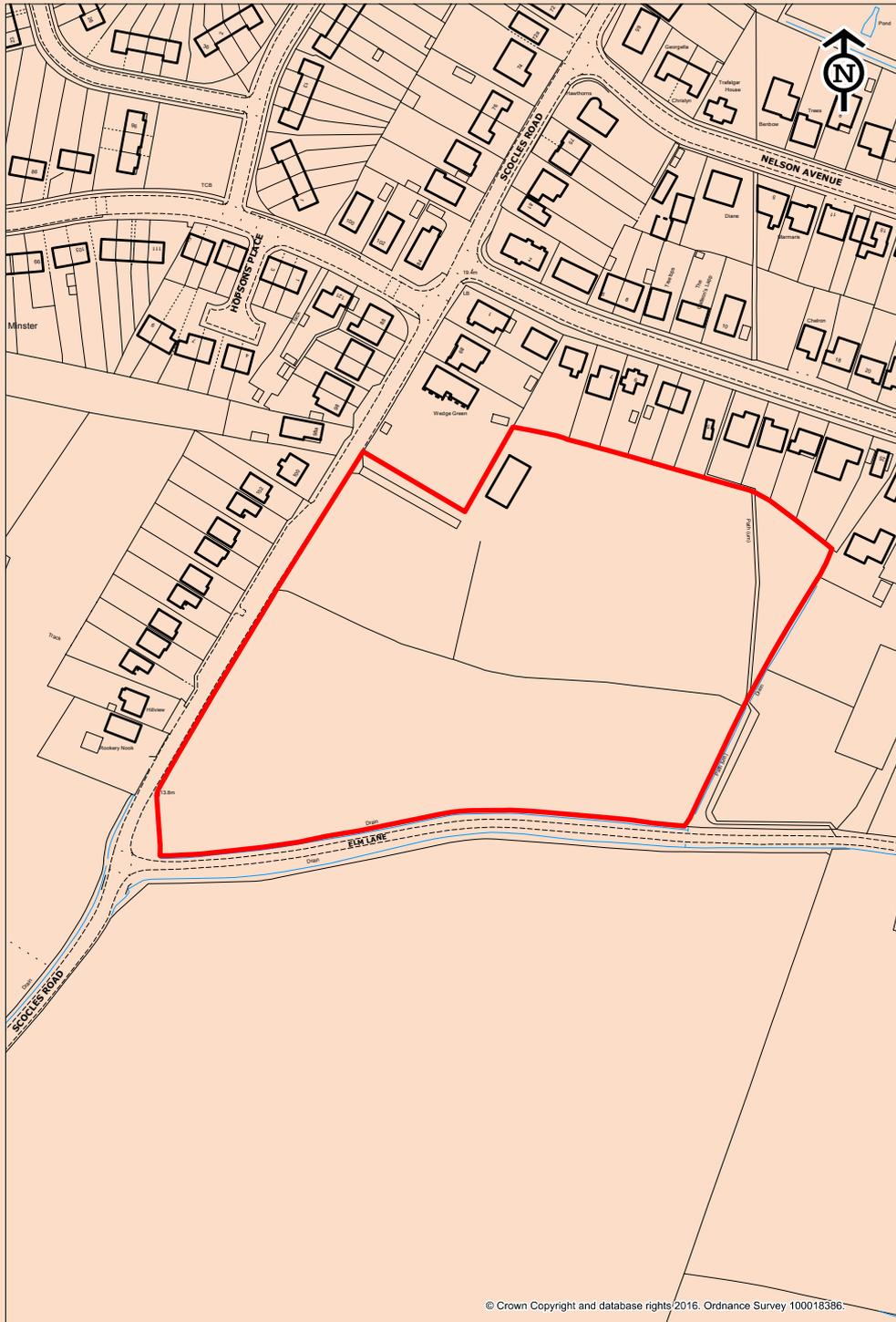
Policy A14 Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements - Land at Chequers Road, Minster



Map 9.0.12 New allocation for land at Chequers Road, Minster

Main Modification 294

Policy A14 Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements - Land at Scocles Road and Elm Lane, Minster

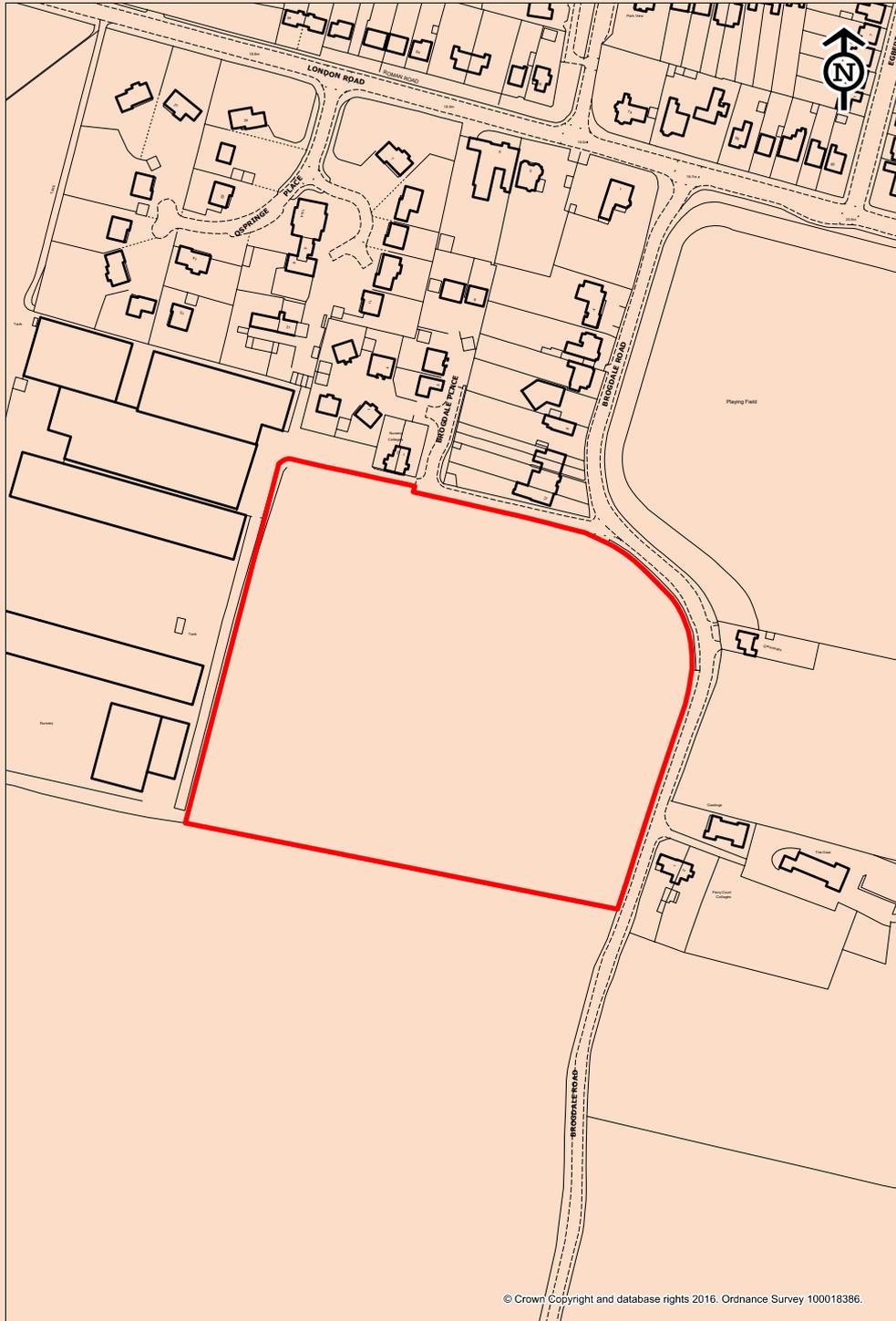


Map 9.0.13 New allocations on land at Scocles Road and Elm Lane, Minster

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 295

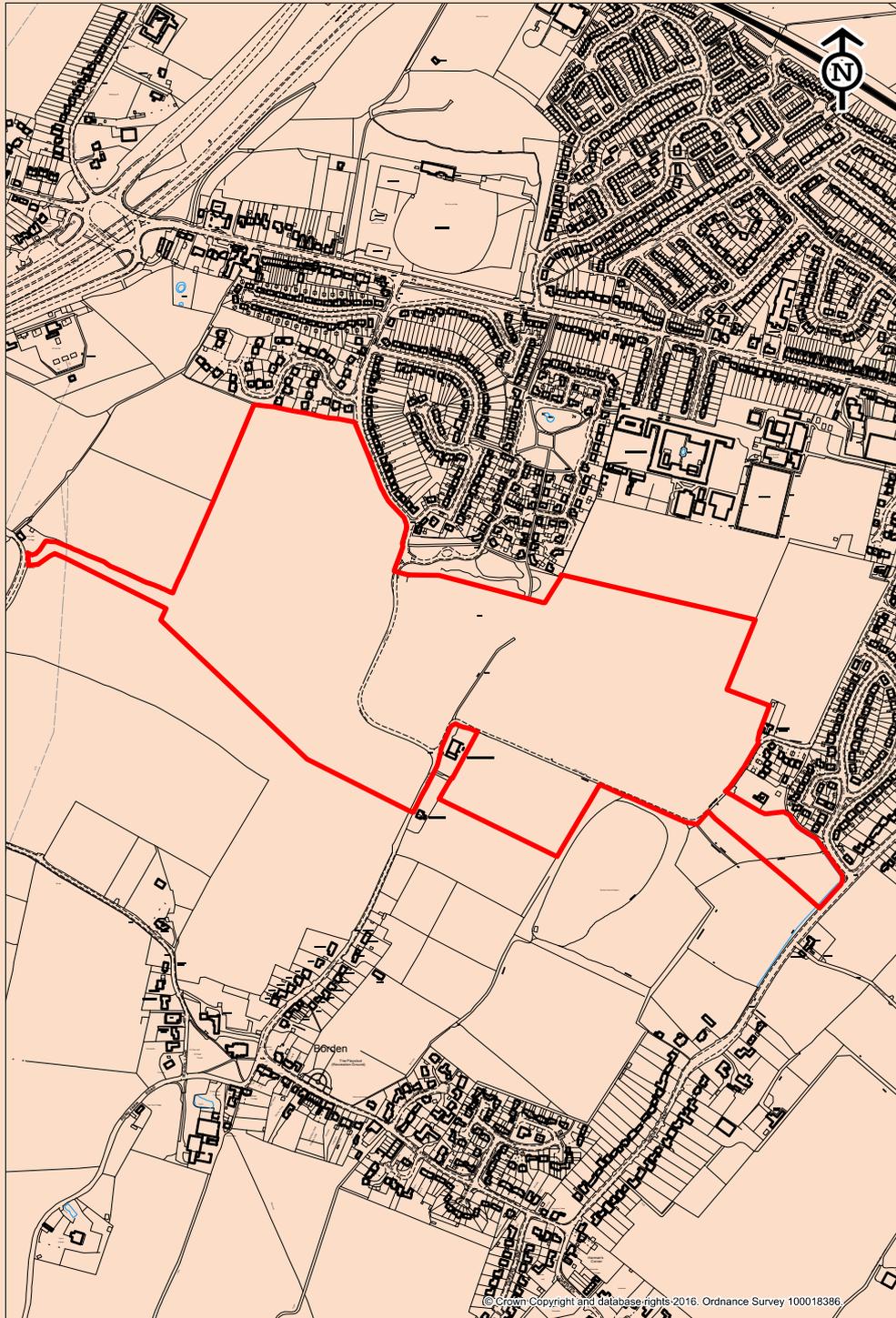
Policy A14 Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements - Land at Brogdale Road, Faversham



Map 9.0.14 New allocation on land at Brogdale Road, Faversham

Main Modification 296

Policy New MUX1 Land at south-west Sittingbourne

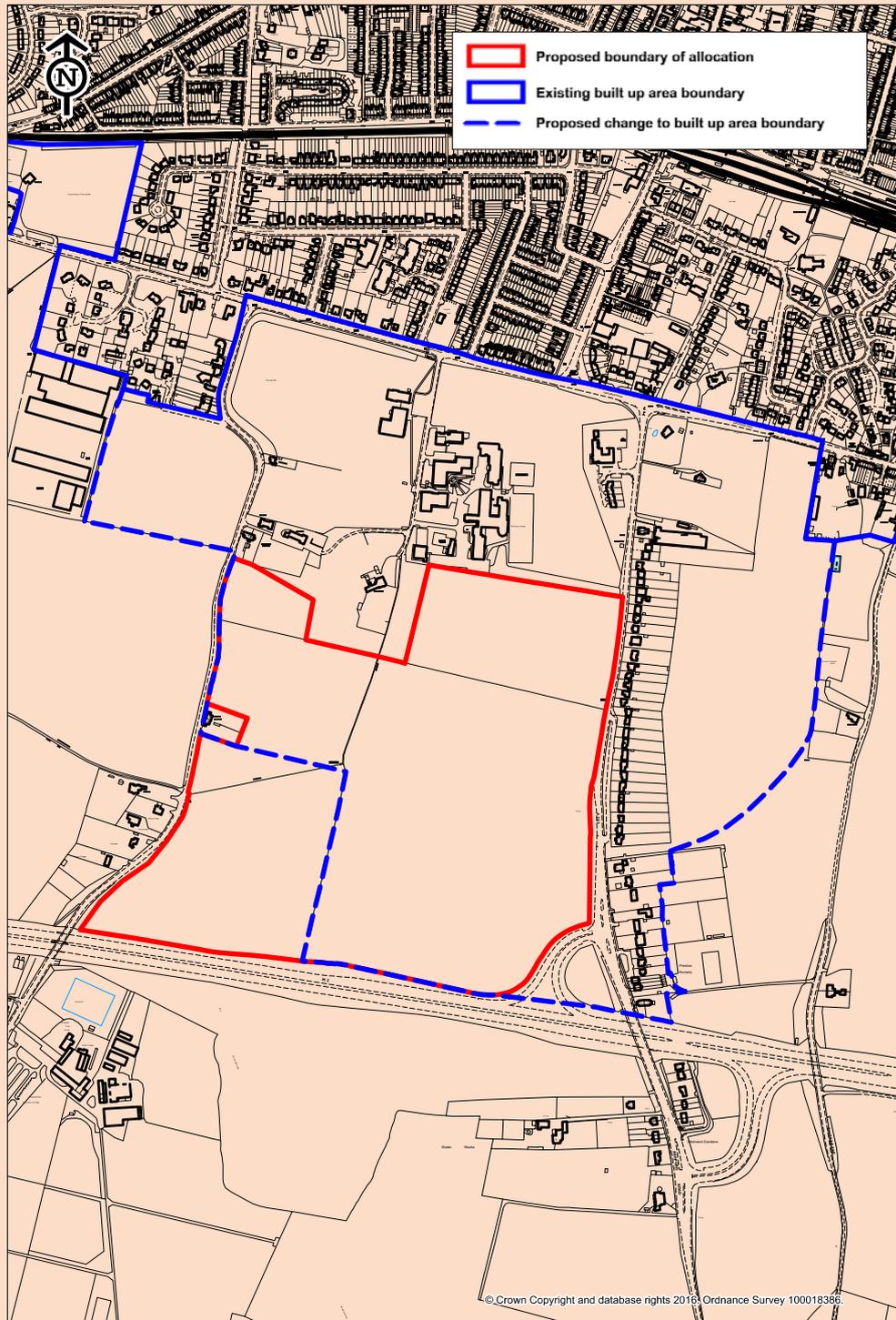


Map 9.0.15 New mixed use allocation for land at south-west Sittingbourne

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 297

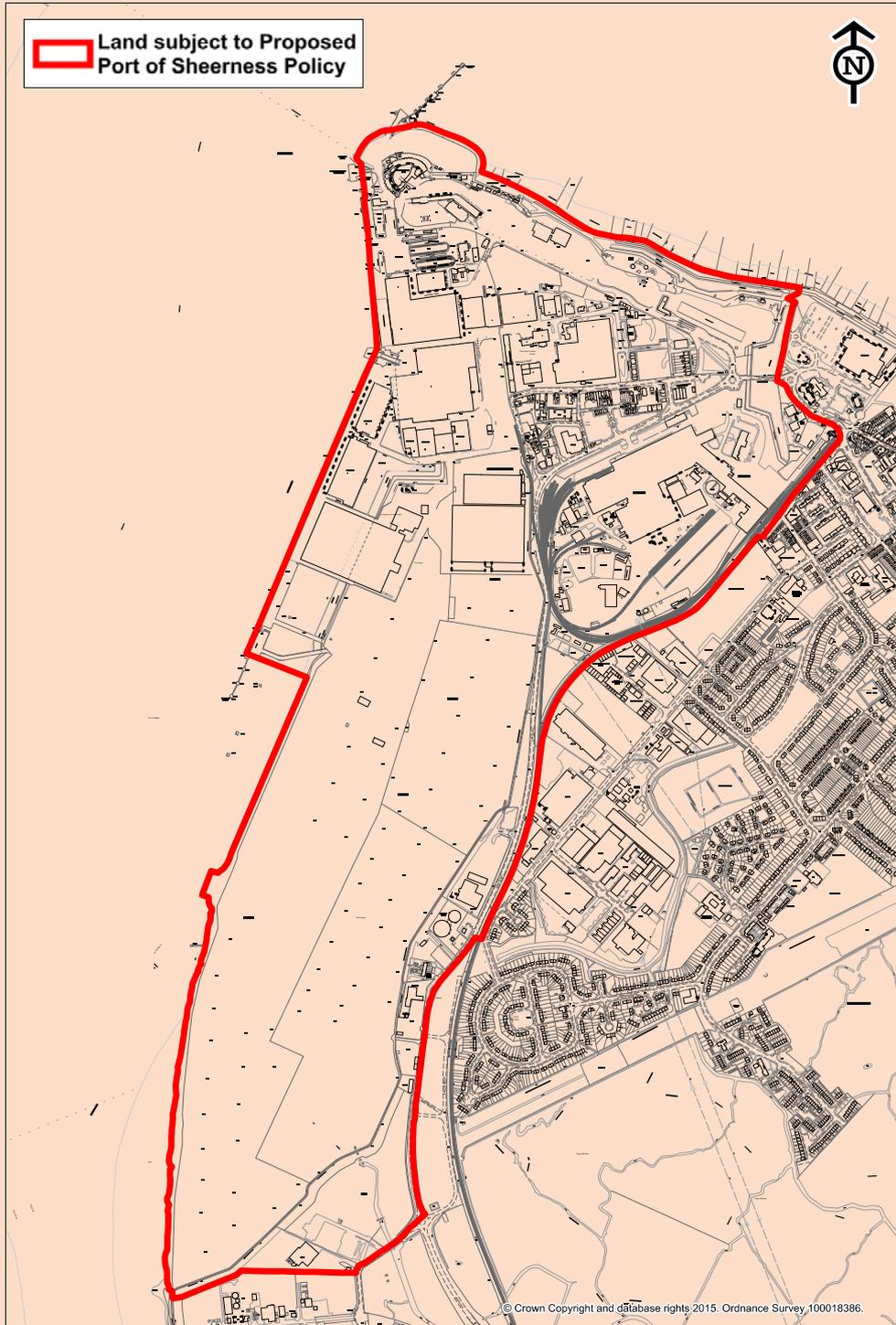
Policy New MUX2 Land at Perry Court Farm, Faversham



Map 9.0.16 New mixed use allocation at Perry Court Farm, Faversham

Main Modification 298

Policy New Regen 4 The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area

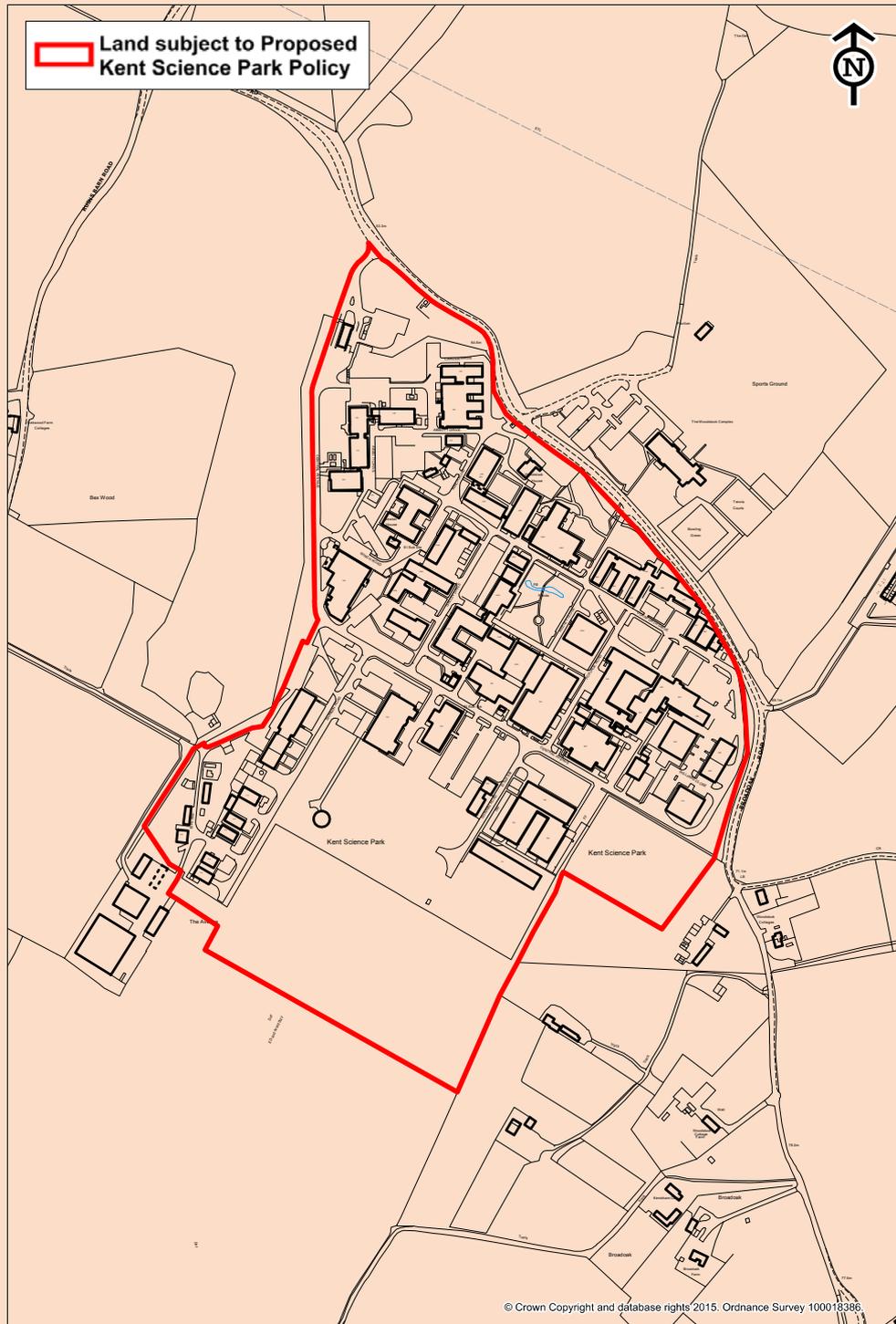


Map 9.0.17 Proposed boundary to regeneration area at Sheerness Port

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 299

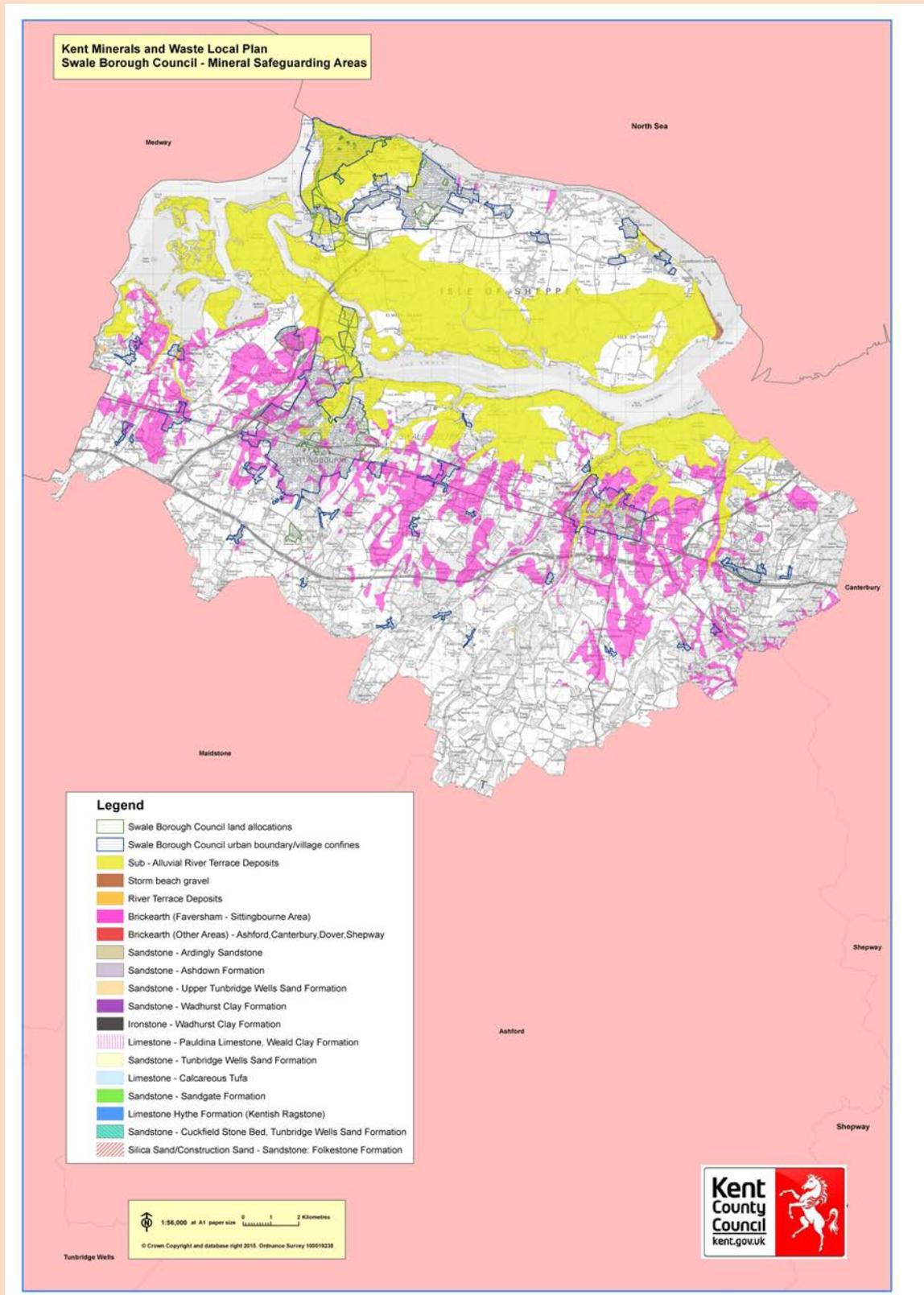
Policy New Regen 5 Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, regeneration area



Map 9.0.18 Proposed boundary to Kent Science Park Regeneration Area

Main Modification 300

Minerals safeguarding area



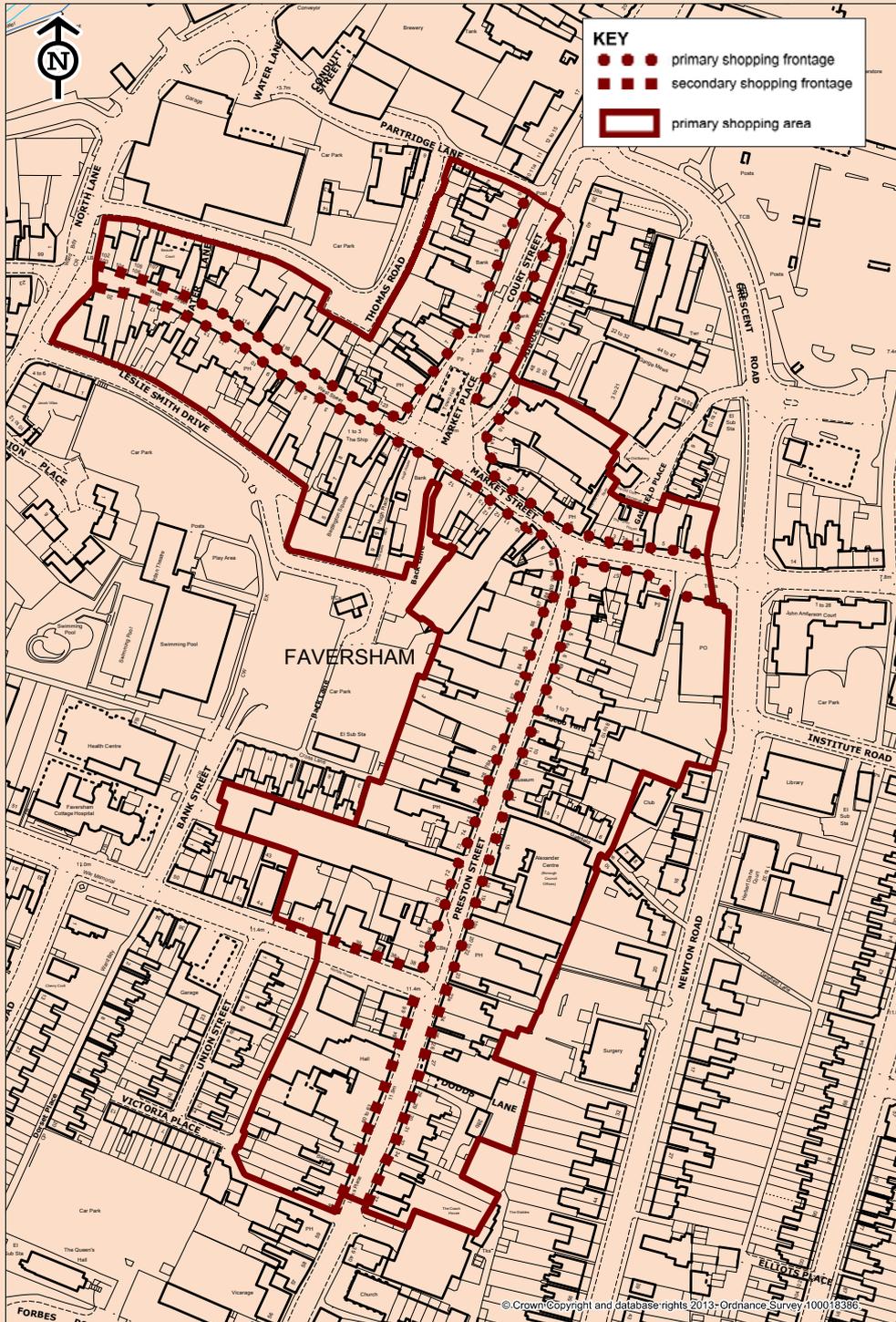
Map 9.0.19 Minerals safeguarding areas

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Chapter 7 changes to the Proposals Map

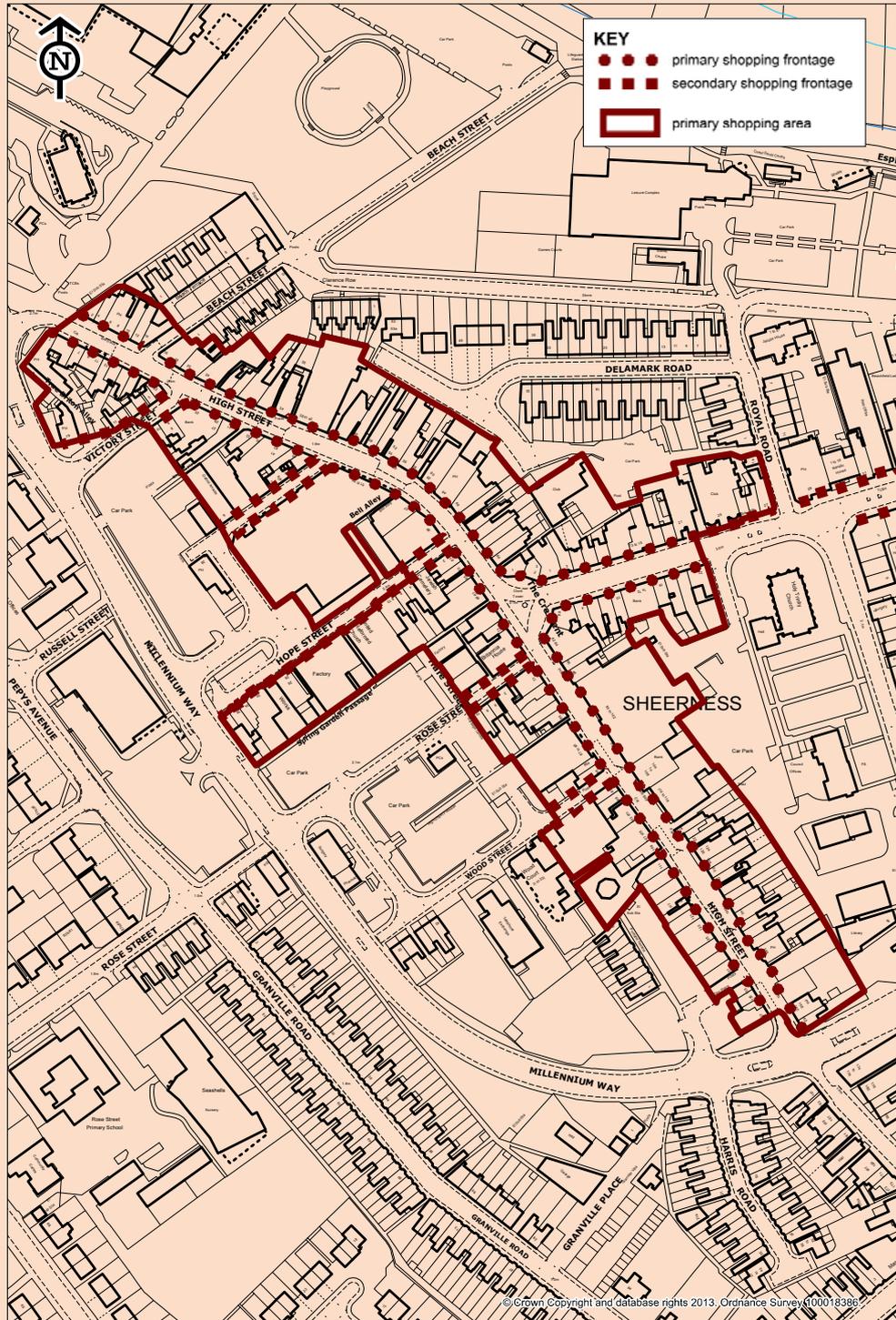
Main Modification 301

Policy DM1 Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas - Proposed change to the primary shopping area/ frontage in Faversham town centre



Main Modification 302

Policy DM1 Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas
 - Proposed change to the primary shopping area/frontage in Sheerness town centre

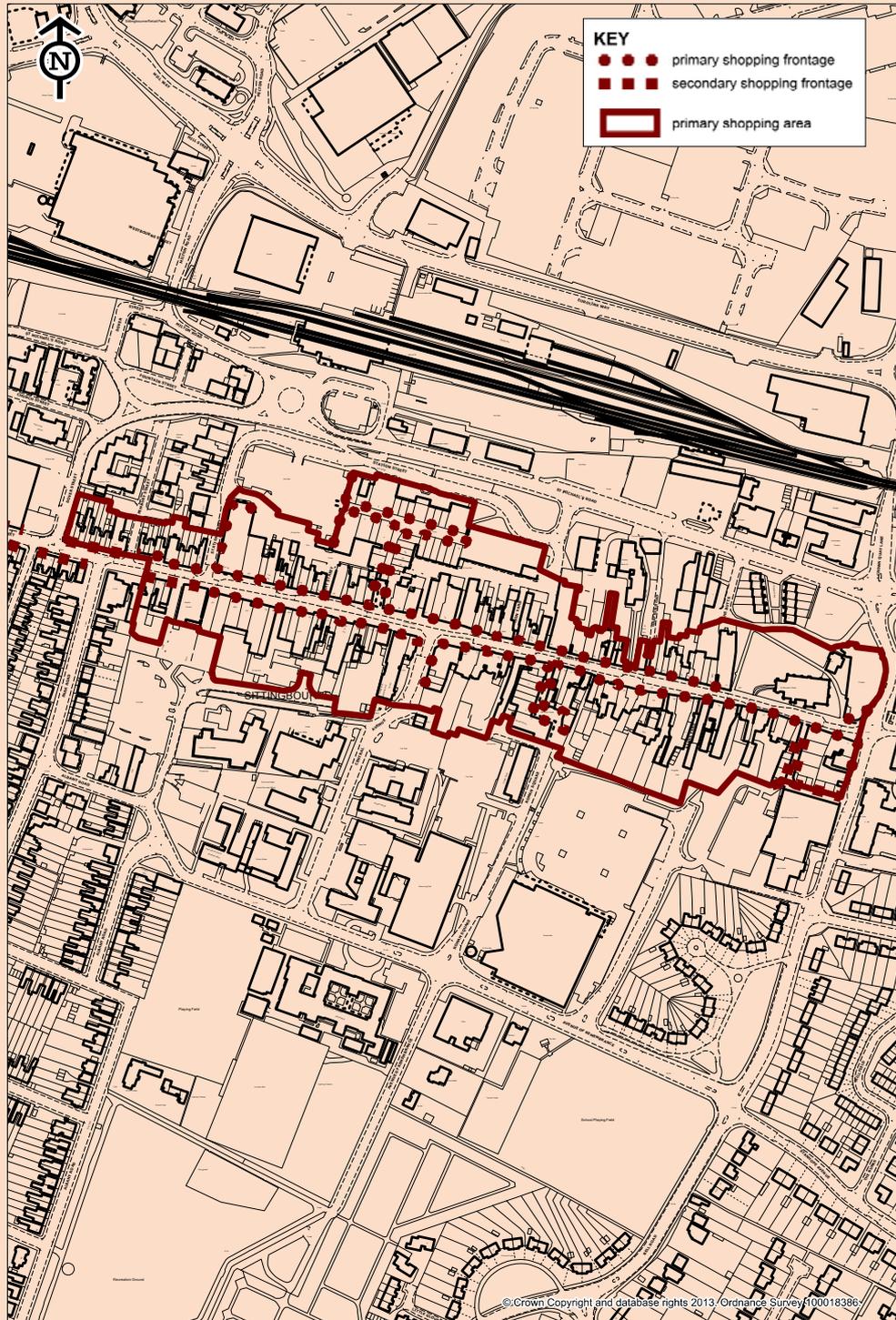


Map 9.0.21 Proposed primary shopping area/frontage in Sheerness town centre

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 303

Policy DM1 Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas
- Proposed change to the primary shopping area/frontage in Sittingbourne town centre



Map 9.0.22 Proposed shopping area/frontage in Sittingbourne town centre

Policy DM18 Local Green Spaces

9.0.4 The Council has reviewed its approach to the proposed designation of Local Green Spaces. The following sites proposed at the submission stage remain proposed to be designated:

1. XXX

9.0.5 These are not subject to modification.

9.0.6 The following sites proposed at the submission stage remain proposed, but are subject to the following modifications to amend their boundaries.

1. XXX

9.0.7 The following sites were proposed as Local Green Spaces at the submission stage, but are no longer proposed. These are subject to the following main modification.

1. XXX

9.0.8 The following sites are proposed as Local Green Spaces and are subject to main modification.

1. XXX

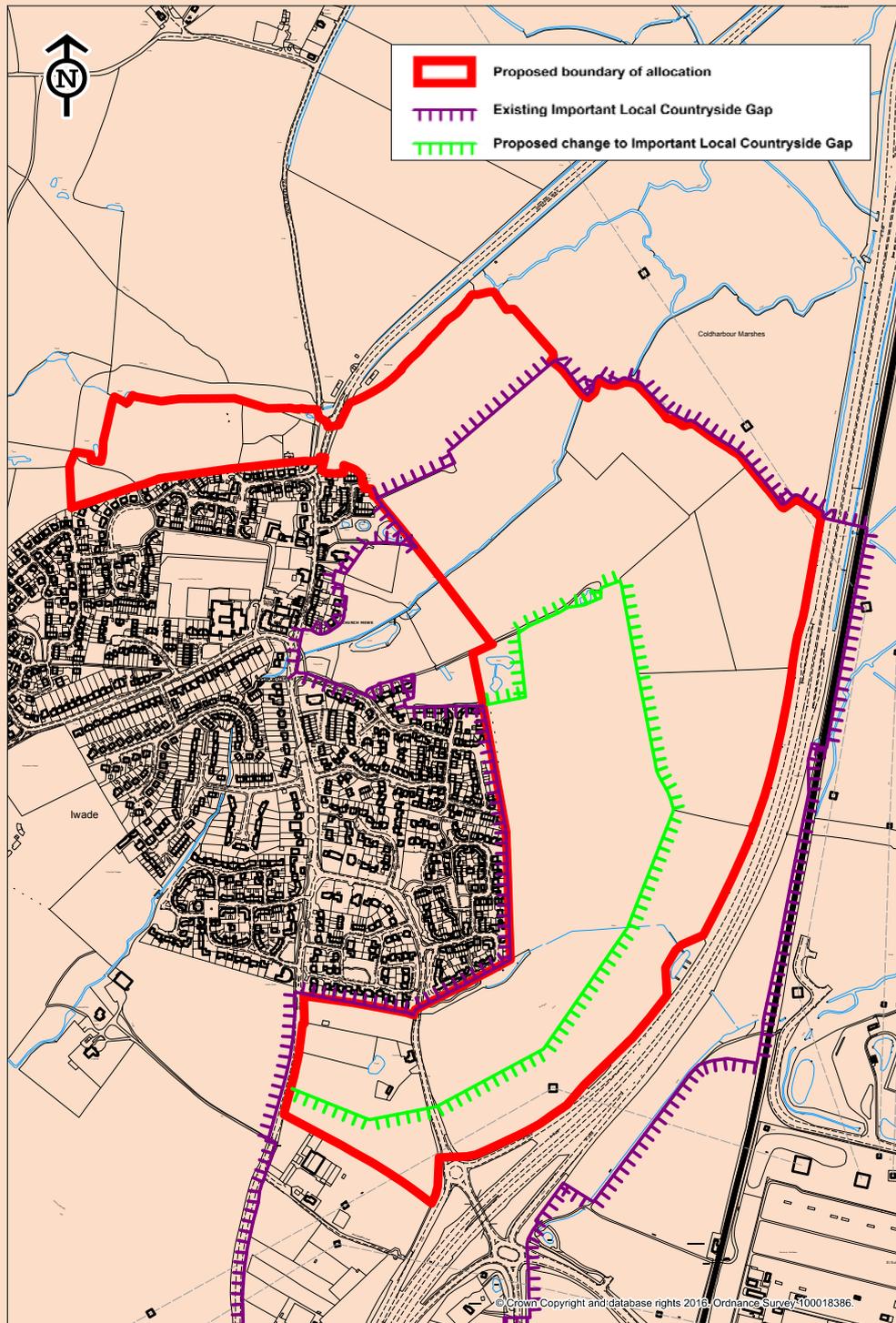
9.0.9 The following sites are not proposed as Local Green Spaces and are subject to the following main modifications.

1. XXX

9 Proposed modifications to the Proposals Map

Main Modification 304

Policy DM25 The separation of settlements - Important Local Countryside Gaps: Change to Important Local Countryside Gap at Iwade



Map 9.0.23 Change to Important Local Countryside Gap at Iwade

Appendix 1 Influences on the Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy

1.1 Creating a natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy draws upon a considerable number of sources of evidence. These include:

1. [Swale Borough Council Green Grid Strategy](#) (2007): Provides a Green Grid Framework Plan to support the provision of future green infrastructure.
2. [Greening the Gateway - Kent and Medway Initiative](#) (2008) Is the partnership organisation for North Kent charged with the promotion of a green grid for the Thames Gateway and the development of green infrastructure projects. 'Green Cluster' studies for the Milton Creek, Faversham Creek and Isle of Sheppey areas: Sets out visions for the design of local green grids.
3. Existing international, national and local landscape and biodiversity designations (see Designated natural assets in Swale): Comprises some 60% of the Borough and represent a very significant consideration. Nationally designated wildlife sites and landscapes will be subject to management plans and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2004 (revised 2009 and under further review), which has in place clear aims, policies and actions for the conservation management and enhancement of the AONB.
4. [Swale Open Space Assessment: Open Space Strategy](#) (2009-2014): Developed to provide a strategic framework for the future management of the Borough's open spaces and supports requirements for contributions from developers where developments create an additional demand for different types of space.
5. UK, Kent and [Swale Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (2008): Highlight priority habitats and species and provide action plans.
6. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas: Identified by the Kent Wildlife Trust and KCC, using data obtained from the Kent Landscape Information System (KLIS), as a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Action Plan, indicating where the delivery of Kent BAP targets should be focused to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits. They have been adopted by the South East and Kent Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships.
7. The [Greater Thames Marshes Nature Improvement Area](#): Covers 48,981 ha with a vision for a 'living and vibrant marshland and estuary landscape where skilled and enthusiastic residents, visitors, businesses and technical experts are harnessed to work in partnership, delivering more wildlife, more public understanding and enjoyment of the environment and greater resilience by the natural world to the changes brought about by development and climate change.'
8. [Swale Landscape Character and Biodiversity SPD](#) (2011): Identifies landscape character areas and their sensitivity and condition, together with a biodiversity opportunity network for each.
9. The Biodiversity Appendix to the [Kent Design Guide](#) (2006): Supports the establishment of a green network, especially within an urban context.
10. Kent Landscape Information System: Contains details on countryside access, landscape character, opportunities for habitat creation and landscape restoration and the Kent habitat survey as well as areas designated for their conservation value.
11. [The ARCH Kent Habitat Survey 2012](#) provides new data on the extent of natural habitats in Kent, identifies areas of importance for wildlife and measures habitat changes since the survey in 2003.
12. The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation Survey 2001: Identified a series of historic landscapes across the Borough.
13. The [Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009](#) requires a long distance route and land for open-air recreation, accessible to the public around the coast of England. Within Swale there is the long distance Saxon Shore Way path and the national cycle route 1.
14. [Shoreline management plans](#) (2008) identify sustainable long-term management policies for Swale's coast in the face of climate change and sea-level rise.
15. Kent County Council's [Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan](#) (2013-2017) aims to increase the usage and enjoyment of public rights of way and open green space in Kent. The network of paths will be a gateway for visitors and residents to explore Kent's heritage, wildlife and iconic

Influences on the Swale natural assets and green infrastructure network and strategy

landscapes. The plan will deliver improvements which contribute to reducing congestion, and which support rural business and economy, health and, most importantly, the quality of life in Kent.

16. The [National Biodiversity Climate Change Vulnerability Model](#) is an assessment of the vulnerability of biodiversity to climate change at a large scale. It uses a 200 sq m GIS grid model to assess Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats for their conservation value, sensitivity to climate change and adaptive capacity metrics. The model will assist the Council in providing a high level indication of the relative vulnerability of BAP habitats to climate change, informing prioritisation of adaptation action and assisting in the development of adaptation strategies for biodiversity.
17. The [Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation](#) (2001) is a tool that provides a framework for broadening our understanding of the whole landscape and contributes to decisions affecting tomorrow's landscape. It has produced interactive GIS-based descriptions of the historic dimension - the 'time-depth' - that characterises our rural landscape.

Appendix 2 Holiday Parks - Conditions for planning permissions

Conditions for planning permissions to be used in connection with the new policy on holiday homes.

2.1 There must be a signed agreement between the park and all caravan/chalet owners stating:

1. The caravan/chalet is to be used for holiday and recreational use only and cannot be occupied as a sole or main residence, or in any manner which might lead any person to believe that it is being used as the sole or main residence, and
2. The caravan/chalet cannot be used as a postal address, and
3. The caravan/chalet cannot be used for registering, claiming or receipt of any state benefit, and
4. The caravan/chalet cannot be occupied in any manner, which shall or may cause the occupation thereof, to be or become a protected tenancy within the meaning of the rent acts 1968 and 1974, and
5. If the caravan/chalet owner is in breach of the above their agreement will be terminated and/or not renewed upon expiry.

2.2 The park will:

1. Ensure all caravan/chalet owners, present and future, have a current signed agreement covering the above points, and
2. Hold copies of documented evidence of the caravan/chalet owners main residence and their identity, which may comprise utility bills, council tax bill, passport, driving licence or similar document, and
3. Require caravan/chalet owners to provide new documentation if they change their main residence, and
4. Send all written communications to the main residence of the caravan/chalet owner, and
5. Not allow postal deliveries to the caravan/chalet or accept post on behalf of the caravan/chalet owner at the park office, and
6. Must seek to ensure that each caravan/chalet is to be used for holiday use only and is not occupied as a sole or main residence, or in any manner which might lead any person to believe that it is being used as the sole or main residence, of the owner or occupant, and
7. Act swiftly if breaches of the above conditions occur, and
8. Adhere to a code of practice as good as or better than that published by the British Homes and Holiday Parks Association.

3 Glossary

Appendix 3 Glossary

Glossary of Terms

Within the supporting text and policies of the Local Plan are a series of terms that indicate levels of control or intent.

Wording	Intervention proposed
Accord/accordance	Be harmonious with/consistent with/conforming with.
Address	Deal with an issue or problem to its resolution.
Demonstrate	Clearly show the existence, truth, or reality of a planning matter by giving proof of evidence.
Encourage	Give support, confidence or persuasion to do something by giving support or advice.
Enhance	Intensify, increase or further improve the quality, value or extent of something.
Expect/ed	As something strongly likely to happen.
Maintain	Cause or enable a condition or situation to continue, keep something at the same level, condition or rate.
Pursue	Seek to attain or accomplish.
Reinforce	To strengthen/to increase by addition.
Resist and oppose	Try and prevent the action or proposal.
Seek/sought	Attempt or desire to achieve something.
Support	Give assistance to through policy or development management decisions, influencing others and, exceptionally, seeking resources to achieve something.
Will and shall	Interchangeable words to express a strong intention or assertion about an action or requirement.

Table 3.0.1 Words of intent or control in the Local Plan

Accretion (coastal): Land mass increasing due to addition of sediment.

Advance the line: Shoreline management policy in which new defences are built seaward of the existing defence line.

Affordable housing: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Aged or veteran tree: A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally.

Air Quality Management Areas: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Allowable Solutions: A former mechanism for ensuring that zero carbon homes can be delivered in practice for most development scenarios, without excessive cost.

Ancient woodland: An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.

Appropriate Assessment/ Habitats Regulation Assessment: Study carried out to make sure that sites which are important for biodiversity at European level are protected and will not be damaged by proposals and policies.

Archaeological interest: There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Article 4 direction: A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

Assistive Technology: Is any product or service designed to enable independence for disabled and older people.

Best and most versatile agricultural land: Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification.

Biodiversity offsets: Conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses, in a measurable way.

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs): BOA maps can be seen as a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy. They indicate where the delivery of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets should be focused in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits.

Birds and Habitats Directives: European Directives to conserve natural habitats and wild fauna and flora.

Building Research Environmental Assessment Methodology: an environmental assessment for rating and certifying non-residential development.

Caravan: Mobile living vehicle used by Gypsies and Travellers. Also referred to as trailers.

Chalet: A small, permanent single storey cabin or house used by holiday-makers, often forming a unit within a holiday complex.

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Climate Change Adaptation: Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate Change Mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs): CCGs will be responsible for commissioning emergency and urgent care, including ambulance services and out-of-hours services, for anyone present in their geographic area. For some services (e.g. A&E attendances and emergency admissions), the costs for an individual patient will be charged to the CCG where the patient is registered (if different from the commissioning CCG). CCGs will be responsible for commissioning healthcare services to meet the reasonable needs of the persons for whom they are responsible. The two CCG's covering Swale are NHS Swale CCG and NHS Canterbury and Coastal CCG.

Coastal Change Management Area: An area identified in Local Plans as likely to be affected by coastal change (physical change to the shoreline through erosion, coastal landslip, permanent inundation or coastal accretion) in which development requires specific management.

Coastal Processes: The processes of erosion, transportation and deposition in which coasts are shaped by the sea and the action of waves.

Code for Sustainable Homes: A former environmental assessment for rating and certifying the performance of homes in terms of their energy efficiency/ consumption. It was withdrawn by the Government in 2015.

Conservation (for heritage policy): The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

Conservation Areas: An area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance is protected. Conservation area guidelines have been produced to guide development decisions in each area.

Convenience Goods: Frequently purchased consumer items (e.g. food) providing a convenience in terms of time savings.

Combined Heat and Power: The combined production of electricity and heat from a single fuel source producing greater efficiency than conventional heat and power generation.

Community facility: Provides a place where people can meet for social events, educational classes, recreational activities, health and wellbeing activities, leisure activities and cultural events.

Community Forest: An area identified through the England Community Forest Programme to revitalise countryside and green space in and around major conurbations.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

Community Right to Build Order: An Order made by the local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a site-specific development proposal or classes of development.

Comparison Goods: High-order (usually more expensive than convenience products) goods such as clothes, furniture, electrical items and other bulky and non bulky household items.

Primary Shopping Areas: Primary areas are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods.

Decentralised Energy: Local renewable energy and local low-carbon energy usually but not always on a relatively small scale encompassing a diverse range of technologies.

Designated Heritage Asset: A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.

Development Plan: Includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans, and is defined in section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. (Regional strategies remain part of the development plan until they are abolished by Order using powers taken in the Localism Act. It is the government's clear policy intention to revoke the regional strategies outside of London, subject to the outcome of the environmental assessments that are currently being undertaken.)

Economic Development: Development, including those within the B Use Classes, public and community uses and main town centre uses (but excluding housing development).

Ecological Networks: These link sites of biodiversity importance.

Ecosystem Services: The benefits people obtain from ecosystems such as, food, water, flood and disease control and recreation.

Edge of Centre: For retail purposes, a location that is well connected and up to 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centre uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. In determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre, account should be taken of local circumstances.

Environmental Impact Assessment: A procedure to be followed for certain types of project to ensure that decisions are made in full knowledge of any likely significant effects on the environment.

European site: This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined by Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

Examination in Public: A hearing into the Swale Local Development Framework, presided over by a Government Inspector to assess the soundness of Development Plan Documents.

Geodiversity: The range of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils and landforms.

Green Infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Can include:

- Parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
- Designated and non-designated natural and semi-natural urban and rural green spaces and landscapes - woodlands, urban forestry, street trees, scrub, grassland, downland, commons and meadows, wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas. May include historic landscapes and other heritage assets.
- Green corridors - including river and canal banks, road verges, railway embankments, cycle ways, and rights of way.
- Outdoor public or private sports facilities.
- Amenity green space – informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens.
- Outdoor play and informal areas.
- Allotments, community gardens and urban farms.
- Cemeteries and churchyards.

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- Accessible countryside in urban fringe areas.
- Green roofs and walls.

For further expansion see the [South East Green Infrastructure Framework: From Policy into Practice 2009](#). The South East Green Infrastructure Partnership a body comprising Natural England, Environment Agency, Government Office for the South East, Forestry Commission, Wildlife Trusts in the South East, Groundwork and the (then) South East England Partnership Board.

Growth without Gridlock: The transport delivery plan for Kent which sets out the County Council's priorities for the county.

Gypsy: Members of Gypsy or Traveller communities. Usually used to describe Romany (English) Gypsies originating from India. This term is not acceptable to all Travellers.

Gypsies and Travellers: Consistent with the Housing Act 2004, inclusive of: all Gypsies, Irish Travellers, New Travellers, Show People, Circus People and Gypsies and Travellers in bricks and mortar accommodation.

Health Impact Assessment: Health Impact Assessments consider the potential impacts of planning policies and decisions on health and health inequalities. They identify actions that can enhance the positive effects, and mitigate, or eliminate, the negative effects of developments.

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Heritage Coast: Areas of undeveloped coastline which are managed to conserve their natural beauty and, where appropriate, to improve accessibility for visitors.

Historic Environment: All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Historic Environment Record: Information services that seek to provide access to comprehensive and dynamic resources relating to the historic environment of a defined geographic area for public benefit and use.

Hold the Line: Shoreline management policy in which the existing flood defence line is maintained.

Inclusive Design: Designing the built environment, including buildings and their surrounding spaces, to ensure that they can be accessed and used by everyone.

International, National and Locally Designated Sites of Importance for Biodiversity: All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Key Diagram: A map which shows indicatively where major development will take place over the plan period and how this links with the main transport routes and neighbouring districts within Swale.

Local Development Order: An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Distinctiveness: A sense of place and our relationship with it. It is what makes one place distinct from another. It can be found in the commonplace as well as the rare and spectacular.

Local Enterprise Partnership: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership, implemented in April 2011, includes councils and businesses from Kent, Greater Essex and East Sussex, creating a new economic powerhouse focusing on driving forward prosperity by creating the right environment for growth.

Local Nature Partnerships: A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, established for the purpose of protecting and improving the natural environment in an area and the benefits derived from it.

Local Planning Authority: The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the district council, London borough council, county council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority and the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Plan: The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the Local Plan. The term includes old policies which have been saved under the 2004 Act.

Main Town Centre Uses: Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment facilities the more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Minerals of Local and National Importance: Minerals which are necessary to meet society's needs, including aggregates, brick clay, silica sand (including high grade silica sands), cement raw materials, gypsum, salt, fluor spar, shallow and deep-mined coal, oil and gas (including hydrocarbons), tungsten, kaolin, ball clay, potash and local minerals of importance to heritage assets and local distinctiveness.

Mineral Safeguarding Area: An area designated by Minerals Planning Authorities which covers known deposits of minerals which are desired to be kept safeguarded from unnecessary sterilisation by non-mineral development.

Mixed-use development: Provision of a mix of complementary uses, such as residential, employment, community and leisure uses, on a site or within a particular area.

Mobile home/Mobiles: Legally classified as a caravan but not usually movable without dismantling or using a lorry.

National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping Project: The National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping (NCERM) project aims to map the risk of erosion for the whole of the coastline of England and Wales.

Nature Improvement Areas: Inter-connected networks of wildlife habitats intended to re-establish thriving wildlife populations and help species respond to the challenges of climate change.

Neighbourhood Development Order: An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) through which Parish Councils and neighbourhood forums can grant planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Neighbourhood Plans: A plan prepared by a Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Managed Realignment: Shoreline management policy which allows for the retreat of the shoreline, with management to control or limit movement.

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No Active Intervention: Shoreline management policy where a decision not to invest in providing or maintaining defences has been taken.

Older People: People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Open Space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.

Original Building: A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

Out of Centre: A location which is not in or on the edge of a centre but not necessarily outside the urban area.

Out of Town: A location out of centre that is outside the existing urban area.

People with Disabilities: People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.

Permanent Inundation: Coastal land lost permanently to the sea.

Pitch/plot: Area of land on a site/development generally home to one licensee household. Can be varying sizes and have varying caravan occupancy levels. Often also referred to as a plot, particularly in relation to Travelling Showpeople. There is no agreed definition as to the size of a pitch, but may be regarded as being sufficient to house a mobile home and tourer and ancillary buildings and equipment.

Planning Condition: A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation: A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Playing Field: The whole of a site which encompasses at least one playing pitch as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010.

Pollution: Anything that affects the quality of land, air, water or soils, which might lead to an adverse impact on human health, the natural environment or general amenity. Pollution can arise from a range of emissions, including smoke, fumes, gases, dust, steam, odour, noise and light.

Previously Developed Land: Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. This excludes: land that is or has been occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill purposes where provision for restoration has been made through development control procedures; land in built-up areas such as private residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously-developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time.

Priority Habitats and Species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Public realm: The space between, and within, buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.

Ramsar Sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Registered Social Landlords: A housing association, housing trust, housing cooperative or housing company that provides housing mainly for households in need either for rent or under shared equity arrangements.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy: Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).

Rural Exception Sites: Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.

Section 106 (S.106)/Planning Obligations: Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements, are legally binding agreements typically negotiated between local authorities and developers in the context of planning applications and are often site specific, and or relate to some type of supporting infrastructure provision. They are a mechanism by which measures are secured to make development acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.

Seascape: An area of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, whose character results from the actions and interactions of land with sea, by natural and/or human factors.

Secondary Shopping Areas: Secondary areas provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Settled community/people: Reference to non-Travellers (those who live in houses).

Shared economy: Or, collaborative consumption, is an economic arrangement in which participants share access to products or services, rather than having individual ownership. Often this is enabled by connecting with strangers online. You could have someone to stay in your spare room or your sofa, lend your neighbour your car, share your clothes, even your time.

Shoreline Management Plans: A Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a large-scale assessment of the risks associated with coastal processes and helps reduce these risks to people and the developed, historic and natural environments. Coastal processes include tidal patterns, wave height, wave direction and the movement of beach and seabed materials.

Significance (for heritage policy): The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Site Investigation Information: Includes a risk assessment of land potentially affected by contamination, or ground stability and slope stability reports, as appropriate. All investigations of land potentially affected

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by contamination should be carried out in accordance with established procedures (such as BS10175 (2001) Code of Practice for the Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites). The minimum information that should be provided by an applicant is the report of a desk study and site reconnaissance.

Site of Special Scientific Interest: Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Areas of Conservation: Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.

Special Protection Areas: Network of areas within European Union countries that have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds. These sites are designated under the EU Birds Directive.

Static caravan: Larger caravan than the 'tourer' type. Can be moved but only with the use of a large vehicle. Often referred to simply as a trailer.

Stepping Stones: Pockets of habitat that, while not necessarily connected, facilitate the movement of species across otherwise inhospitable landscapes.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: A procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which requires the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: The requirement to undertake a SFRA is set out in Government guidance.

Supplementary Planning Documents: Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.

Sustainable Transport Modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS): Means of managing surface water drainage to reduce flooding and pollution impacts.

Swale Public Services Board: Body that brings together senior representatives from the key statutory, voluntary, community and business sectors in the Borough with the aim of improving the quality of life for local people and for greater effectiveness and efficiency to oversee and shape the local delivery of services. Its role is to manage the delivery of the priorities set out in the strategy Realising our Ambitions for Swale and the county-wide Vision for Kent.

Swale's Sustainable Community Strategy: Created by the Swale Local Strategic Partnership, called Ambitions for Swale 2009 - 2026, which sets out a broad vision for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area, together with proposals for delivering that vision.

Sustainable Transport Modes: Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Tourer: A movable caravan.

Town Centre: Area defined on the local authority's proposal map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres

but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in Local Plans, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Transit site: Site intended for short stays. Such sites are usually permanent, but there is a limit on the length of time residents can stay.

Transport Assessment: A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.

Transport Statement: A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising out of development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.

Travelling Showpeople: Commonly referred to as Showmen, these are a group of occupational Travellers who work on travelling shows and fairs across the UK and abroad.

Travel Plan: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

Wildlife Corridor: Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.

Windfall Sites: Sites which have not been specifically identified as available in the Local Plan process. They normally comprise previously-developed sites that have unexpectedly become available.

Acronyms

AA Appropriate Assessment

AONB Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

AMR Annual Monitoring Report

AQMA Air Quality Management Area

BAP Biodiversity Action Plan

BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology

BSF Building Schools for the Future

CCG Clinical Commissioning Group

CHP Combined Heat and Power

CCHP Combined Cooling, Heat and Power

CCMA Coastal Change Management Area

CIL Community Infrastructure Levy

CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England

DEFRA Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

DPD Development Plan Documents

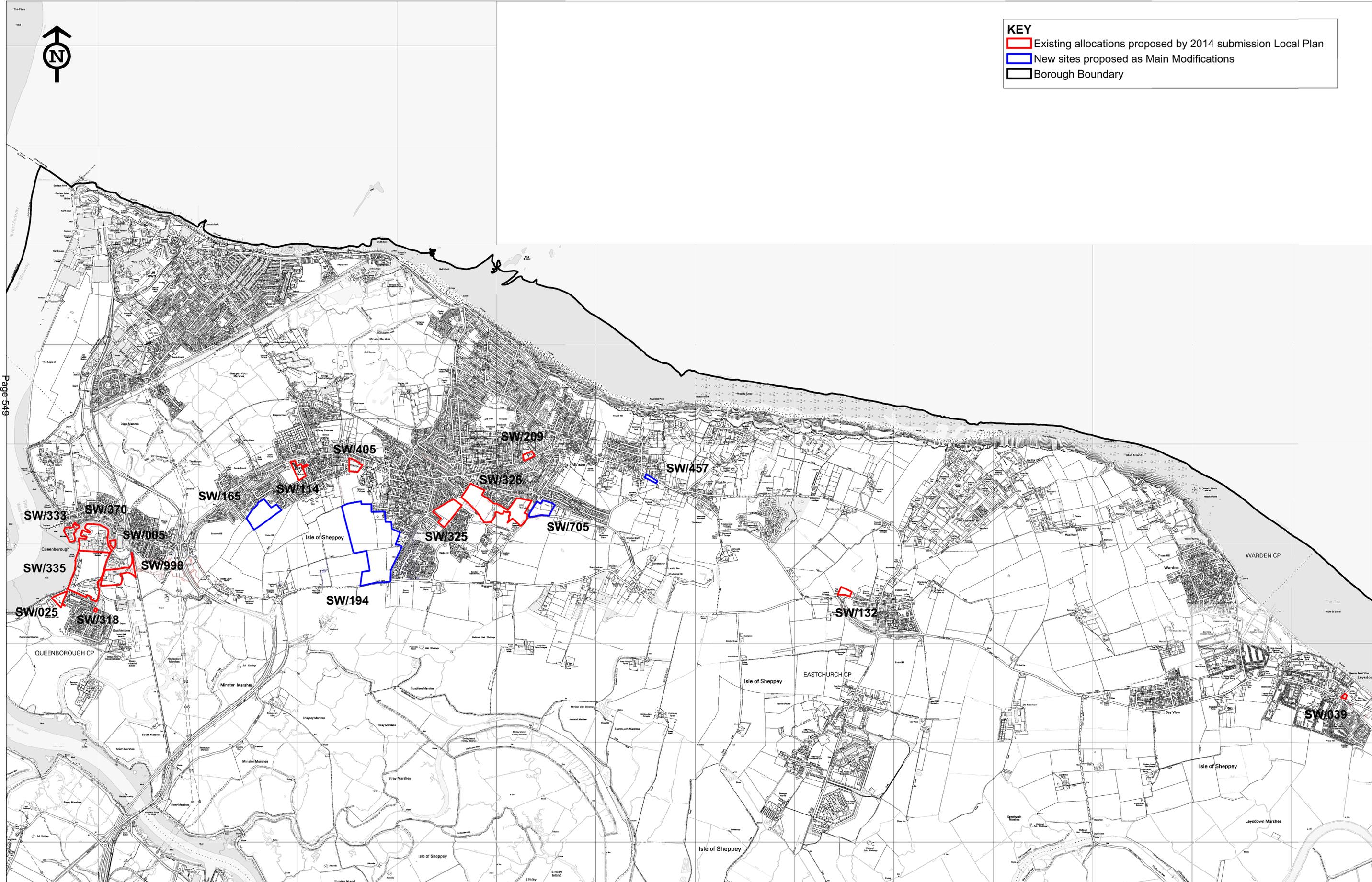
ELR EmploymentLand Review

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- EIP** Examination in Public
- GTAA** Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessment
- GVA** - Gross Value Added
- HCA** Homes and Communities Agency
- HIA** Health Impact Assessment
- HRA** Habitats Regulation Assessment
- LEP** Local Enterprise Partnership
- KCC** Kent County Council
- KSP** Kent Science Park
- LDF** Local Development Framework
- LSP** Local Strategic Partnership
- LTP** Local Transport Plan
- NCERM** National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping Project
- NFU** National Farmers Union
- NPPF** National Planning Policy Framework
- NP** Neighbourhood Plan
- PCT** Primary Care Trust
- PYO** “Pick Your Own” Consultation Document
- PPG** Planning Policy Guidance
- PPS** Planning Policy Statement
- SA/SEA** Sustainability Appraisal/ Sustainable Environmental Assessment
- SBC** Swale Borough Council
- SCI** Statement of Community Involvement
- SCS** Sustainable Community Strategy
- SELEP** South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- SFRA** Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- SHMA** Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- SHLAA** Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- SNCI** Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
- SNRR** Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road

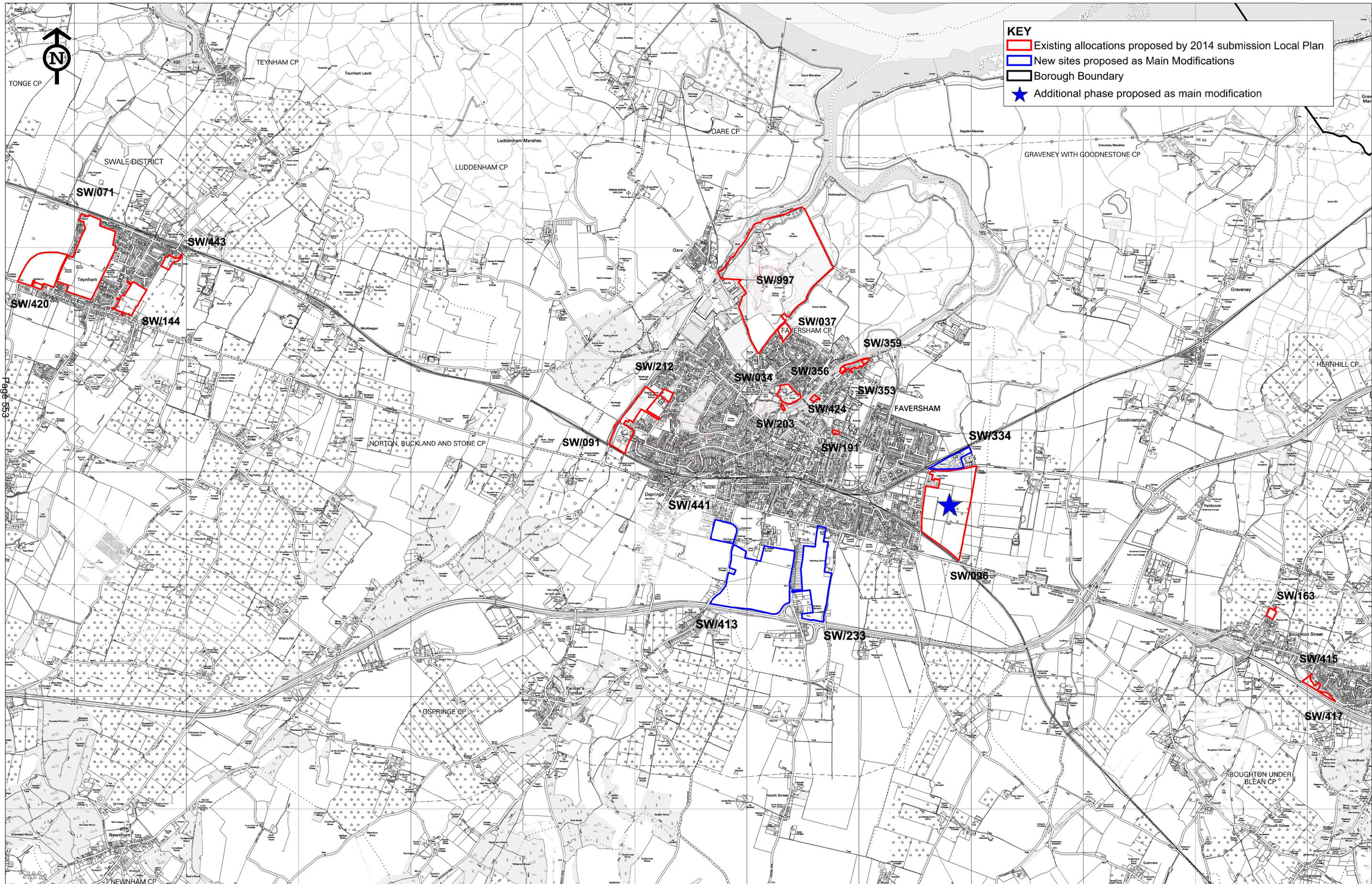
- SSRR** Sittingbourne Southern Relief Road
- SMEs** Small/Medium Enterprises
- SMP** Shoreline Management Plan
- SPD** Supplementary Planning Document
- SRN** Strategic Road Network
- STS** Sustainable Transport Strategy
- SuDS** Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

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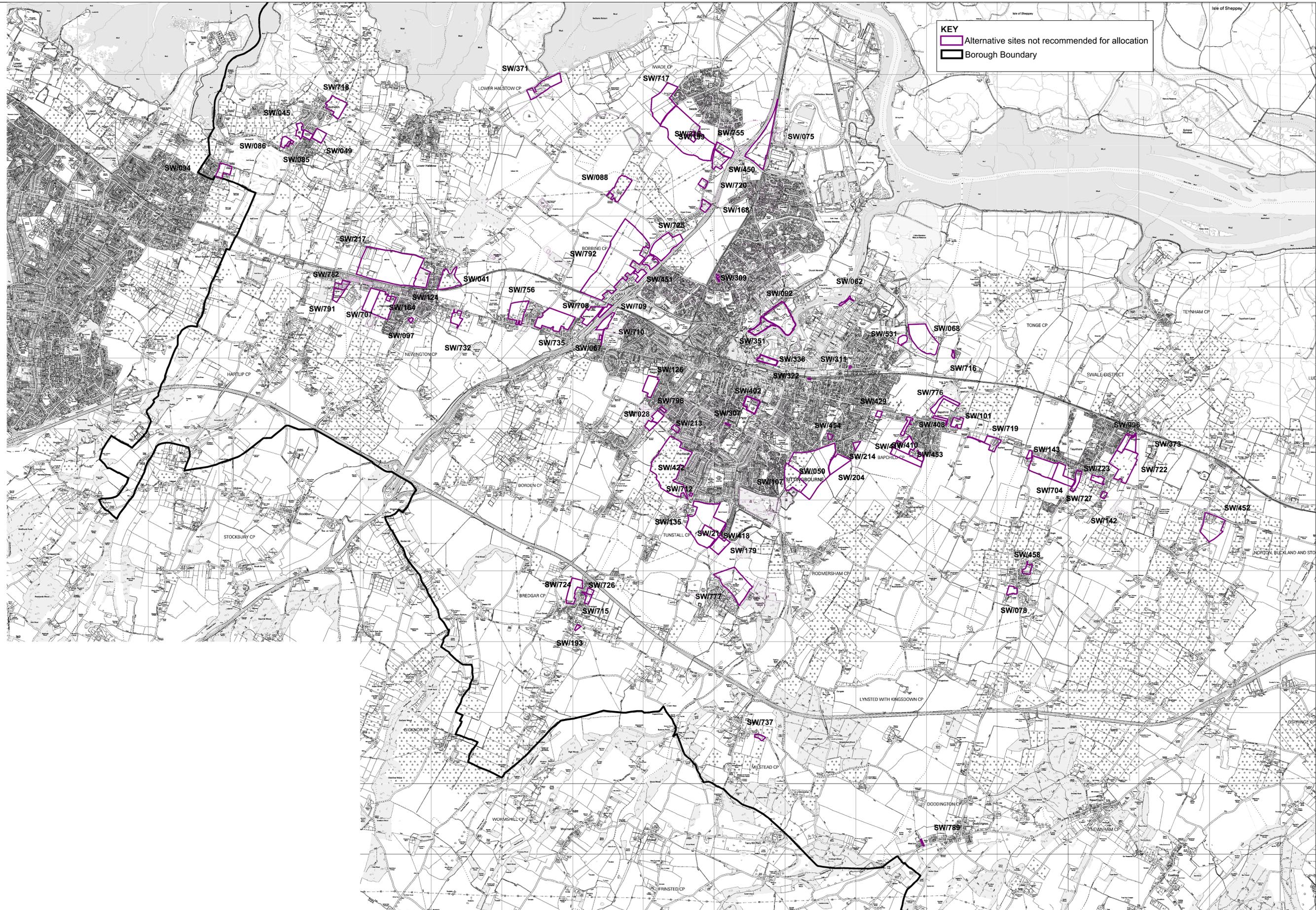
- Existing allocations proposed by 2014 submission Local Plan
- New sites proposed as Main Modifications
- Borough Boundary
- Additional phase proposed as main modification

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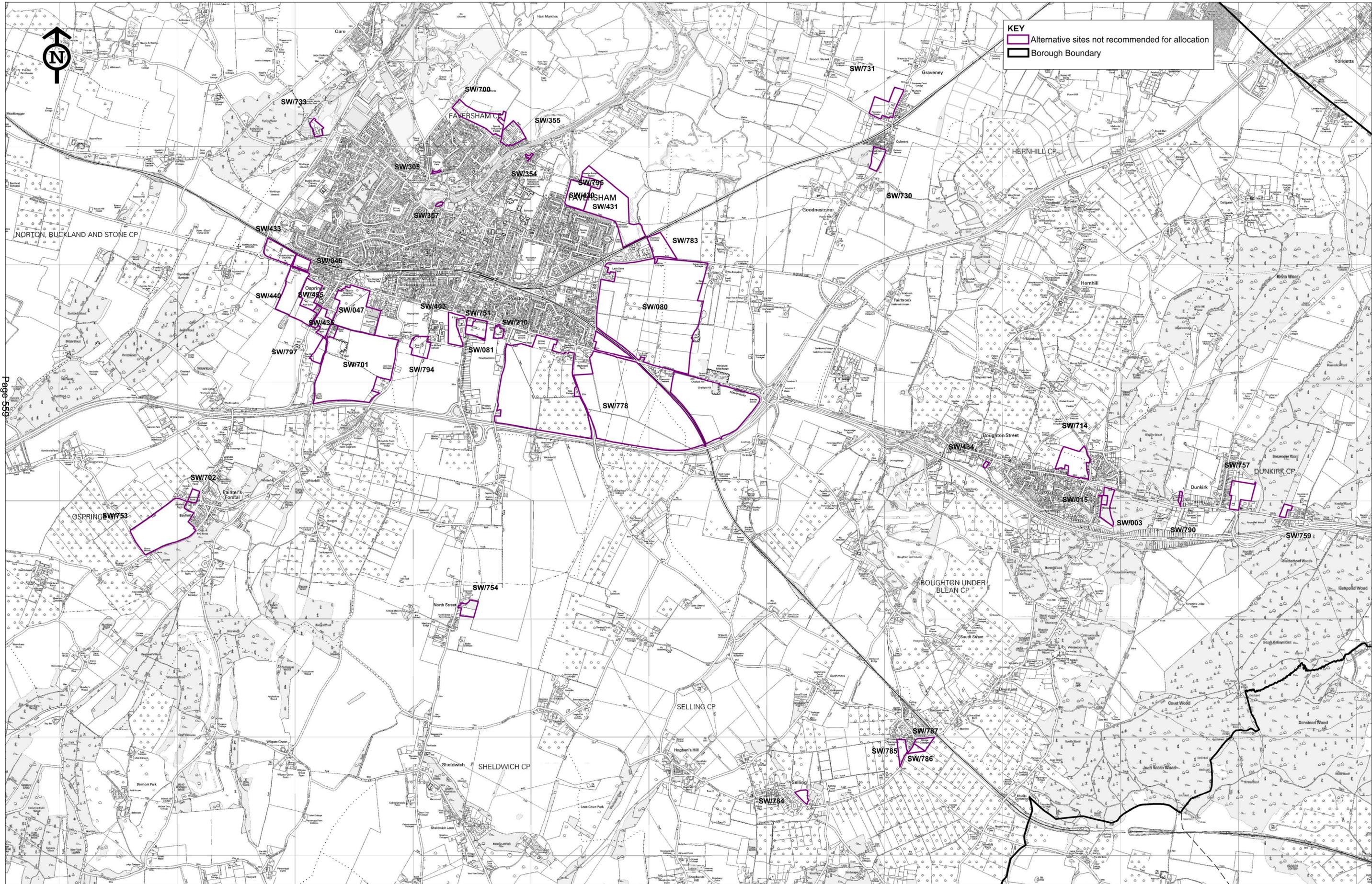
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Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Swale **Borough** Local Plan



SA Report Addendum

May 2016

SA REPORT ADDENDUM FOR PUBLICATION ALONGSIDE DRAFT MODIFICATIONS

Version	Date	Details	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	May 2016	<u>Draft</u> presented to Elected Members, prior to publication	Mark Fessey Principal Consultant	Steve Smith Technical Director	

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INTRODUCTION

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 The Swale Local Plan Part 1, once adopted, will set out strategic policies, allocate sites and set out a framework of development management policies to guide the determination of planning applications.
- 1.1.2 The plan is at an advanced stage of preparation, having been formally published in December 2014 ahead of being submitted to Government for examination in April 2015; and then having been the focus of Examination Hearings in November/ December 2015.
- 1.1.3 Following the Examination Hearings, in February 2016, the appointed Planning Inspector wrote to the Council stating that Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) is 776 dwellings per annum, and that the Council should **allocate additional sites** in order to make provision for meeting OAN (the submitted plan having made provision for 540 dwellings per annum).
- 1.1.4 Subsequent to receipt of the Interim Report, the Council began in earnest¹ the process of considering omission sites (i.e. sites that are available and deliverable, but not allocations within the submitted plan) with a view to identifying those that should become allocations.
- 1.1.5 The aim was to develop **draft modifications to the plan** as submitted (covering additional allocations primarily, but also changes to various other elements of the submitted plan) that could then be published for consultation.
- 1.1.1 At the current time, work has been completed and draft modifications are published for consultation.

2 THIS SA REPORT ADDENDUM

- 2.1.1 The Local Plan is being developed alongside a process of **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**, a legally required process that aims to ensure that the significant effects of an emerging draft plan (and alternatives) are systematically considered and communicated. It is a requirement that SA is undertaken in-line with the procedures prescribed by the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (the 'SEA Regulations') 2004.
- 2.1.2 The aim of **this SA Report Addendum** is essentially to present information on the draft modifications, and alternatives, with a view to informing the current consultation and subsequent plan finalisation.
- 2.1.3 In order to achieve this aim, this SA Report Addendum sets out to answer three questions:
1. What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?
 - Particularly in terms of the consideration given to reasonable alternatives
 2. What are the SA findings at this stage?
 - i.e. in relation to draft modifications.
 3. What happens next?

N.B. This report is known as an SA Report 'Addendum' on the basis that it is an Addendum to the SA Report submitted in April 2015. Whilst the focus of this report is on draft modifications (alternatives), there is a need to bear in mind that the draft modifications will (if taken forward) be implemented alongside the rest of the Local Plan, i.e. that part which is not the focus of 'modification-making'. Hence there is some need to read this SA Report Addendum alongside the 2015 SA Report.

¹ In practice, the process commenced immediately after Examination Hearings, as it had become apparent through discussions at the Hearings that the Council's OAN would be set at c.776 dpa, and that the Council would be expected to allocate additional sites.

3 WHAT’S THE SCOPE OF THE SA?

3.1 The SA framework

3.1.1 The scope of SA work, with respect to the Swale Local Plan, is introduced within the SA Report submitted alongside the Local Plan in April 2015. Essentially, the scope is reflected in a list of sustainability objectives, which collectively provide a methodological ‘framework’ for appraisal. The SA objectives are listed below in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: The SA framework

Sustainability objectives / topics		Sub-objectives
The environment	Reduce air pollution and ensure air quality continues to improve across the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to reductions in air quality monitoring pollutants at monitoring locations
	Conserve and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enhance relevant habitats and species • Protect and enhance habitat corridors and linking routes • Continue the protection of designated areas and propose appropriate enhancement • Conserve and enhance the populations of protected and/or BAP priority species • Allow for the creation of new areas of BAP priority habitats
	With regards to climate change : Minimise the need for energy, increase energy efficiency and to increase the use of renewable energy; and encourage sustainable construction materials and methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the emissions of greenhouse gases • Ensure preparedness for the effects of climate change • Increase the energy efficiency of housing stock • Increase the proportion of energy generated from renewables
	Reinforce local distinctiveness, environmental quality and amenity through the conservation and enhancement of built and cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect archaeological sites, historic buildings, conservation areas and other culturally important features
	Protect and enhance the valued landscape and townscape of Swale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and enhance the nationally important landscape of the AONB • Contribute positively to the borough’s established high quality landscape • Contribute to the establishment of the green grid network
	Protect and enhance soil quality and reduce contamination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce contaminated sites and increase remediation of redundant industrial land • Maintain the resource of high quality agricultural land • Protect an identified brownfield site with conservation value
	Promote traffic reduction and encourage more sustainable alternative forms of transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide improvements and new routes for cyclists and pedestrians • Reduce need to travel by car • Lead to adverse impacts on the Strategic Road Network, including junctions of the M2

Sustainability objectives / topics		Sub-objectives
	Achieve the sustainable management of waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce waste arisings • Ensure waste management in accordance with the waste hierarchy
	Manage and reduce the risk of flooding; and maintain and enhance water quality (ground and surface) and make efficient use of water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the quality of water • Reduce the demand for water (water efficiency measures) • Ensure that development does not increase vulnerability to flooding • Provide SuDS and other flood prevention systems and ensure integration into the wider green grid network
Communities	Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and the fear of these	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help reduce the fear of crime • Incorporate designing out crime measures into new development
	Improve health and well-being and reduce inequalities in health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to health services • Contribute to fuel poverty reductions • Improve access to recreation
	Provide affordable and decent housing adaptable to future needs of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the appropriate mix of housing to deliver long term regeneration schemes • Reduce the number of people homeless or in temporary accommodation • Contribute to the provision of affordable, social and key-worker housing • Reduce the number of unfit housing and those failing decent homes standards • Deliver adaptable housing to meet the lifelong needs of the population
	Meet the challenges of a growing and ageing population ; reduce poverty and social exclusion; and improve accessibility for all to key services and facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with regeneration of deprived areas • Improve access to key services • Improve access to recreation, amenity and community facilities
The economy	Ensure high and stable levels of employment in accessible locations; raise the educational achievement levels across the borough; and help people to acquire the skills needed to find and remain in employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the numbers of knowledge based and higher paid jobs • Create new employment opportunities to meet the needs of the residents • Contribute to increased learning opportunities
	Sustain economic growth and competitiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute the development of eco-tourism industry • Provide for opportunities to attract new businesses to the borough • Contribute to infrastructure improvements

3.2 Updating the SA scope

3.2.1 It has not been necessary to update the SA framework (Table 3.1); however, it is appropriate to consider how understanding of more detailed issues/objectives has evolved over the past year or so (i.e. since the time that the plan and SA Report were published and then submitted for Examination), and how in turn understanding of the SA scope has evolved.

3.2.2 Presented below is a brief discussion of some key matters, in terms of which evidence/understanding has evolved.

Objectively Assessed Needs

3.2.3 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, September 2015) updated the previous SHMA, and determined that the objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in Swale was 776 dpa (13,192 dwellings for the plan period) and that this included 190 dpa for affordable housing. Employment forecasting also indicated as necessary some supporting 10,900 jobs or 130,000 sq. m (60 ha) of employment floorspace ('B' class). The SHMA led to the publication of a Council position statement (PS) via which the findings of the SHMA were accepted. It indicated that should further sites be required, this would be achieved in accordance with the strategy of the plan, whilst addressing environmental constraints (inc. best and most versatile agricultural land) in accordance with paras. 110/112 and 113 of the NPPF.

Landscape issues/opportunities

3.2.4 In recognition of the landscape issues associated with some of the prospective allocations, landscape architects David Huskisson and Associates were appointed to undertake landscape-led concept diagram work and policy recommendations for a number of sites in contention for allocation through modifications.

Agricultural land

3.2.5 Para. 112 of the NPPF indicates that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, Councils should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality – known as Best and Most Versatile (BMV). Use of BMV land will be necessary, due to insufficient levels of available and suitable brownfield sites, and the locations of lower quality agricultural land. Read in conjunction with para. 110 of the NPPF, this means the approach should be that use of BMV (Grades 1,2 and 3a) should be avoided as far as possible by use of lower quality land (i.e. grades 3b and above) until such point as consistency with other policy objectives becomes unsustainable.

3.2.6 Para. 112 of the NPPF also requires the economic and other benefits of BMV land to be taken into account. As such, a report (SBC/PS/088) was presented to the Examination in October 2015 that explored 'Agricultural Land Value in Swale'. The report finds that losses of BMV are likely to be irreversible, with the estimation that for every 100 ha of BMV land lost, £0.7 million - £1.7 million of output and between 5 and 13 jobs in agriculture could be lost.

Other thematic issues

3.2.7 Understanding of numerous other issues has evolved, in light of representations received on the plan, discussions at Examination and the Inspector's Interim Reports of 2016. In some cases, this has led to statements of common ground, e.g. with the Highways Agency.

Area / site specific issues

3.2.8 Understanding of various area and site specific issues also increased greatly over the course of 2015, as a result of written representations received and also discussions at the Examination Hearings. Whilst it is not possible to summarise matters here, evidence of up-to-date understanding should be readily apparent within the analysis presented in subsequent sections of this report.

PART 1: WHAT HAS PLAN-MAKING / SA INVOLVED UP TO THIS POINT?

4 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 1)

4.1.1 The Local Plan-making / SA process has been ongoing since 2011, as explained within the section of the SA Report (April 2015) that answers the question: *What has the SA / plan-making process involved up to this point?*

4.1.2 At the current time there is no need to recap the whole story; rather, there is a need to explain the work undertaken in early 2016 that led to the development of draft modifications.

4.1.3 Specifically, in-line with regulatory requirements, there is a need to explain how work was undertaken to develop and then appraise **reasonable alternatives**, and how the Council then took into account alternatives appraisal findings when finalising draft modifications.²

4.1.4 As such, this part of the report is structured as follows -

Chapter 5 - explains reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with

Chapter 6 - presents an appraisal of the reasonable alternatives

Chapter 7 - explains reasons for selecting the preferred option.

What about site options appraisal?

4.1.5 Throughout the plan-making / SA process, in addition to appraisal of reasonable alternatives (i.e. mutually exclusive approaches to addressing policy issues), there has been a focus on appraising site options (i.e. the pool of sites that are available and deliverable, and thereby in contention for allocation).

4.1.6 The Local Plan SA Report (April 2015) presented information on site options in Appendix IV, and then updated site options appraisal findings were presented within Post Submission Interim SA Report II (October 2015). Also in 2015, site options appraisal findings (non-SA) were reported within the Council's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the 'Ranked Assessment of Non-allocated Site Options' report prepared by AECOM.

4.1.7 Subsequent to the Local Plan Examination Hearings in late 2015 the Council recognised the need to update site options work, to reflect latest understanding of site availability/deliverability and latest understanding of the evidence/issues.

4.1.8 It is not the intention of this SA Report Addendum to encourage a focus on site options at the current time (rather, the intention is to focus attention on alternatives); however, those interested in the details of site options appraisal work are signposted to the -

- The list of reasonable site options, and an explanation of how this list was arrived at - see **Appendix I**;
- GIS analysis of reasonable site options - see **Appendix II**;
- Discussion of reasonable site options at each settlement in turn - see **Appendix III**;
- An updated list that ranks site options in a (very rough)³ order - see **Appendix IV**; and
- Updated SHLAA - see <http://www.swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library/>.

² In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), there is a need to present appraisal findings in relation to 'reasonable alternatives', as well as 'an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with'.

³ The 2015 'Ranked Assessment of Non-allocated Site Options' report proved a useful point of reference at examination hearings; however, it was widely accepted that, because the methodology was necessarily limited (i.e. necessarily formulaic/mechanistic), limited reliance should be placed on its findings. Perhaps most usefully, the report served to highlight sites with 'showstopper' and 'significant' constraints, and highlighted that of the remaining sites potentially in contention there is much variation in terms of the landscape impact that would result from development. In 2016 consideration was given to the possibility of not updating the ranking exercise - because understanding of site options had been refined considerably (i.e. the focus was on a shortlist of better performing sites) making ranking more of a challenge - however, on balance it was determined appropriate to update the exercise. It is important to emphasise that the ranking exercise is not SA. The outputs are simply included within this SA Report Addendum for ease of reference.

5 DEVELOPING REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter explains steps taken to develop 'reasonable alternatives'. Specifically, this chapter -

- explains the **background** to alternatives development; and
- explains how background understanding enabled **development of reasonable alternatives**.

5.2 Background

5.2.1 Early discussions between the Council and AECOM centred around three questions:

- 1) What should be the focus of alternatives appraisal?
- 2) What strategic / 'top-down' understanding must factor-in?
- 3) What 'bottom-up' understanding must factor-in?

5.2.2 Each of these three questions is discussed in turn below.

What should be the focus of alternatives appraisal?

5.2.3 The Inspector tasked with examining the Local Plan wrote to Swale Borough Council on 4th February 2016 stating that Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) for Swale equates to 776 dwellings per annum (dpa). The Inspector does not accept the argument, put forward by some Examination participants, that OAN is higher than this.

5.2.4 Furthermore, the Inspector stated that the plan should make provision for OAN, stating: *"The Council's work to update the evidence base demonstrates that there are sufficient sites available to enable it to deliver the full OAN for the plan period whilst maintaining the settlement strategy of two planning areas. The Council should therefore proceed to allocate sites to meet a revised target of 776 dwellings pa."*

5.2.5 The Council accepts the Inspector's finding that it is appropriate to make provision for OAN in full, and therefore accepts that there is a need to allocate additional sites accordingly, through modifications to the submitted plan (recognising that the submitted plan makes provision for a level of housing below 776 dpa). Whilst the Council's position at the time of submission was that delivery constraints were a barrier to providing for OAN, this can no longer be sustained.

5.2.6 Therefore, the Council identified a need to explore **alternative approaches to providing for OAN** through the allocation of additional sites.

5.2.7 *In theory*, making provision for OAN necessitates allocating additional sites to deliver 2,224 homes.⁴ However, *in practice* there is a need to allocate additional sites to deliver a higher figure, i.e. there is a need to make provision for a **buffer**. This is because there is a risk that some sites will not deliver within the plan period, or deliver at a slower rate than anticipated (i.e. with some delivery beyond the plan period). Also, there is a need to consider the possibility of an additional buffer to ensure a robust 'trajectory' of delivery across the whole plan period, recognising that some sites will have a long lead-in time and hence only be ready to deliver in the latter part of the plan period. There is a need to avoid troughs in the housing trajectory; and specifically ensure a continual 'five year land supply' (i.e. a list of ready-to-go sites capable of delivering $776 \times 5 = 3,880$ homes).

5.2.8 Therefore, the Council identified a need to explore **alternative approaches to providing for 2,224 homes plus an appropriate buffer**.

⁴ This number of additional dwellings would mean delivering 13,192 over the 17 year plan period, or 776 dwellings pa on average.

5.2.9 The Council recognised that the allocation of additional sites is the key issue to be addressed through modifications to the plan, and so appraisal of alternatives was necessary. There was some discussion of whether **other plan issues**, set to be the focus of draft modifications, might ‘reasonably’ need to be the focus of alternatives appraisal - notably affordable housing, Gypsies and Travellers, local greenspaces, Kent Science Park and the Port of Sheerness - however, it was determined that they did not. Rather, it was determined proportionate and reasonable for the Council to draft modifications on the basis of representations received, discussions at Examination Hearings and other evidence. The matter of how these issues might best be resolved through policy is appropriately discussed as part of the draft plan appraisal, (see ‘Part 2’ below), rather than through formal alternatives appraisal.⁵

What ‘top-down’ understanding must factor-in?

5.2.10 Over the course of the plan-making process (stretching back over five years), much work has focused on the consideration of alternative approaches to housing distribution.⁶ On the basis of this work, the Inspector’s Interim Report (Feb 2016) was able to conclude that:

“The settlement strategy successfully addresses the core principles set out in paragraph 17 of the NPPF, particularly with regard to driving and supporting economic development and conserving the natural environment and heritage assets, whilst taking account of the different roles and character of different areas... The settlement strategy is soundly based and consistent with national policy subject to allocating additional sites to meet OAN whilst maintaining the broad proportional balance of growth between the two planning areas [i.e. the two planning areas of: A) the Thames Gateway; and B) Faversham and the rest of Swale].”

5.2.11 The Council understood the implication to be that **any ‘reasonable’ option** (for distributing the additional dwellings) **must**:

- A) As per Policy ST3, involve delivering roughly 87% within the Thames Gateway planning area, and roughly 13% within the rest of Swale; and accord with the settlement strategy, which establishes Sittingbourne as the main borough urban centre, above Faversham and Sheerness and the supporting other urban local centres within the West Sheppey Triangle, followed by the six rural local service centres and finally the villages
- B) Accord with all aspects of Policy ST1, including the policy of conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- C) More broadly accord with the plan objectives.

What ‘bottom-up’ understanding must factor-in?

5.2.12 Having answered the two questions above, there was an understanding that: the aim was to develop a single set of alternative approaches to distributing ‘2,224 dwellings plus a buffer’; and only certain distribution options need (‘reasonably’) be given consideration.

5.2.13 However, even with this understanding, it was recognised that there remained a plethora of alternative approaches that might be taken. With a large number of site options in contention, it was recognised that the number of potential site combinations was far too large to appraise (let alone meaningfully consult on).

⁵ In line with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), a decision on what ‘reasonably’ should be the focus of alternatives appraisal should be made in-light of the plan objectives. In early 2016, given the task of preparing draft modifications to the Swale Local Plan, it was recognised that the overriding objective was to plan for OAN. N.B. Recent case-law (most notably Friends of the Earth Vs. Welsh Ministers, 2015) has established that planning authorities may apply discretion and planning judgement when determining what should reasonably be the focus of alternatives appraisal, recognising the need to apply a proportionate approach and ensure an SA process / report that is focused and accessible.

⁶⁶ See discussion at paras 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 of Post Submission Interim SA Report I (2015) [online] available at: <http://www.swale.gov.uk/examination-document-library/> (document PS/033)

5.2.14 As such, it was recognised that there was a need to undertake work to **explore site options**, with a view to narrowing down the number of distribution alternatives in contention, and ultimately establishing a set of reasonable alternatives.

5.2.15 Findings of initial work to explore site options are presented in **Appendices I - IV**.

5.3 Establishing reasonable alternatives⁷

5.3.1 On the basis of ‘top-down’ / strategic considerations (essentially the need to plan in-line with the established strategy, and respond to the advice of the Inspector) and ‘bottom-up’ / site specific considerations (see discussion of sites in Appendices I - IV and the SHLAA) the Council was in a position to establish reasonable alternatives.

5.3.2 In practice, this involved: 1) considering each settlement in turn and considering whether the approach to growth should be taken to be a **constant or variable**, for the purposes of developing alternatives; and then 2) establishing borough-wide alternatives.

5.3.3 Each settlement (or settlement grouping) is discussed in turn below, before a final section presents the borough-wide alternatives. For each settlement, strategic and site specific considerations are discussed in turn, before a conclusion is reached regarding whether the approach to growth should be taken to be a constant or a variable.

N.B. To reiterate, the ‘analysis of site options’ referenced below can be found in **Appendices I-IV** of this report and within the Council’s SHLAA.

Sittingbourne

5.3.4 There is a need to focus additional allocations at Sittingbourne, recognising the need to plan in-line with the established broad settlement strategy. However, at the same time there is a need to recognise certain strategic constraints, notably in relation to landscape/ settlement-separation/ heritage sensitivities to the south (which is where site options are concentrated).

5.3.5 Analysis of site options showed a number of sites in contention, and indeed showed there to be a number of ‘stand-out’ sites that could be taken to be a ‘given’, for the purposes of developing alternatives. Specifically, sites identified as a ‘given’ were: Former Bell Centre, Bell Road (SW/343; 120 dwellings); and SW Sittingbourne (SW/703; 564 dwellings).

5.3.6 Allocation of these sites would involve an additional 684 dwellings at Sittingbourne. However, there is potentially scope to deliver higher growth at Sittingbourne, and there are sites that could come into contention under such a scenario, specifically: sites southeast of Sittingbourne (SW/050, 107, 204).⁸

5.3.7 As such, the approach to additional allocations at Sittingbourne was identified as a **variable**, for the purposes of developing alternatives. Two **options** were established:

- 1) Lower growth (684 dwellings) at the broadly supported sites
- 2) Higher growth (c.1,300) at the broadly supported sites, plus an additional urban extension to the southeast.

⁷ Responsibility for establishing reasonable alternatives ultimately falls with the Council, rather than the SA consultant (AECOM, whose primary task is to *appraise* reasonable alternatives). However, in practice, the Council and AECOM worked closely on the task of establishing reasonable alternatives. It is also worth reiterating a point already made above, which is that Councils may apply discretion and planning judgement when determining what should reasonably be the focus of alternatives appraisal.

⁸ Another cluster of sites is to be found more or less directly south of Sittingbourne. It would be possible to deliver an extension to Sittingbourne on a similar scale to that which could be delivered to the southwest or southeast; however, the option of an extension to the south can be discounted, for the purpose of developing reasonable alternatives. To reiterate once again, analysis of site options (and combinations of site options) can be found within the Council’s SHLAA, and within Appendices I-IV of this report.

Faversham (and Boughton)

- 5.3.8 There is a need to deliver a 'proportional boost' at Faversham, i.e. a boost in-line with the strategy of directing c.13% of growth to Faversham. Faversham is a heavily constrained town; however, at the same time it is suited for housing growth in the sense that there is high demand and therefore high development viability. This is an important strategic consideration, given that viable/deliverable sites are needed to ensure a robust housing trajectory.
- 5.3.9 Analysis of site options showed a number of sites in contention, and indeed showed there to be a number of 'stand-out' sites that could be taken to be a 'given', for the purposes of developing alternatives. Specifically, sites identified as a 'given' were: Brogdale Road (SW/441; 66 dwellings; has planning permission); SW/413 (Perry Court Farm; 370 dwellings; has a resolution to grant outline planning permission); Lady Dane Farm (SW/080; 60 dwellings; an existing allocation); Former Nova premises (SW/334; 90 dwellings; an existing employment allocation, but not viable for employment); and Preston Fields (SW/233; 217 dwellings; as a more suitable site - see discussion in the SHLAA and in Appendices I-IV).
- 5.3.10 Allocation of these sites would involve an additional 803 dwellings at Faversham, which could arguably mean delivering notably more than is necessary to achieve a 'proportional boost'. However, this approach was nonetheless established as suitable, for the purposes of developing alternatives, on the basis of site specific and strategic considerations.
- 5.3.11 There is no need to consider the possibility of further allocations (such that the total allocations would involve in excess of 803 dwellings), given strategic considerations and no further 'stand-out' sites; and so the approach to additional allocations at Faversham was identified as a **constant**, for the purposes of developing alternatives.

West Sheppey

- 5.3.12 There is a need for additional allocations at West Sheppey, recognising the need to plan in-line with the established broad settlement strategy (Minster/Halfway being an other urban local centre, defined by Policy ST3 as supporting nearby Sheerness). However, there are also strategic constraints to account for - notably in relation to landscape and road infrastructure/traffic congestion - and it is the case that development viability is poor.
- 5.3.13 Analysis of site options showed a number of sites in contention, and indeed showed there to be a number of 'stand-out' sites that could be taken to be a 'given', for the purposes of developing alternatives. Specifically, sites identified as a 'given' were: Chequers Road, east of Minster (SW/457; 6 dwellings); Scocles Road/Elm Lane, southeast of Minster (SW/705; 50 dwellings); Barton Hill Drive, southwest of Minster (SW/194; 620 dwellings); Belgrave Road, Halfway (SW/165; 140 dwellings).
- 5.3.14 Allocation of these sites would involve an additional 816 dwellings at West Sheppey. However, there is potentially scope to deliver higher growth at West Sheppey, and there are sites that could come into contention under such a scenario, specifically, smaller sites including Scocles Road, east Minster (SW/459) and R/o 33 Highfield Road, Halfway (SW/158).
- 5.3.15 As such, the approach to additional allocations at West Sheppey was identified as a **variable**, for the purposes of developing alternatives. Two **options** were established:
- 1) Lower growth (816 dwellings) at the broadly supported sites
 - 2) Higher growth (c.1,400) at the broadly supported sites, plus additional smaller sites

Iwade

- 5.3.16 Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Iwade (a Rural Local Service Centre). There are some strategic opportunities - e.g. related to its position on the strategic road network and proximity to employment opportunities at Sittingbourne, Ridham and Neatscourt - however, there are also constraints (e.g. landscape), and it is the case that Iwade has seen considerable growth over recent years.
- 5.3.17 Analysis of site options showed there to be one 'stand-out' site - East of Iwade (SW/123; 572 dwellings)⁹ - however, it was not the case that its allocation could be taken to be a 'given', for the purposes of developing alternatives.
- 5.3.18 As such, the approach to additional allocations at Iwade was identified as a **variable**, for the purposes of developing alternatives. Two **options** were established:
- 1) Nil additional allocations
 - 2) Allocation of East of Iwade (SW/123; 572 dwellings)

Newington

- 5.3.19 Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Newington (a Rural Local Service Centre); and from a strategic perspective, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions in relation to Newington. It is notable for having a train station, but equally there are transport constraints associated with Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) on the A2, and the village is surrounded by attractive countryside.
- 5.3.20 However, analysis of site options showed there to be two 'stand-out' sites that could be taken to be a 'given', for the purposes of developing alternatives. Specifically, sites identified as a 'given' were: The Tracies (SW/010; 5 dwellings) and North of High Street (SW/407; 115 dwellings).
- 5.3.21 Allocation of these sites would involve an additional 120 dwellings at Newington, and there is no need to consider the possibility of further allocations beyond this. As such, the approach to additional allocations at Newington was identified as a **constant**, for the purposes of developing alternatives.

Teynham

- 5.3.22 Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at Teynham (a Rural Local Service Centre); and from a strategic perspective, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions in relation to Teynham. The situation at Teynham is similar to that at Newington (see discussion above), although Teynham is more constrained from a transport / AQMA perspective.
- 5.3.23 No stand-out sites were identified at Teynham, and so nil additional allocations was established as a **constant**, for the purposes of developing alternatives.

⁹ This site incorporates SW/116, 117, 183.

East Sheppey

- 5.3.24 Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is not necessarily a need to allocate additional sites at East Sheppey (where there are two Rural Local Service Centres); and from a strategic perspective there is a strong argument for restricting growth here given its isolation / poor transport connections. Whilst in theory it can be argued that growth could address the problem of isolation (and associated relative deprivation), in practice it is not clear that opportunities exist at the current time. Another factor in support of growth here is the resource of lower quality agricultural land, but this is not an overriding factor.
- 5.3.25 No stand-out sites were identified at East Sheppey, and so nil additional allocations was established as a **constant**, for the purposes of developing alternatives.

Villages

- 5.3.26 Recognising the need to plan in-line with the established settlement hierarchy, there is little in the way of strategic arguments for allocating additional sites at the villages.
- 5.3.27 No stand-out sites were identified at the Villages, and so nil additional allocations was established as a **constant**, for the purposes of developing alternatives.

The reasonable alternatives

- 5.3.28 On this basis, a set of borough wide alternative spatial strategies ('reasonable alternatives') was established - see **Table 5.1**.

Table 5.1: Reasonable spatial strategy alternatives to inform ‘modification-making’

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at Sittingbourne (extension to the SE)
Sittingbourne	700	700	1300
West Sheppey	800	1400	800
Iwade	600	0	0
Faversham	800	800	800
Newington	100	100	100
Teynham	0	0	0
East Sheppey	0	0	0
Boughton	0	0	0
Other villages	0	0	0
Total additional allocations through mods	3,000	3,000	3,000

N.B. Figures in this table are rounded to the nearest 100.

5.3.29 These were determined to be the ‘reasonable’ alternatives on the basis that their appraisal should facilitate discussion of numerous important issues. Whilst it was recognised that there are **other spatial strategy options** that could potentially feature, it is appropriate to limit the number of alternatives given explicit consideration in order to ensure effective public engagement. Interested parties are, of course, welcome to comment on spatial strategy options other than those presented, drawing upon the analysis of site options (i.e. analysis presented within the SHLAA and within appendices I - IV of this report).

5.3.30 These are the reasonable alternatives that were appraised in early 2016, at the time of finalising proposed modifications for publication. Chapter 6 presents appraisal findings.

6 APPRAISING REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Summary appraisal findings

6.1.1 **Table 6.1** presents summary appraisal findings in relation to the alternatives introduced above. Detailed appraisal findings are presented in **Appendix V**.

6.1.2 Detailed appraisal methodology is explained in Appendix V, but in summary:

Within the table the alternatives are appraised in terms of the topics established through past 'scoping' work. Within each topic row, the alternatives are ranked in order of preference (1 being best) and efforts are also made to categorise the performance of each option in terms of 'significant effects' (using red/green shading).

Table 6.1: Summary appraisal of the spatial strategy alternatives

Conclusions						
	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)		Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)		Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)	
Air	★ 1		★ 1		3	
Biodiversity	3		★ 1		★ 1	
Cultural heritage	=		=		=	
Landscape	★ 1		2		3	
Soil	3		★ 1		3	
Transport and traffic	★ 1		3		3	
Water	=		=		=	
Health	=		=		=	
Housing	★ 1		2		★ 1	
Population	=		=		=	
Economy / employment	=		=		=	
Rank summary ¹⁰	Best in terms of: • Air • Landscape • Transport • Housing	Worst in terms of: • B'diversity • Soil	Best in terms of: • Air • B'diversity • Soil	Worst in terms of: • Transport • Housing	Best in terms of: • B'diversity • Housing	Worst in terms of: • Air • Landscape • Soil • Transport
Significant effects summary	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • B'diversity • Soil	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • Landscape	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • Landscape • Soil
Summary discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 (Iwade) stands-out as performing best in terms of a number of objectives, although it performs worst in terms of 'biodiversity' (see the HRA for detailed discussion) and 'soil', as there would be some loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. • Option 2 (West Sheppey) notably performs best in terms of 'soil', but performs relatively poorly from a 'housing' perspective given poor development viability. • Option 3 (Sittingbourne) is notably worst performing in terms of 'landscape', and also gives rise to some transport / air quality concerns. 					

¹⁰ N.B. The aim is to discuss the relative merits of the alternatives in terms of the SA framework - i.e. in terms of competing sustainability objectives - rather than to identifying an option that is best performing or 'most sustainable' overall.]

7 DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED APPROACH

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The aim of this Chapter is to present the Council's response to the alternatives appraisal, i.e. the Council's 'outline reasons' for developing the preferred approach (to the allocation of additional sites, as reflected in the proposed modifications currently published for consultation) in-light of alternatives appraisal.

7.2 The Council's reasons

7.2.1 The Council has been able to identify a preferred approach drawing on various workstreams, namely -

- Work examining site options in isolation (as reported in the SHLAA and Appendices I-IV of this report)
- Appraisal of district-wide spatial strategies
- Other factors, including discussions with site promoters.

7.2.2 The Council's reasons can be summarised as follows -

"Within the context of an increased housing target, the preferred approach is aimed at maintaining the settlement strategy of the Local Plan, via its two planning areas, and via the settlement tiers within Policy ST3.

Sittingbourne is intended to remain the overall focus for growth in the Borough, in recognition that it is the largest settlement with strong opportunities for urban regeneration, employment and new services with overall good transport links. The town's position within the Thames Gateway reinforces the need for growth here. However, there are limitations to its overall growth, not least the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV) and landscape and heritage constraints to the south of the town. Thus the preferred approach represents a balance between safeguarding the town's position within Policy ST3 and safeguarding its important environmental resources. There will though be development needed in locations where the need for growth will override local constraints; notably through the erosion of important local countryside gaps.

To achieve such a balance requires growth at other locations, principally the Isle of Sheppey where sites can be provided on lesser constrained sites, whilst maximising the use of sustainably located BMV in a way that too reflects Sheppey's overall position within the Thames Gateway. Here though, there too are limits to this emphasis, given that sites toward the centre and eastern end of Sheppey are less well located and are judged to have more significant environmental impact. The focus therefore is on the better connected and less harmful sites on the western side of the Island.

Also important to securing this balance for Sittingbourne and Sheppey is the need to secure a proportionate boost at Faversham and the rural areas. In the case of Faversham, this can be achieved without significant/substantial harm to the strategy and vision for the town. In the rural areas, this can also be achieved with further growth and, amongst the Rural Local Service Centres, Iwade is considered to be the most appropriate main focus for additional growth because of its strong location close to Sittingbourne and the strategic road network. Here, a limited amount of lower quality agricultural land is also available, whilst large areas of land are able to provide potentially significant environmental and green infrastructure benefits for the village and for the Swale Thames Gateway as a whole.

Within the framework of this overall preferred approach, there are risks, not least the achievement of a 5-year supply against the now proposed increased housing target. This is addressed through the allocations of sites able to increase the potential provision, notably at Faversham, the rural areas and south-west Sittingbourne. Whilst this represents an over-provision of sites, no insurmountable adverse consequences have been identified via the SA, HRA or other modelling work, although some further examination of transport impacts is required.

In totality, the preferred approach is judged to achieve sustainable development, as required by para. 14 of the NPPF. Against its three strands, socially, the plan can achieve a significant boost in the supply of housing as required by the NPPF, alongside the provision of new jobs, as well as providing for the infrastructure needs arising. Although it will need to be kept under close review, economically, the plan comfortably provides for sufficient land for economic development to match the planned housing need and to meet the identified economic needs for the Borough. Lastly, environmentally, whilst the plan has some adverse consequences for BMV (including economic loss), settlement separation and landscape character, it also provides for significant levels of green infrastructure involving landscape and biodiversity enhancements and safeguards via the choice of sites and the mitigation proposed for international, national and local designated sites.”

PART 2: WHAT ARE SA FINDINGS AT THIS CURRENT STAGE?

8 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 2)

8.1.1 The aim of this part of the report is to present appraisal findings in relation to the draft modifications (to the plan as submitted) that are currently published for consultation.

9 APPRAISAL OF DRAFT MODIFICATIONS

[To be completed in time for consultation]

PART 3: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

10 INTRODUCTION (TO PART 3)

10.1.1 The aim of this Chapter is to explain next steps in the plan-making / SA process.

11 PLAN FINALISATION

11.1.1 Subsequent to the current consultation the Inspector will consider all representations received, before deciding whether to report on the Plan's soundness (with modifications as necessary), or hold resumed examination hearings.

11.1.2 The latter situation is likely, and it may be that resumed hearings lead to a need for further modifications being identified. If this is the case, there will then be another consultation on draft (further) modifications, with another SA Report Addendum published alongside.

11.1.3 Ultimately, it will be for the Inspector to consider the representations raised through consultation on proposed modifications, and then report on the Plan's soundness (with modifications as necessary).

11.1.4 Assuming that the Inspector is able to find the Plan 'sound', it will then be formally adopted by the Council. At the time of adoption an 'SA Statement' will be published that explains the process of plan-making / SA in full and presents 'measures decided concerning monitoring'.

12 MONITORING

12.1.1 The April 2015 SA Report proposed monitoring indicators in-light of appraisal findings. Given the appraisal findings presented in this SA Report Addendum (see Part 2, above), it is suggested that particular emphasis be given to:

- [TBC - in light of Chapter 9 appraisal findings]

APPENDIX I: ESTABLISHING REASONABLE SITE OPTIONS

Introduction

As explained in Chapter 4, throughout the plan-making / SA process, in addition to appraisal of reasonable alternatives (i.e. mutually exclusive approaches to addressing policy issues), there has been a focus on appraising site options (i.e. the pool of sites that are available and deliverable, and thereby in contention for allocation).

The **aim of this appendix** is to introduce the 'reasonable' site options, as understood at the current time.

The reasonable site options

The list of site options identified as 'reasonable' (i.e. potentially in contention for allocation through modifications) comprises:

(A) The reasonable site options from 2015 (as listed in 2015 SHLAA and Table 3.1 of Post Submission Interim SA Report II); **minus (B)** those that are allocations within the submitted plan; **minus (C)** those that are now understood to be unavailable; **minus (D)** those that are now understood to be 'unreasonable'; **plus (E)** new reasonable site options identified through a call for sites in early 2016.

With regards to **(D)**, it is appropriate to screen out sites as unreasonable, given that the amount of land available is far in excess of the amount of land that could ever need to be allocated through modifications (i.e. it is appropriate to take a step-wise approach, with detailed consideration given only to a short-list of sites rather in order to make the process more manageable). Reasons for screening-out relate either to:

- 'show-stopper' constraints, generally as established within the 'ranked assessment of non-allocated site options' exercise (2015), e.g. flood risk, loss of public open space or loss of employment land; or
- parameters established by the Inspector's Interim Report of February 2016, particularly the need for additional allocations to fit with the settlement strategy as established through submitted Policy ST3.
 - In practice, this rules out sites not related to a settlement listed in Policy ST3;¹¹ and sites that, whilst associated with a Policy ST3 settlement, would be otherwise contrary to Policy ST3 if allocated.¹²

With regards to **(E)**, 101 new sites were submitted in total, through the 2016 call for sites. However, 69 of these comprised new sites. The remaining 32 submissions were to propose revisions to sites previously 'in the system', e.g. a revised site boundary or a revised density/yield.

In total, there are **110 reasonable site options** at the current time, as listed in Table A.

¹¹ A number of sites at Bobbing are screened-out despite the fact that Bobbing is closely related to Sittingbourne. For the purposes of 'modification-making' there is not potential to explore the option of treating Bobbing as part of wider Sittingbourne, although it is recognised that may be something to consider through a future plan.

¹² SW/778 (Land at Selling Road, Faversham) is an extremely large site to the south east of Faversham. Given that the Inspector directs the Council to allocate only enough land to deliver a 'proportional boost' to Faversham (i.e. a boost in-line with Policy ST3), there is not potential to allocate this site through proposed modifications. However, it is understood to be an option with some merit that might be explored through a future plan. Development would lead to transport impacts upon J7 of the M2, which would not be capable of mitigation without major and currently unplanned for improvements.

Table A: Reasonable site options 2016

Reference	Name	Area (ha)
SW/001	Land at Marrow Bone Hill, Plough Rd, Minster.	1.8
SW/010	The Tracies, Callaways Lane, Newington	0.3
SW/019	Land situated at the top of Southdown Road, Halfway	2.5
SW/021	Danley Farm, Minster Road	8.0
SW/028	Land at Borden Lane	3.1
SW/038	Danley Farm, Minster Road, Minster	0.7
SW/041	Land off Church Rd, Adj St Marys View	5.7
SW/044	Adjacent 24 & 26 Chequers Road, Minster	3.8
SW/046	Land fronting London Rd	1.3
SW/047	London Road/Water Lane	11.5
SW/049	Chaffes Lane, Upchurch	2.3
SW/050	Chilton Manor Farm, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne ME9 0AA	26.9
SW/078	The Vallance, Lynsted	1.3
SW/080	Land East of Love Lane	67.5
SW/081	Mindon, Ashford Road	2.5
SW/085	Land at Jubilee Fields, Oak Lane, Upchurch	0.4
SW/086	Land west & North of Jubilee Fields	1.7
SW/096	Phase II Lady Dane Farm, Faversham	N/a
SW/101	Land off Hempstead Lane, Bapchild	1.9
SW/107	Land at Chiltern Manor/Muddy Lane	7.8
SW/123	Land East of Iwade	55.0
SW/124	Land West of Church Lane, Newington	4.4
SW/129	The Bunny Bank	4.7
SW/133	Land East of Scocles Rd	27.5
SW/135	Land at Grove End Farm	22.6
SW/143	Land between Claxfield Farm & Lynsted Lane	13.5
SW/155	Chequers Stables, Eastchurch Rd	0.4
SW/158	Land rear of 33 Highfield Road, Minster	1.5
SW/159	Land adj to Dantlings, Plough Road, Minster	0.2
SW/164	Land at Pond Farm, Newington	12.8
SW/165	Land at Belgrave Road	5.2
SW/179	Land at Ruin Barns Road (The Old sale Field)	3.5
SW/184	Land Top of Parsonage Chase	0.9
SW/193	Land Adj Bredgar Village Hall	0.3
SW/194	Barton Hill Drive, Minster	25.3
SW/196	Land adj to Kingsborough Farm	18.5
SW/197	Garretts Farm, Eastchurch	10.7
SW/199	Coleshall Farm, Iwade	1.0
SW/204	Land at Muddy Lane, Sittingbourne	4.4
SW/211	Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall	3.0
SW/216	Land south west of Iwade	29.7
SW/217	Land North of London Rd, Newington	35.9
SW/233	Preston Fields, Canterbury Road, Faversham	14.4
SW/321	Southsea Avenue, Minster	3.4
SW/334	Former Nova Furniture Site, Graveney Road	3.0
SW/343	Bell Centre, Bell Road Sittingbourne	0.9
SW/373	Barrow Green Farm	2.5
SW/407	Land off High Street, Newington	6.9
SW/410	Land at London Road/Scholl Lane, Bapchild	5.4
SW/411	Land adj to School Lane, Bapchild	9.0
SW/412	Bapchild Fruit Stall, Fox Hill, Bapchild	0.5
SW/413	Perry Court Farm, Faversham	30.0
SW/418	Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne	0.4
SW/422	Land at Ufton Court Farm, Sittingbourne	27.2
SW/430	Abbey Fields, Faversham	3.8

Reference	Name	Area (ha)
SW/431	Abbey Fields - Option 2	18.8
SW/433	A2/Western Link	3.4
SW/434	Land R/O 111, The Street	0.2
SW/435	Queen Court farm, Water Lane	2.3
SW/440	West of Water Lane, Ospringe.	8.2
SW/441	Land West of Brogdale Road	3.6
SW/450	Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane	3.0
SW/453	School Lane	0.8
SW/457	Chequers Road	0.4
SW/458	Vicarage Farm, Lynsted	1.3
SW/459	Land off Scocles Road, Minster	0.6
SW/531	Land at East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne - Trenport	1.3
SW/700	East of Ham Road, Faversham	5.5
SW/701	Queen Court Farm, Ospringe	32.0
SW/702	Land East of Painters Farm, Eastling Road	0.8
SW/703	South West Sittingbourne	30.0
SW/704	Lynsted Lane, Teynham	4.9
SW/705	Land at Scocles Road/Elm Lane, Minster	2.8
SW/706	Rear of Chequers Road/Scocles Road	2.2
SW/707	Pond Farm London Road Newington	8.0
SW/714	Land North of the Street, Boughton	5.3
SW/715	Land to the rear of Magnolia, Primrose Lane, Bredgar	1.0
SW/717	Land at School Farm, Iwade	11.8
SW/718	Forge Lane, Upchurch	5.3
SW/721	Land north of Lower Road, Minster	75.5
SW/722	Barrow Green Farm, Teynham	13.7
SW/723	Land at London Road/Cellar Hill, Teynham	1.5
SW/724	Land West of Bredgar / Primrose Hill	4.3
SW/726	Land south of Primrose Lane, Bredgar	0.7
SW/727	Land at Lynsted Lane, Teynham	1.8
SW/732	Land at Ellen's Place, High Street, Newington	2.3
SW/733	Land at Bysing Wood, Faversham	1.0
SW/751	Land adj 9 Ashford Road and Orchard Cottage, Canterbury Road	2.1
SW/753	Bayfield Farm, Painter's Forstal	14.6
SW/757	Land r/o Courtenay Road, Dunkirk	3.5
SW/758	Land at Warden	6.6
SW/759	Bossenden Farm, Dunkirk	0.6
SW/779	Land at Gilbert Hall Farm, Minster	20.5
SW/780	Land at Windy Gap, Chequers Road, Minster	17.8
SW/781	Land adj St Clements School and the George Wharton Centre, Warden Bay	4.0
SW/784	Site A Land at Neames Forstal, Selling	0.8
SW/785	Site B Land at Neames Forstal, Selling	1.2
SW/786	Site C Land at Neames Forstal, Selling	0.5
SW/787	Site D Land at Neames Forstal, Selling	1.1
SW/789	Adj Doddington Playing Field, Dully Hill	0.2
SW/790	Courtenay House, London Road, Dunkirk	0.2
SW/793	Rear of Nelson Road/Scocles Road, Minster	4.0
SW/794	Perry Court Farmhouse and farmyard, Faversham	2.6
SW/795	Land at 39 Abbeyfields, Faversham	1.0
SW/796	179-183 Borden Lane, Sittingbourne	0.4
SW/797	Land at Vicarage Lane, Ospringe	1.6
SW/799	Land south of Elm Lane, Minster	2.5
SW/996	Barrow Green Farm, Barrow Green, Teynham	2.2
Policy MU3	Land at Frogal Lane, Teynham (proposal to switch from MU to housing)	18
Policy MU6	Nova site, Faversham (proposal to switch from employment to housing)	2
Policy A6	Land north of Graveney Road, East of Faversham	2

APPENDIX II: GIS ANALYSIS OF SITE OPTIONS

Introduction

As explained in Chapter 4, throughout the plan-making / SA process, in addition to appraisal of reasonable alternatives (i.e. mutually exclusive approaches to addressing policy issues), there has been a focus on appraising site options (i.e. the pool of sites that are available and deliverable, and thereby in contention for allocation).

The SA Report (April 2015) presented information on site options in Appendix IV, and then updated site options appraisal findings were presented within Post Submission Interim SA Report II (October 2015).

The aim of this appendix is to update the information on site options presented within Post Submission Interim SA Report II (October 2015).

Specifically, the **aim of this appendix** is to

- 1) explain the site options appraisal methodology; and
- 2) present the outcomes of site options appraisal.

The site options appraisal methodology (unchanged since 2015)

It was not possible to simply apply the SA framework (i.e. the list of SA topics/objectives presented in Table 3.1, above) given the number of site options and limited data (to inform qualitative appraisal). As such, work was undertaken to develop a criteria-based (quantitative / GIS) methodology suited to site options appraisal.

The broad scope of the site options appraisal criteria are introduced in **Table A**, below. The table aims to demonstrate that the criteria reflect the SA framework as closely as possible, recognising data limitations (and given that there is a need to appraise site options ‘on a level playing field’).¹³

Table B then lists the criteria concisely alongside the rules that have been applied to categorise the performance of sites. Specifically, Table B explains how, for each of the 29 criteria employed, the performance of sites is categorised on a Red/Amber/Green scale.

Table A: Introducing the site appraisal methodology and its fit with the SA framework

Topic	Relevant criteria (Location in relation to...)	Notes
Air	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality Management Area (AQMAs) 	Good data exists to inform the appraisal, as there is the potential to measure proximity to an AQMA; however there is not potential to model traffic flows between sites and AQMAs.
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Protection Area (SPAs) • Special Area of Conservation (SAC) • Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) • Locally designated wildlife site • Ancient semi-natural woodland • Woodland 	Good data is available to inform the appraisal, as there is the potential to measure proximity to various areas of biodiversity importance. It is fair to assume that sites in close proximity are sensitive, including because development can lead to recreational impacts; however, it is recognised that proximity is not the only determinant of impacts. Ideally, it would be possible to draw on locally commissioned work to identify further areas of constraint/opportunity (e.g. particularly sensitive locally

¹³ It is important to be clear on limitations. Given the broad scope of the SA framework, the number of site options to be appraised and time/data limitations, the decision was taken to apply quantitative proximity/intersect analysis, utilising GIS software. The absence of qualitative analysis (i.e. analysis that employs evidence-based professional judgement) means that this is a limited methodology; however, it nonetheless suited to aiding understanding of the site options and their relative merits.

Topic	Relevant criteria (Location in relation to...)	Notes
		designated wildlife sites or other areas contributing to 'green infrastructure').
Cultural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation area • Historic park or garden • Scheduled monument • Listed building 	<p>Good data is available to inform the appraisal, i.e. there is good potential to highlight where development in proximity to a heritage asset might impact negatively on that asset, or its setting.</p> <p>A limitation relates to the fact that it has not been possible to gather views from heritage specialists on sensitivity of assets / capacity to develop sites. This is a notable limitation as potential for development to conflict with the setting of historic assets / local historic character can only really be considered on a case-by-case basis. It will sometimes be the case that development can enhance heritage assets.</p>
Landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) • Area of high landscape value (AHLV) - Kent level • Area of high landscape value (AHLV) - Swale level • Local countryside gap • Landscape character area 	<p>Good data is available to inform the appraisal, i.e. there is good potential to highlight where development may impact on valued landscape character. Points to note are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council has identified areas of high landscape value across the County, and Swale Borough Council has supplemented this work by identifying areas that are locally valued, and also 'local countryside gaps'. • All of Swale is divided into landscape character areas, and to a limited extent it is understood how capacity/sensitivity varies between these areas. <p>A limitation relates to the fact that site specific factors have not been taken into account, e.g. it has not been possible to take into account the extent to which sites are screened within the landscape.</p>
Soil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality agricultural land¹⁴ • Agricultural land under Environmental Stewardship¹⁵ 	<p>Limited data is available to inform the appraisal. It is possible to draw on a national data-set that shows how agricultural land quality varies; however, this data-set is 'indicative' only. To establish agricultural land quality accurately there is a need to apply 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria, which involves field surveys. A number of areas around the borough have been surveyed, such that agricultural land quality has been established accurately; however, relatively few site options have been surveyed. As such, for the purposes of this analysis, it is appropriate to apply the national data-set.</p>

¹⁴ Agricultural land is classified into five grades, with grade one being of the best quality. High quality agricultural land is a finite resource, in that it is difficult if not impossible to replace it.

¹⁵ Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environment scheme which provides funding to farmers who deliver effective environmental management on their land. ES land is likely to be of relatively high biodiversity value and potentially 'well farmed' in general terms.

Topic	Relevant criteria (Location in relation to...)	Notes
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flood risk zone • Coastal change management area 	<p>Good data exists to inform the appraisal in terms of flood risk, although the available data relates to fluvial (river) and tidal flood risk only. Data on surface water flood risk is not available.</p> <p>No data is available to inform appraisal in terms of water quality or water resource availability; however, this is not a major problem.¹⁶</p>
Waste	<p>It is not possible to appraise site options in terms of the potential to support good waste management. It would not be fair to assume that larger schemes, or residential development in close proximity to recycling centres, will necessarily lead to better waste management.</p>	
Transport and Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train station • Rural lane 	<p>Limited data is available to inform the appraisal; however, the analysis under the 'Population' heading (see below) will also give some indication of how sites perform in terms of transport/traffic.</p>
Climate change	<p>No data is available to inform appraisal. Whilst some site options may well have inherently greater potential to incorporate on-site low carbon energy technologies (including on account of the scale of development / density of development within the local area), or link to a decentralised source of low carbon energy, there is insufficient evidence to enable robust analysis. As for the potential for development to support building integrated renewables (such as solar PV and solar heating), this is not locationally dependent (to any significant extent, although terrain / aspect is a factor).</p>	
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary school • Secondary school • Local shop • Large shop • Bank • GP surgery / medical centre 	<p>Limited data is available to inform the appraisal. Data-sets are available showing the location of facilities; however, some have been found to be out of date. On the plus side, the data-sets do show facilities outside of Swale, and so it should not be the case that the analysis is unfair in its treatment of sites near the borough boundary.</p> <p>Proximity to community infrastructure is important, particularly for residents who are less mobile (e.g. the elderly). However, there is little or no potential to take into account the potential for development at a particular site to put 'strain' on community infrastructure locally, or the potential for development to fund new community infrastructure.</p>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Park • National / Local Nature Reserves • Area of overall deprivation • Area of health deprivation 	<p>Development in an area of relative deprivation is assumed to be a positive step given that it can lead to developer funding being made available for targeted local schemes/initiatives; however, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions as viability considerations will come into play and/or because the full impacts can only be examined in the context of a detailed scheme.</p>

¹⁶ Whilst water pollution sensitivity may vary spatially (including issues associated with the capacity of Waste Water Treatment Works), in the absence of a detailed Water Cycle Study there is no mapped data. It is also the case that issues can often be appropriately addressed through masterplanning/ design measures, and so are appropriately considered at the planning application stage. The same can be said for 'drainage'. In terms of water resource availability: water resource availability does not vary significantly within the borough, and hence need not be a consideration here; and it is not possible to appraise site options in terms of the potential to support water efficiency. It might be suggested that large development schemes (i.e. developments on large sites) might be more able to deliver high standards of sustainable design, which in turn support water efficiency; however, this assumption will often not hold true. Finally, it is unnecessary to appraise site options in terms of groundwater 'source protection zones' and 'primary aquifers'. The presence of a groundwater source protection zone or aquifer does not represent a major constraint for most (non-polluting) types of development.

Topic	Relevant criteria (Location in relation to...)	Notes
Housing		No data exists to inform the appraisal. It would not be appropriate to suggest that a large site performs better than a small site simply because there is the potential to deliver more homes. Housing objectives could be met through the delivery of numerous small sites, or through delivery of a smaller number of large sites (albeit it is recognised that financial viability, and hence the potential to deliver affordable housing, is higher at large sites).
Crime		No data exists to inform the appraisal. Whilst the Index of Multiple Deprivation does identify areas of crime deprivation, this data is not suitably reliable.
Employment and skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area of employment deprivation 	Poor data exists to inform the appraisal. It is possible to consider the implications of development in areas of existing employment deprivation (as defined by the Index of Multiple Deprivation). However, it is difficult to draw strong conclusions.
Economic growth		Much is known about employment deprivation within Swale, and opportunities for regeneration; however, it is not possible to reflect this understanding in a high level appraisal of many site options. Appraisal necessitates knowledge of specific scheme proposals.

Table B: Site appraisal criteria with performance categories

Criteria (Location in relation to...)	Performance categories	Notes
1 Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	R = <TBCm A = <TBCm	Impact thresholds are unknown, and so the RAG thresholds reflect the spread of the data. N.B. There is no potential to take into account the size of the site option involved, i.e. make the assumption that large sites are problematic. This rule also applies to other criteria below. If small sites were shown to perform relatively well, despite being in close proximity to a sensitive location, there would be a risk that numerous small sites would come forward in close proximity leading to negative effects. It is appropriate to 'flag' sites as potentially problematic, even where they are small and in practice not likely to result in negative effects.
2 Special Protection Area (SPA)	R = <TBCm A = <6km	A 6km impact threshold is established; however, as all site options are within 6km it was determined appropriate to differentiate further. A 1654m threshold was determined on the basis of the spread of the data (half of the site options are within this distance). ¹⁷

¹⁷ There is an argument that it is not appropriate to differentiate between site options as the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries has established a methodology for ensuring that recreational impacts can be mitigated regardless of proximity. However, it is also important to remember that there could potentially be 'impact pathways' other than recreation. The Local Plan HRA Report (April 2015) mentions disturbance (other than through recreation) and proximity effects, water quality; and atmospheric pollution.

Criteria (Location in relation to...)		Performance categories	Notes
3	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	R = <TBCm A = <6km	Natural England has defined a Risk Impact Zone for both SACs that extends to 2km; however, no site options fall within 2km. It is appropriate to 'flag' site options that, despite being outside the Risk Impact Zone, are relatively close. On balance, it was determined appropriate to use the 6km threshold discussed above (i.e. that used for the SPAs), and then to flag half of the sites (i.e. the 50% sites closest to an SAC) red.
4	Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) not also designated as an SAC or SPA	R = <TBCm A = <2km	All SACs and SPAs in Swale are also designated as a SSSI, and so in order to avoid 'double counting' it is appropriate to focus here only on those SSSIs not also designated as SAC or SPA, of which there are three. Natural England has defined Risk Impact Zones for all three SSSIs that extend to 2km, and hence it was determined appropriate to use that threshold and then to also flag the sites that are in closest proximity (50 th percentile) to each SSSI.
5	Locally designated wildlife site	R = Intersect A = <400m	The thresholds reflect an understanding that LWSs and ASNWs are relatively non-sensitive. 400m is a walkable distance.
6	Ancient Semi Natural Woodland	R = Intersect A = <400m	
7	Woodland	A = Intersect	The threshold reflects an understanding that non-designated woodland tends to be non-sensitive.
8	Conservation Area	R = Intersect A = <TBCm	The 510m threshold reflects the spread of the data (i.e. half of those sites that do not intersect are within m). It is important to remember that impacts can be indirect (e.g. traffic within a village centre) as well as direct (e.g. impacts to setting).
9	Listed building	R = 0m A = <50m	It is appropriate to 'flag' a red where a site intersects or is adjacent. It is also appropriate to flag sites that might impact directly on the setting of a listed building. A 50m threshold is assumed.
10	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	A = <2km	No sites intersect, and hence it would not be appropriate to 'flag' any sites as red. In the absence of any firm understanding of a distance threshold for 'setting', a 2km threshold is set.
11	Area of high landscape value - Kent level	R = Intersect A = <500m	The thresholds reflect an understanding that the setting of these landscapes is likely to be significantly less sensitive than that of the AONB.
12	Area of high landscape value - Swale level	R = Intersect A = <500m	
13	Local countryside gap	R = Intersect	It is not appropriate to consider the 'setting' of land designated as a local countryside gap.

Criteria (Location in relation to...)		Performance categories	Notes
14	High quality agricultural land ¹⁸	R = Grade 1 A = Grade 2 or 3	Thresholds reflect the spread of the data, i.e. many sites intersect with Grade 1 land. ¹⁹ N.B. In instances where the GIS indicates loss of agricultural land, but the site is known to be brownfield, the site has not been flagged as constrained.
15	Agricultural land under Environmental Stewardship ²⁰	A = Intersect	This is not a major issue, and so it would not be appropriate to 'flag' sites red.
16	Coastal change management area	R = Intersect	The risks associated with coastal change are more significant, and so it is appropriate to 'flag' sites red.
17	Flood risk zone	R = > 10% of site intersects a flood risk zone A = 1 - 10% of site intersects a flood risk zone	The extent of flood risk zone 2 does not extend far beyond the extent of flood risk zone 3. As such, it is appropriate to consider the two together. The thresholds also reflect the fact that small areas of flood risk can be left undeveloped. The 10% threshold is fairly arbitrary.
18	Rural lane	A = Adjacent	It is fair to assume that adjacent sites would include an access point onto the rural lane.
19	Local shop	R = >TBCm A = >TBCm G = <400m G = <TBCm	400m is a walkable distance for most, but as there are a large number of sites within this distance it is appropriate to also flag half (i.e. the 50% closest) as performing particularly well. The other thresholds reflect the spread of the data.
20	Primary school	R = >TBCm A = >TBCm G = <800m G = <TBCm	Department for Transport guidance ²¹ suggests 800m as a walkable distance for those accessing a primary school or GP surgery, but as there are a large number of sites within this distance it is appropriate to also flag half (i.e. the 50% closest) as performing particularly well. The other thresholds reflect the spread of the data.
21	GP surgery / medical centre	R = >TBCm A = >TBCm G = <TBCm G = <TBCm	

¹⁸ Agricultural land is classified into five grades, with grade 1 being of the best quality. Agricultural land is a finite resource.

¹⁹ Another approach would be assign a red categorisation to sites intersecting agricultural land that is grade 1, grade 2 or grade 3. This might be in-line with the NPPF, which states at para 112 that: "Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile [BMV] agricultural land" before defining BMV as Land in grades 1, 2 and 3a. However, this approach would fail to adequately differentiate between sites, given that very few sites options intersect grade 4 land. It is also noted that the NPPF goes on to state at para 112 that: "..., local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality."

Also, with regards to agricultural land, it is also worth noting that whilst the NPPF makes reference to 'grade 3a' the available dataset does not show this grade, i.e. it simply shows 'grade 3' land and does not differentiate within this grade.

Finally, with regards to agricultural land, it is important to note that the dataset is of a poor resolution, so much so that large villages are shown to be washed over by agricultural land. Effort has been made to correct the data-set by classifying brownfield sites as such.

²⁰ Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environment scheme which provides funding to farmers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land. ES land is likely to be of relatively high biodiversity value and 'well farmed' in general terms.

²¹ WebTag (January 2014) Unit A4.2 paragraph 6.4.5, Department for Transport

Criteria (Location in relation to...)	Performance categories	Notes
22 Secondary school	R = >TBCm A = >TBCm G = <1000m G = <TBCm	Department for Transport guidance suggests 1000m as a walkable distance for those accessing a secondary school, but as there are a large number of sites within this distance it is appropriate to also flag half (i.e. the 50% closest) as performing particularly well. The other thresholds reflect the spread of the data.
23 Bank	R = >TBCm A = >TBCkm G = <TBCm G = <TBCm	There is no clear guidance on distance thresholds, and it is recognised that these facilities will often be reached by car or public transport. The thresholds therefore reflect the spread of the data.
24 Larger shop	R = >TBCm A = >TBCm G = <TBCm G = <TBCm	
25 Train station	G = <TBCm G = <TBCm	The thresholds reflect the spread of the data.
26 Country Park	G = <TBCkm G = <TBCkm	
27 National Nature Reserve	G = <TBCm G = <TBCm	
28 Local Nature Reserve	G = <2km G = <TBCm	People are unlikely to travel far to access a LNR, and so it is only appropriate to flag sites green where they are within 2km. It is also appropriate to flag half (i.e. the 50% closest) as performing particularly well.
29 Area of overall deprivation	G = Site intersects with an 'output area' that is relatively deprived (i.e. in the 0-20% (1 st quintile) most deprived in the borough G = second quintile	It is fair to assume that development in an area of relative deprivation (as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation) may support regeneration.
30 Area of health deprivation		
31 Area of employment deprivation		

Appraisal findings

The table below presents appraisal findings in relation to all reasonable site options (i.e. sites in contention for allocation). Specifically, the table presents an appraisal of the 110 site options (see Appendix I) in terms of the 31 appraisal criteria (Table B), with performance categorised on the following 'RAG' scale -

Dark green	Site performs particularly well
Light green	Site performs well
No shading	No issue in terms of this criterion
Amber	Site performs poorly
Red	Site performs particularly poorly

It is important to be clear that:

The aim of categorising the performance of site options is to aid differentiation, i.e. to highlight instances of site options performing relatively well / poorly. The intention of categorisation is not to indicate that a 'significant effect' is predicted. As discussed in Table A, in most instances the categorisation thresholds were determined taking into account the spread of the data more so than any understanding of impact thresholds.

The table below should be read with the following understanding of **limitations**.

It is recognised that only limited understanding can be gained from strict GIS analysis; and equally it is recognised that presenting appraisal findings for all site options in tabular format is in practice of limited assistance to those interested in the spatial strategy.

As such, the spreadsheet containing the underlying data is available upon request. The spreadsheet allows for more effective interrogation of the data as it is possible to compare and contrast particular sites (that might be alternatives) and examine sub-sets (e.g. sites around a particular settlement, or sites above a certain size).

Table C: Findings of GIS analysis (N.B. Proposed additional allocations are highlighted)

[Insert table with 110 rows (one for each site option) and a column for each of the 31 appraisal criteria. Each cell within the table will be shaded on a 'Red Amber Green' scale. Data will not be included in the table, but is available upon request (i.e. the spreadsheet underpinning the table is available upon request)]

APPENDIX III: DISCUSSION OF SITE OPTIONS AT EACH SETTLEMENT

Introduction

As explained in Chapter 4, throughout the plan-making / SA process, in addition to appraisal of reasonable alternatives (i.e. mutually exclusive approaches to addressing policy issues), there has been a focus on appraising site options (i.e. the pool of sites that are available and deliverable, and thereby in contention for allocation).

The **aim of this appendix** is to present a discussion of site options at each settlement in turn.

Methodology

The sections below examine each of the borough's main settlements in turn, with each section discussing the merits of the reasonable site options (see Appendix I for an explanation of how these were arrived at), and combinations of site options, in terms of the SA framework (see Chapter 3).

Points to note are -

- Boughton is considered within the Faversham section, as there are only two 'reasonable' site options.
- Rather than assign a section to each of the settlements on the Isle of Sheppey, consideration is given to:
A) West Sheppey, i.e. Minster/Halfway, recognising that there are no 'reasonable' site options at Sheerness or Queenborough/Rushenden; and B) East Sheppey, i.e. Leysdown and Eastchurch.
- Within each section there is a discussion under each of the topics that comprise the SA framework except (for conciseness) -
 - Waste - There is no potential to differentiate between site options with any confidence. Sustainable waste management should be possible under any foreseeable scenario.
 - Climate change - Development viability does vary across Swale (highest in Faversham; lowest on Sheppey), and it can be suggested that larger sites are more 'viable'; however, there are not thought to be any opportunities to deliver low carbon infrastructure (e.g. district heating) in practice.
 - Housing - Development viability does vary across Swale, and it can be suggested that larger sites are more 'viable'; hence the potential to deliver affordable housing is assumed to vary in a simple fashion (i.e. greatest at large sites at Faversham; and least at small sites on Sheppey).
 - Crime - It is unlikely that any site option, or combination of site options, would have bearing.
 - Water quality/resource issues (a factor considered under 'Water', within the SA framework) - It is not clear that there is any potential to differentiate between the site options with confidence. It is recognised that the North Kent Marshes are a sensitive water environment, but it is not clear that development nearby (e.g. on the northern edge of Faversham) would lead to a risk of impacts.

With regards to the evidence-base, there is a need to note the following -

- There is a reliance on reporting on those constraints that can be understood from the available GIS data, i.e. the data used to generate the 'RAG analysis' presented for each site option in Appendix II, and which is available at: [insert [weblink](#) to GIS maps]; and data available from magic.gov.uk.
- Reliance is placed on the findings of the Urban Extension Landscape Capacity Study (UELCS, 2010) as part of the discussion of landscape and heritage constraints.
- The nationally available agricultural land quality data-set is applied cautiously, as this data-set is extremely low-resolution (i.e. not suited for differentiating between site options at the settlement-scale).
- Professional judgement is applied cautiously, e.g. in respect of traffic generation issues/impacts, given an absence of modelling data.

Sittingbourne

Sites examined are - ²²

Southwest Sittingbourne		SW/703
Sites south of Sittingbourne	Borden Lane	SW/028
	Ufton Court Farm	SW/422
	Sites along Ruins Barn Road	SW/135, 211, 179 and 418
Sites southeast of Sittingbourne	Chilton Manor Farm	SW/050
	Highsted Road	SW/107
	Muddy Lane	SW/204

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Topic	Commentary
Air	<p>Air quality is an issue at Sittingbourne, with an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) designated along a stretch of the A2 to the east of the town centre, and another designated along St. Pauls Street (B2006) to the north of the town centre. Also, another consideration is the possibility of increasing traffic through the AQMAs at Newington, Teynham and Ospringe.</p> <p>The situation is currently problematic, and could potentially worsen in the future, recognising that the submitted plan makes provision for 3,585 dwellings in Sittingbourne, alongside 238,091m² industrial and office floorspace and 29,754m² retail and leisure floorspace (and Teynham is set to be a focus of growth, with provision for 423 dwellings).</p> <p>However, it is not possible to differentiate between the site options in terms of the likelihood of increased traffic through these AQMAs. It might be suggested that expansion to the southeast (SW/050, 107, 204) would lead to a significant increase in traffic through the Sittingbourne A2 AQMA (due to car movements west, towards M2 J5) and the Teynham AQMA (if residents travelling east, e.g. to Canterbury, choose not to first 'double-back' to M2 J5), but there is no certainty in this respect.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Biodiversity sensitivities constrain growth to the north of Sittingbourne, given proximity to the internationally important North Kent Marshes; however, this does not have a bearing on the site options under consideration.</p> <p>Sites to the south and southeast - notably SW/179, which is the eastern most of the southern cluster; and SW/107, which is the southern-most of the southeastern cluster - border a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), which is the only such site in the vicinity; however, it is not clear that this is a constraint.</p>

²² Also, there are three further 'reasonable site options' that are not considered within the table below, for conciseness, on the basis that they give rise to few strategic issues:

- Land at the former Bell Centre, Bell Road (SW/343) - could accommodate a considerable number of new apartments (up to 150), together with a possible medical centre. The site has been subject to past viability challenges; however, with many of the adverse development costs (i.e. demolition) addressed by the previous owners, it is now assumed that the prospects for development have considerably improved. As one of the few brownfield sites within a central location available to allocate, it is broadly supported.
- Land at East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne (SW531) - This site, on the northeastern edge of Sittingbourne, has been identified as appropriate for a local centre. However, the site is located within the urban area and as such any potential for development is likely best pursued outside of the Local Plan.
- Land at 179-183 Borden Lane (SW/796) - is a small site currently comprising three houses with gardens.

Topic	Commentary
	<p>Otherwise, sites are unconstrained, in terms of strategic biodiversity considerations, although that is not to say that there is not onsite habitat that has some importance in the wider landscape. One site comprises orchards (SW/107, which is adjacent to the SNCI); however, it is not possible to assume particular biodiversity value.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>Six Conservation Areas are designated at villages to the south of Sittingbourne (north of the M2), plus there are numerous listed buildings (outside of Conservation Areas). With this in mind, comments on sites are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest Sittingbourne (SW/703) is designated locally as a Countryside Gap between Sittingbourne and Borden (a Conservation Area, CA), and the UELCS identifies the need to: <i>“Maintain a landscape gap between the edge of Sittingbourne and Borden to protect the integrity of Borden.”</i> Development would clearly impact the gap, but a considerable gap would remain; and this is a large site where there is good potential for landscaping. As such, the gap / setting of Borden is perhaps not a major constraints; however, there are also other considerations. Firstly, the proposed access road linking the site to Borden Lane would pass adjacent to a listed building (Cryalls Farmhouse), which is currently passed by a footpath to Borden (although there may be scope for mitigation to limit impacts to its setting). Secondly, access to the site from the south leads to the potential for traffic impacts to three nearby CAs and rural lanes. • Moving east, land at Borden Lane (SW/028) would close the gap between Sittingbourne and the edge of Borden, which the UELCS states should be retained. A gap between Sittingbourne and the Borden CA would remain, but the setting of a second CA (Harmans Corner) could be affected. One listed building is adjacent to the site, and another is nearby, along the road to Borden. • Moving east again, land at Ufton Court Farm (SW/422) would likely impact on the Tunstall CA, as access from the south would be via the CA itself (on a corner where there are currently three listed buildings), and possibly the setting of the Harmans Corner CA to the west (although a c.300m gap would remain). Also, the northern access to the site is non-ideal, in that this is a narrow lane and there is clearly potential for ‘rat-running’, in the direction of M2 J5, through three CAs. • Moving further east, the largest of the four sites at Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall (SW/135) is also constrained by its proximity to the Tunstall CA. The site skirts the gardens of a listed building at the eastern extent of the CA (Cedar House), and would likely impact on its setting. Assuming that much traffic from this site would be along Tunstall Road to the north / west, rather than Ruins Barn Road to the east, then there would also be a likelihood of ‘rat-running’ through CAs. • The other three sites at this southern cluster (SW/211, 179 and 418) are located on Ruins Barn Road, away from the Tunstall CA, and are perhaps less likely to generate problematic rat-running (although this is highly uncertain). • Finally, with regards to the southeast Sittingbourne sites (SW/107, 050, 204) it is similarly the case that there are no CAs or Listed Buildings in close proximity, but question-marks remain regarding rural rat-running (in order to reach the trunk road network). The gap between Sittingbourne and the Rodmersham Green CA would be eroded, but a gap of at least 600m would be remain.
Landscape	<p>The UELCS concludes that: <i>“To the south of Sittingbourne and the A2, the landscape generally has a low capacity to accommodate change because it is often locally distinct, has a strong rural character and is not strongly influenced by the existing urban edge of Sittingbourne. However [an area to the southeast] has a moderate capacity to accommodate change, where it is more strongly influenced by the existing urban edge of Sittingbourne.”</i> With this in mind, comments on sites are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest Sittingbourne (SW/703) comprises land designated locally as a Countryside Gap between Sittingbourne and Borden, and the UELCS identifies this area (in fact, the whole area along this edge of Sittingbourne) as having ‘low’ capacity for change. However,

Topic	Commentary
	<p>development here would be in-line with the UELCS priority to: <i>“Maintain a landscape gap between the edge of Sittingbourne and Borden to protect the integrity of Borden.”</i> This conclusion is reached on the basis that, whilst development would significantly lessen the gap, a considerable gap would remain, and this is a large site where there is good potential for landscaping. It is also noted that the UELCS references land in this area that is <i>“currently influenced by, the existing urban edge.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving east, land at Borden Lane (SW/028), also within the area identified as having ‘low’ capacity for change, would virtually close the gap between Sittingbourne and the edge of Borden, which the UELCS states should be retained. • Moving east again, land at Ufton Court Farm (SW/422) is a large site that would impinge on the Tunstall Conservation Area and also erode the gap between Sittingbourne and Borden (see discussion above, under ‘Heritage’). The UELCS study identified this area (indeed, the whole area along this edge of Sittingbourne) as having ‘low’ capacity for change; however, the study does note that the northern-most part of this site (a relatively small part of the site) is suitable for development from a landscape perspective. • Moving further east, it is difficult to draw a conclusion on two of the four sites along Ruins Barn Road (SW/135 and 211, to the west of the road), other than to say that: they sit within the broad area identified by the UELCS as having ‘low’ capacity for change; there are some fairly long views over the sites (in particular from Ruins Barn Road, where there is little in the way of hedgerow); and the smaller site would be incongruous (unless frontage development only, in which case it would still be somewhat incongruous). In respect of the other two sites along Ruins Barn Road (SW/179 and 418), these sit within a locally designated landscape (Kent Level), and the UELCS concludes ‘low’ capacity for change, emphasising that: <i>“The existing urban edge is very subtle and does not impinge on the rural and parkland character of the wider landscape”</i>. However, the UELCS also suggests that the smaller site is broadly suitable, stating that <i>“a very minor extension of housing along Ruins Barn Road would be acceptable within the [larger site] where a small parcel of land appears to have no current usage and is physically and visually well contained by field boundaries and existing vegetation belts. It would be most appropriate if any further development in this location comprised a single line of well-spaced out houses, to maintain the subtle character of the urban edge and the transition between the urban and rural areas.”</i> • Finally, with regards to the southeast Sittingbourne sites (SW/050, 107, 204), landscape is a major consideration as the sites lie within a designated area of high landscape value (Kent level); and there are also (less significant) coalescence considerations. Recent site specific work commissioned by the Council (DHA, 2015) has confirmed (after having given consideration to proposed mitigation measures) that there would be impacts to the designated landscape, stating: <i>“the proposed development, given its size and extent, would be likely to result in significant, demonstrable harm to the North Downs Special Landscape Area, as defined within the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008, bearing in mind much of the land designated at the South Eastern edge of Sittingbourne would be physically effected by the development.”</i> The UELCS identifies a land parcel comprising most of this site as having a ‘moderate’ capacity for change; however, on closer examination it seems that there is distinct variation within this landscape parcel. The UELCS states that <i>“[s]ensitivity increases to the south from where the urban edge is not evident and the distinctiveness and remoteness of the landscape are stronger”</i>; and suggests that ‘minor’ (to the west, within the larger SW/050 site) or ‘very minor’ (to the east, within SW/204) expansion of the urban edge would ‘perhaps’ be acceptable. Also, the UELCS mentions the orchards that comprise SW/107 to the southwest, finding that they should be conserved as they <i>“provide scenic quality and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity”</i>.
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates that much of the land in question around Sittingbourne is likely to be Grade 1 (to the southwest and southeast) or Grade 2 (to the south). Grade 1 is agricultural land of the highest quality nationally (and Grade 2 is also high</p>

Topic	Commentary
	<p>quality, similarly classed as 'best and most versatile').</p> <p>Some, but by no means all, of the land around Sittingbourne has also been surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work),²³ generally confirming that much of the land is Grade 1 or Grade 2 quality. There is one notable area of Grade 3b (i.e. non-best and most versatile) land identified southeast of Sittingbourne (intersecting with SW/050), thereby contradicting the low resolution national dataset (which indicates Grade 1 for this site).</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, it is very difficult to confidently differentiate between the sites in terms of the quality of agricultural land that would be lost. SW/050 is known to comprise some non-BMV land, but the same could also be the case for other sites.</p> <p>It is also noted that two sites (SW107 and SW/204, i.e. two of the three sites at southeast Sittingbourne) intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship 'agri-environment' agreement; however, this is a relatively minor consideration.</p>
Water	<p>SW/204 to the southeast is significantly constrained (c.40% flood zone 3), and flood zone three also skirts the edge of the adjacent site SW/050 (although this is unlikely to be an issue, given the size of this site).</p>
Transport and Traffic	<p>Without the benefit of detailed transport modelling it is difficult to differentiate between the site options, in terms of the impact on the road network. What is known is that the predominant direction of travel from most locations will be south/west to Junction 5 of the M2; and it is known that this junction has major capacity (and safety) issues that are set to be resolved through improvements to commence in 2019/20, with completion by 2024.</p> <p>On balance it seems appropriate to conclude that SW/703 to the southwest performs relatively well, as this site is closest to the junction and there is perhaps the least likelihood of 'rat-running' along rural lanes and through villages and hamlets. However, there is much uncertainty, as reaching the M2 Junction via rural lanes (as opposed to via the A249) could be an attractive option from SW/703.</p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good 'accessibility', thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect it is again difficult to differentiate between the sites with confidence; however, it is noted that the sites differ in terms of proximity to the town centre. Sites to the southeast are closest (c.1km), whilst sites on Ruins Barn Road are most distant (c.1.8km); however, it seems likely that all sites could be served by a frequent bus service.</p> <p>Finally, there is a need to consider in-combination effects. In this respect, it is clearly the case that any option involving a combination of sites that leads to high growth at Sittingbourne as a whole will lead to impacts on M2 J5.</p>
Population	<p>The matter of sites to the south being somewhat distant from the town centre has already been discussed, under 'Transport and traffic', and it is not clear that there are any further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence. Areas of Sittingbourne that are relatively deprived (within the 20% most deprived areas of Swale) are concentrated to the north / northeast of the town centre, i.e. away from the site options under consideration. Along the town's southern edge, the most deprived area is at the eastern extent - adjacent to SW/050, 204 - however, this area is not amongst the 20% most deprived in Swale.</p>
Health	<p>See discussion above, under 'Population'. In respect of health, it is noted that the area of <i>relative</i> deprivation at Sittingbourne's eastern extent (adjacent to SW/050, 204) is the 18th most deprived 'super output area' in Swale, in terms of health and disability (which places it in the second quintile).</p>
Employment and skills	<p>There is little potential to differentiate between the site options, as none would deliver significant new employment (SW/703 would deliver a modest amount of employment</p>

²³ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Topic	Commentary
Economic growth	<p>floorspace), impact on an existing employment site or necessarily support existing employment sites (which are mainly focused to the north of Sittingbourne).</p> <p>Similarly, it is not clear that higher growth at Sittingbourne (i.e. allocation of numerous sites in combination) would lead to notable benefits.</p>

Conclusions

Sites to the south of Sittingbourne - SW/028, 422, 712, 135, 211, 179, 418 - stand-out as particularly constrained, with issues relating to heritage and/or landscape and/or remoteness from the town centre.

This leaves in contention the options of extending Sittingbourne to the southwest or southeast:

- Southwest Sittingbourne (SW/703) - is constrained in landscape and heritage terms in a similar way to sites to the south, but not to the same extent, and there is known to be good potential for mitigation. Traffic impacts may also be more manageable, given its relative proximity to M2 J5.
- Sites at southeast Sittingbourne (SW/050, 107, 204) - are notably constrained in landscape terms, given impacts to a landscape identified as being important at the Kent-scale, and this may be an over-riding consideration. It is relatively close to the town centre, but distant from M2 J5.

Faversham (and Boughton)

Sites examined are - ²⁴

Bysing Wood Road (west of Faversham)	SW/733
Sites to the southwest and at Ospringe	SW/046, 433, 435, 440, 797
Sites to the east of Ospringe, west of Ashford Rd (A251)	SW/047, 701, 794
Sites to the east of the Ashford Rd (A251)	SW/081, 233, 751
Sites to the east (Extension to Lady Dane Fm and Graveney Rd).	SW/080
Sites to the northeast	SW/430, 431, 795
East of Ham Road (north of Faversham)	SW/700
Sites at Boughton	SW/434, 714

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

²⁴ Also, there are five further 'reasonable site options' that are not considered within the table below, for conciseness, on the basis that they give rise to few strategic issues:

- Policy MU6 - Land at Graveney Road, Faversham - An existing employment site currently allocated within the submission plan for mixed uses. However, despite its good location, adverse development costs indicate that its future as an employment site may be in some doubt; and on this basis its redevelopment wholly for housing is supported.
- Policy MU5 - Phase II Lady Dane Farm, Faversham - of the submission plan references the potential for a second phase of development, including housing. Taking into account the land required for a second phase of employment, the need for further open space and the possibility of a new primary school, there is potential for a minimum additional 60 dwellings.
- Policy A6 - Land at Graveney Road, Faversham - There is a proposal to reallocate this employment development for housing.
- Brogdale Road (SW/441) was recently granted planning permission at appeal (66 dwellings), hence allocation is something of a 'given'.
- Perry Court Farm (SW/413) has a resolution to grant outline planning permission (370 dwellings and 18,525m2 of employment uses), hence allocation is something of a 'given' (despite issues, e.g. heritage and landscape considerations).
- KCC Highways Depot, Preston (SW/210) - There is uncertainty over the site's availability, but if available it would seem broadly suitable (given that it is a brownfield site).

Topic	Commentary
Air	<p>Air quality is an issue at Faversham, given the designated AQMA at Ospringe. There is a need to avoid increased traffic through the AQMA, recognising that the predominant direction of travel will be towards Canterbury and the M2 (J6 to the south of Faversham and J7 to the east). Also, there is a need to avoid cars queuing at junctions within the AQMA.</p> <p>The situation is currently problematic, and could potentially worsen in the future as planned housing growth increases traffic through the AQMA (albeit mitigation measures are set to be put in place through policy). It could also be that planned growth at Teynham (423 dwellings across four allocations) increases traffic through the AQMA.</p> <p>In light of these issues, sites to the southwest and at Ospringe, that would access the A2 within or west of the AQMA (SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 701, 797), perform relatively poorly. There may be good potential to mitigate effects, but these sites should be avoided if possible, from an 'air' perspective, and in-combination effects are certainly a consideration.</p> <p>It is not appropriate to differentiate further between sites - e.g. sites along the A2 to the east of the AQMA versus sites located away from the A2. However, it is noted the 'Preston Fields' site (SW/233), to the east of the Ashford Rd, benefits from close motorway access.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>Biodiversity sensitivities constrain growth to the north, given proximity to the internationally important North Kent Marshes, and associated locally important marshlands. The proposed allocation at Oare Gravel Works (Policy MU4) abuts the SPA, and two others are within 100m, which on the one hand highlights the potential to avoid/mitigate effects, but on the other suggests the risk of in-combination effects should there be further allocations. Also of note are locally designated woodlands to the west and southwest of Faversham, and to the east of Boughton (the edge of the wider Blean Woodlands complex).</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, sites to the northeast (SW/430, 431, 795) perform notably poorly. It might be that further investigation would show significant effects to be unlikely (e.g. because onsite habitat does not functionally link to the nearby designated habitat, or because recreational impacts are unlikely given access), and it might be that mitigation is possible; however, for the purposes of this appraisal it is appropriate to flag as an issue.</p> <p>Other sites that perform relatively poorly are: 'East of Ham Road' (SW/700), where the North Kent Marshes SPA is within easy walking distance, and seemingly accessible by public footpath; and 'Bysing Wood Road (SW/733), to the east, which intersects an area of locally designated woodland (albeit part of the site is previously developed). With regards to the site north of Boughton (SW/714), this site is probably not constrained by nearby woodlands (with nationally important SSSI woodland c.1.5km distant, and managed as a National Nature Reserve, albeit other locally important areas of ancient woodland are closer, accessible by footpath and not managed as a nature reserve.</p> <p>Other sites are unconstrained, in terms of strategic biodiversity considerations, although that is not to say that there is not onsite habitat that has some importance in the wider landscape. It is difficult to see that there could be in-combination effects associated with large scale growth to the south of the A2 (given that the broad scale ecological corridors are to the north and south / southwest of the town), but there could be a need for further investigation.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>Faversham is a historic town, with extensive Conservation Areas, many listed buildings, two scheduled ancient monuments and a clear 'setting' within the landscape.</p> <p>Beginning to the east, SW/080 is relatively unconstrained, as existing development (Graveney Road Industrial Estate) and planned development (Policy MU5, Lady Dane Farm) means that additional growth would not have a direct impact on the nearby Faversham Conservation Area (CA).</p> <p>Sites to the northeast (SW/430, 431, 795) are relatively constrained, as the flat open landscape is understood to contribute to the heritage setting of Faversham.</p> <p>Similarly, 'East of Ham Road' (SW/700), to the north, is constrained by the flat open landscape understood to contribute to the heritage setting of Faversham; however, the degree of constraint may be more limited (and sufficient mitigation possible), recognising that</p>

Topic	Commentary
	<p>the Faversham CA abuts only a small part of the site.</p> <p>To the northwest, 'Bysing Wood Road' (SW/733) is seemingly constrained by the adjacent Gunpowder Works Scheduled Ancient Monument.</p> <p>South of Faversham, all land likely contributes to the historic setting of the town to some extent, given the historic settlement pattern;²⁵ however, on the basis of the Faversham Town Heritage, Landscape Setting and Characterisation Study (2015) it is possible to differentiate between areas where the contribution is 'moderate' versus 'high'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites in the vicinity of Ospringe (SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 797) make a 'high' contribution, and several either intersect the Ospringe CA, abut the Syndale Park CA or abut one or more listed buildings. • Moving east, SW/701 is a large site that abuts the Ospringe CA, but is within an area that makes a 'moderate' contribution to the historic setting of Faversham and is some distance (at least 100m) from any listed building. Elsewhere within this central area south of the A2, two sites (Brogdale Road, SW/441; and Perry Court Farm, SW/413) are 'givens' (see discussion above), leaving just one smaller site - Perry Court Farmhouse, SW/794 - which is constrained by the nearby Listed oast house (as explained within the UELCS, 2010). • Moving east, on the other side of the Ashford Rd A251, the two smaller sites (SW/081, 751) perform poorly as they fall within the Faversham CA. This leaves 'Preston Fields' (SW/233), which is a large site identified as contributing to the historic character of Faversham to a 'high' extent. There would certainly be a loss of attractive views along this shallow valley, and some impacts on the adjacent CA; however, masterplanning/design evidence indicates good potential for mitigation. • In respect of growth to the south of Faversham, it is also necessary to highlight the potential for in-combination effects, i.e. it is clearly the case that numerous developments would cumulatively impact on the heritage setting of Faversham. It may also be that higher growth at Faversham, or at certain locations around the town, could result in traffic impacts on the historic centre; however, this is less clear. <p>Finally, at Boughton, SW/714 is open orchard land that is visible in the landscape on the approach to the Staplestreet CA and Mount Ephraim Registered Park/Garden; however, there is no clear evidence to suggest it contributes to setting.</p>
Landscape	<p>Landscapes with a 'heritage setting' value (see discussion above) may tend to have some 'landscape' value; however, this is uncertain. What <i>is</i> certain is that the western side of Faversham is constrained by a locally important (Kent level) Areas of High Landscape Value (AHLV), which is essentially a spur of the AONB (which lies to the south of the M2); whilst land to the north is flat / low lying, with some areas designated as AHLV (Kent Level).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginning to the east, whilst this land is identified as having 'moderate' capacity to accept change, SW/080 is less well contained than the submission plan allocation at Lady Dane Farm (Policy MU5), the extent of which was defined with the explicit purpose of not breaking a ridgeline. The UELCS is clear that: <i>"Extensive development extending beyond, or visible from, land east of this ridge would be inappropriate because it would impose on the rural character of the landscape to the east."</i> • Sites to the northeast (SW/430, 431, 795) are constrained, with the UELCS identifying low capacity for change and referring to the <i>"unspoilt foreground to the current, attractive urban edge of Faversham."</i> • To the north, 'East of Ham Road' (SW/700) is constrained by the flat open landscape. The UELCS establishes 'low' capacity to accept change and refers to a highly sensitive 'buffer between the urban extent of Faversham and Ham Marshes'. The UELC refers to the potential for development to improve (soften) the urban edge, to the benefit of the landscape; however, it is not at all clear that this is an overriding factor.

²⁵ Faversham pre-1800 was located well north of the A2, associated with the Creek, with Ospringe as a distinct village on the A2 (London Road). It was only in the early 20th Century that development reach the A2 (and spilled over to a very minor extent), and a proportion of this 20th Century development is itself now designated as part of the Faversham Conservation Area.

Topic	Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the northwest, 'Bysing Wood Rd' (SW/733) intersects the AHLV, hence performs poorly. • South of Faversham, the UELCS distinguishes between land to the west of the A251 Ashford Rd versus land to the east, but ultimately concludes that both land parcels have 'moderate' capacity to accommodate change. Only one site - 'Perry Court Farmhouse' (SW/794) - is singled out as performing poorly, and this is primarily for heritage reasons. The general conclusion is that small scale, sensitive development could be appropriate at a number of the better contained locations, with development opportunities (cautiously) identified at Land at SW/233 ('the valley sides'); and at SW/047 ('minor residential development'). Also, SW/435 at Ospringe performs well as it is partially developed. With regards to in-combination effects, the comments made under 'heritage' above apply, and there is also a need to consider the setting of the AONB to the south. • Finally, at Boughton site SW/714 is open orchard land that falls within the AHLV (Swale level) and so performs poorly.
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates that much of the land around Faversham is likely to be Grade 1 (i.e. of the highest quality) with the likelihood of some Grade 2 land to the south / southwest and the likelihood of some lower quality (Grade 4) to the northeast (i.e. a spur of lower quality land, extending southwards from the marshes). At Boughton, the national dataset indicates a likelihood of Grade 2 and/or Grade 4 land.</p> <p>A good proportion of the land around Faversham has also been surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work),²⁶ suggesting that much of the land is Grade 1, Grade 2 or Grade 3a (i.e. 'best and most versatile'), with some Grade 3b.</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, it is very difficult to confidently differentiate between the sites in terms of the quality of agricultural land that would be lost. It might be suggested that sites in the Ospringe area (notably SW/797), and the site at Boughton, perform relatively well as the national data-set indicates Grade 2 land; however, it would not be appropriate to differentiate on this basis given that A) Grade 2 land is nonetheless 'best and most versatile'; and B) the national dataset is very unreliable, i.e. not suited for differentiating between sites at this scale. It might also be suggested that land to the north ('East of Ham Road, SW/700) is more likely to be lower quality agricultural land given proximity to the North Kent Marshes, but in fact the national (low resolution) agricultural land dataset indicates a likelihood of this land being Grade 1 (i.e. best quality).</p> <p>It is only possible to identify the non-agricultural sites - SW/733 to the northwest, SW/435 to the south and SW/795 to the east - as performing relatively well; however, there is uncertainty as sites might potentially be available for agriculture in the future.</p> <p>N.B. It is also noted that SW233 intersects with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship 'agri-environment' agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.</p>
Water	<p>With regards to flood risk, site SW/435 at Ospringe is very constrained. Also, about half of site SW/733 is constrained.</p>
Transport and Traffic	<p>Without the benefit of detailed transport modelling, it is difficult to differentiate between the site options, in terms of the impact on the road network. What <i>is</i> known is that the predominant direction of travel from most locations will be south/east to the M2 Junctions; and it is known that, whilst J6 to the south has capacity, J7 to the southeast has significant capacity issues and no plans for upgrade.</p> <p>On balance it seems appropriate to conclude that sites to the east and northeast of Faversham (i.e. SW/080, 430, 431, 795) perform poorly; however, there is uncertainty. What is more certain is that 'Preston Fields' (SW/233) performs well given its access to J6.</p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good 'accessibility', thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect it is again difficult to differentiate between the sites with</p>

²⁶ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Topic	Commentary
	<p>confidence, but what does seem clear is that the site options ‘on the extremities’ of the town perform less well, with sites to the southwest of Faversham and at Ospringe (SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 701, 797) performing notably poorly. These sites would be some distance from the train station and the town centre (which stretches north from the train station).</p> <p>Finally, there is a need to consider in-combination effects. In this respect, it is clearly the case that any option involving a combination of sites that leads to high growth at Faversham as a whole will lead to impacts on M2 J7.</p>
Population	<p>The matter of sites to the southwest being somewhat distant from the town centre has already been discussed, under ‘Transport and traffic’, and it is not clear that there are any further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence. Areas of Faversham that are relatively deprived (within the 20% most deprived areas of Swale) are concentrated to the southwest (adjacent to SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 701, 797) and north (adjacent to SW/700); however, there is little reason to suggest that development would stimulate new employment or infrastructure (that might assist with regeneration). In theory it might be suggested that there is the potential for benefits to be realised through the masterplanning of numerous development in-combination; however, in practice fragmented land ownership would be a hindrance.</p>
Health	<p>See discussion above, under ‘Population’. In respect of health, it is noted that the area of relative deprivation to the north performs worse than the area to the southwest. It is the ninth most deprived ‘super output area’ in Swale, in terms of health and disability.</p>
<p>Employment and skills</p> <p>Economic growth</p>	<p>With regards to in-combination effects, it is fair to say that higher growth at Faversham is to be supported from an ‘economy and employment’ perspective, but it is not clear that opportunities vary at the sub-Faversham scale.</p>

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- Bysing Wood Road (SW/733) - constrained in numerous respects, not least flood risk.
- Sites to the northeast (SW/430, 431, 795) - constrained in terms of landscape, heritage and biodiversity. SW/795 is smaller and partially developed, but nonetheless constrained.
- Perry Court Farmhouse (SW/794) - constrained in heritage terms (given proximity to a listed oast house).
- North of the Street, Boughton (SW/714) - constrained in landscape terms (AHLV).
- Land adjacent Mindon, 9 Ashford Road and Orchard cottages (SW/081, 751) - constrained in heritage terms (within a Conservation Area), albeit in close proximity to the train station.
- East of Ham Road (SW/700) - constrained in terms of landscape, and may be somewhat constrained in terms of biodiversity and heritage.
- SW/080 (Lady Dane Farm) - landscape impacts and location / scale would have implications for M2 J7.
- Sites to the southwest of Faversham and at Ospringe (SW/046, 047, 433, 435, 440, 701, 797) - constrained in terms of air quality, heritage (less so SW/701) and proximity to the town centre; albeit the UELCS suggests some opportunities for minor development to be accommodated in the landscape.
- Preston Fields (SW/233) - leads to heritage concerns; however, the UELCS identified some capacity for development, and site promoters have identified good opportunity for mitigation.

West Sheppey

Sites examined are -

Belgrave Road, Halfway		SW/165
R/o 33 Highfield Road, Halfway		SW/019, 158
Danley Farm, Minster Road, Halfway/Minster		SW/021, 038
Southsea Avenue, northwest Minster		SW/321
Sites southwest of Minster		SW/184, 194, 721
East Minster	Chequers Road	SW/457
	Sites r/o Chequers Road / Scocles Road / Nelson Avenue, Minster	SW/459, 706, 793, 779
	Windy Gap, Chequers Road, Minster	SW/044, 780
	Sites at Scocles Road/Elm Lane, southeast of Minster	SW/133, 705, 799

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Sustainability topic	Commentary
Air	There are no designated air quality management areas on the Isle of Sheppey, and it is not likely to be the case that there are any locations in West Sheppey where traffic congestion leads to problems in relation to poor air quality. Of course, many trips by car will be off the Island via the A429; however, this does not give rise to air quality concerns.
Biodiversity	<p>The first point to note is that site SW/780 - i.e. Windy Gap, Chequers Road, on the seaward side of Minster - intersects the Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI (designated <i>primarily</i> for its geological value, but also with biodiversity interest). It is also noted that the smaller site (SW/044) encroaches to within c.200m, and is seemingly well vegetated.</p> <p>Also, 'East of Parsonage Farm' (SW/184), a small site southwest of Minster, comprises 'traditional orchard' Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat (uncommon on Sheppey); and 'Southsea Avenue' (SW/321), northwest Minster, is thickly vegetated with potential ecological interests. This latter site is mostly surrounded by existing development, but at one point does border the Minster Marshes SNCI, which extend away from Minster to the west.</p> <p>Another consideration is recreational pressure on the North Kent Marshes SPA, which is in proximity to those sites on the southern side of Minster (in particular SW/721); however, there would not appear to be good footpath access. It might be that allocation of SW/721 (which is a very large site), or several sites in-combination, would lead to a risk of impacts; however it is difficult to be certain (as matters would need to be examined through HRA).</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>There are no Conservation Areas that might be affected, whilst listed buildings in West Sheppey are sporadically located. Minster Abbey is a Grade 1 listed building, and the surrounding grounds a Scheduled Ancient Monument.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites at 'Danley Farm, Minster Road', at Halfway, would impact on a listed building (Danley Farmhouse), i.e. it would be a challenge to develop in line with the following priority established by the UELCS: "Conserve the drove track which passes via Danley Farm, and

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p><i>ensure any extended development does not impinge on the setting of the Listed Building.”</i> The listed building is within the larger site (SW/021), and it would seem that the smaller site (SW/038) would also impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘East of Parsonage Farm’ (SW/184), a small site southwest of Minster, is adjacent to a listed building (Parsonage Farmhouse), with the UELCS stating that a priority is to: <i>“Conserve and respect the rural setting of Parsonage Farm Listed Building.”</i> This site is also subsumed within two much more extensive sites (SW/194, 721), which are relatively unconstrained as there would be potential to avoid/mitigate impacts to the listed building. • Another site close to a listed building is ‘East of Scocles Road’ (SW/133), southeast of Minster. Here it would seem that impacts to the setting of the listed building (Scocles Court) are likely to be unavoidable. It is also the case that the UELCS identifies that <i>“historic core of Minster and Minster Abbey would potentially be blocked by any significant development... and the undeveloped foreground to the historic core would be diminished.”</i> • Another constrained area of land is that to the rear of Chequers Road / Scocles Road / Nelson Avenue, east of Minster, which is in close proximity to Minster Abbey albeit to the rear of existing properties. The UELCS did not examine this land, but there are clear heritage concerns given the rising topography, and the bisecting footpath. It is understood that from the footpath there are views to the southeast across the marshes, and that Minster Abbey comes into view to the northwest. As such, sites here - SW/459, 706, 793, 779 - are judged to be constrained (albeit there will be some variability, e.g. SW/459 is the smallest of the sites, and is tight to the rear of existing properties). This conclusion is supported by a Planning Inspector’s decision from 1998, in relation to a 14.5 ha site, likely to have been to have somewhat resembled the largest site currently promoted (SW/779, which is 20.5 ha in size and includes within its boundary the three other sites promoted). • Finally, ‘Windy Gap, Chequers Road’ (SW/044, 780), east of Minster, is located on the approach to Minster Abbey (c.250 to the east, with one listed building along the road between the site and the Abbey), affording a sea view that is identified as valuable by the UELCS. However, the UELCS does not reference heritage concerns.
Landscape	<p>The UELCS drew the conclusion that: <i>“South of Minster and between Minster and Sheerness, the landscape has a moderate capacity to accommodate change within pockets of land which are physically and visually well contained by the landform. East of Minster... has a low capacity to accommodate change because the open landscape is important as the coastal setting and as open space between residential areas within Minster. South east of Minster [has] a low capacity to accommodate change because the open, rising landscape is very prominent in highly sensitive views from the marshland to the south. The cumulative impact of significant development [southwest and/or southeast of Minster] would be substantial in terms of highly sensitive views from the marshland to the south.”</i></p> <p>Beginning with sites to the east of Minster -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UELCS considered a large land parcel to the southeast of Minster (stretching from Lower Road, uphill to the edge of Minster) and concludes ‘low’ capacity for change; however, the only site within this parcel - ‘Chequers Road’ (SW/457) - is a small site at the northwestern extent, well related to the existing eastern edge of Minster. It is therefore not possible to conclude that this site performs poorly (albeit the risk of setting a precedent for further ribbon development east of Minster is a concern). • ‘Windy Gap, Chequers Road’ (SW/044, 780) was examined by the UELCS, with the conclusion reached that: <i>“... it is sensitive in terms of providing an area of open space between residential areas within Minster and acts as a buffer between the existing urban area and the highly ecologically sensitive coastline. Whilst a single line of residential development along the B2008 would not be entirely unacceptable in landscape terms because the landscape is in poor condition, there would be a loss of sea views...”</i> • Land to the rear of Chequers Road / Scocles Road / Nelson Avenue, Minster (SW/459, 706, 793, 779) is a parcel of land that was not examined by the UELCS, but there are clear

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>sensitivities given the rising topography, and the bisecting footpath (see further discussion above, under 'Heritage').</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast of Minster three sites - SW/705, SW/799, SW/133 - sit within a parcel of land that the UELCS concludes has 'low' capacity to accept change, concluding that: <i>"any significant amount of further development across this prominent higher ground would be exceptionally visible in sensitive views from the low lying marshland to the south. In addition to this views of the historic core of Minster and Minster Abbey would potentially be blocked by any significant development within the Study Area, and the undeveloped foreground to the historic core would be diminished."</i> SW/799 and SW/133 perform poorly; however, SW/705 performs better as it is well contained (lying to the north of Elm Lane). • The next sites to consider are those that sit within the locally designated 'Countryside Gap' to the west of Minster and at Halfway. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beginning with the northern-most sites - Danley Farm, Minster Road (SW/021, 038) - the UELC states that: <i>"an extension of the existing edge of Halfway would perhaps be appropriate... where the landscape is well contained by the public open space formed by a small hill to the east and school development to the west."</i> However, it is not thought that this statement supports either site. ○ The western-most site - Belgrave Road (SW/165) - on the southern edge of Halfway, is contained within the landscape given its location to the north of Furze Hill, with the UELCS stating that it would <i>"perhaps be acceptable to extend... slightly where the land is physically and visually contained to the north of Furze Hill."</i> This site would appear to represent a logical 'rounding off' of Halfway, rather than erosion of the Countryside Gap. ○ 'R/o 33 Highfield Road' (SW/019, 158) is located on high ground that "provides wide panoramic views across the marshland to the south" according to the UELCS. The smaller site (SW/158) is on lower land; however, it does not relate well to the existing settlement edge and the previous Local Plan Inspector concluded that development here would be highly intrusive. ○ Finally, sites to the southwest of Minster (SW/184, 194, 721) would erode the Countryside Gap; however, the principle of limited development is seemingly supported by the UELCS, which states: <i>"A degree of residential extension would also perhaps be acceptable around the existing periphery of Minster where the landscape relates well to the urban edge."</i> In conclusion, the largest site (SW/721) clearly performs poorly; the smallest site (SW/184) does not perform poorly; and there is uncertainty in respect of SW/194 (where the site extent has been amended to reflect concerns, and substantial landscaping/open space has been proposed). • The final site is 'Southsea Avenue' (SW/321), west Minster, which is enclosed by existing development and on this basis performs relatively well. <p>Finally, there is a need to consider in-combination effects, particularly in relation to landscapes south of Minster, where the Thistle Hill area (i.e. the area south of Minster, north of Lower road, east of Barton Road and west of Scoccles Road) has been the focus of growth over recent years and is a focus of growth through the submission plan. In light of in-combination effects, it would seem fair to conclude that allocation of numerous sites south of Minster would not be something to support, from a landscape perspective.</p>
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates primarily Grade 3 agricultural land (with no indication of whether this is likely to be Grade 3a, and therefore 'best and most versatile'), with some Grade 2 land east of Minster (intersecting SW/779) and Grade 4 land to the north of Halfway (SW/019 and 158).</p> <p>Certain sites have been examined in greater detail - i.e. surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work)²⁷ - are 'Belgrave Road' (SW/165), sites southwest of</p>

²⁷ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>Minster (SW/184, 194, 721)²⁸ and sites rear of Chequers Road/ Scocles Road/ Nelson Avenue, Minster (SW/459, 706, 793, 779). ‘Belgrave Road’ and sites southwest of Minster are found to comprise Grade 3b land (the low resolution national dataset having indicated Grade 3), whilst the latter area is found to comprise Grade 3b to the west and Grade 3a to the east. Specifically, the Grade 3a land intersects SW/779, which the low resolution national dataset had indicated would be Grade 2.</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, it is very difficult to confidently differentiate between the sites in terms of the quality of agricultural land that would be lost. However, it is possible to say with some confidence that SW/779 performs relatively poorly.</p> <p>N.B. It is also noted that four sites (SW/165, 721, 780, 799) intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship ‘agri-environment’ agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.</p>
Water	<p>Flood risk is a constraint at SW/038 (all flood risk zone 2, with significant zone 3), SW/021 (more than half zone 2, and significant zone 3) and SW/321 (more than half zone 2, and some zone 3).</p>
Transport and Traffic	<p>Traffic is an issue on Sheppey, particularly along the A2500 Lower Rd, which links the east of the Island to the A249. In the summer tourist season the population of the Island can increase substantially, serving to highlight transport deficiencies. The improvement of existing queuing problems on the A2500 Lower Road approaches to the A249 will largely be a matter for the County Council to resolve via its transport strategy for Swale; however, committed and submission plan housing sites at Thistle Hill, Plover Road and other locations may be expected to contribute financially to its solution.</p> <p>On this basis, sites to the west of Minster perform relatively well; and sites to the south/east of Minster, which would put pressure on Scocles Road and its junction with Lower Rd (SW/459, 706, 793, 779, 705, 799, 133) are constrained. It is understood that SW/133 (which is a large site) could potentially provide a ‘bypass’ of Scocles Road; however, this is uncertain. A recent review by Kent Highways, completed for the 2015 SHLAA update, found in relation to SW/133 that: <i>“The level of traffic likely to be associated with a development of this size... is likely to [need] upgrade to local junctions and Lower Road for its length to accommodate the additional traffic that this development could generate. This is likely to require third party land.”</i></p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good ‘accessibility’, thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect, most sites perform adequately, given access to Minster (a Local Centre) and/or Sheerness (easily accessible by bus from Minster and Halfway), but sites on the southern periphery of Minster are more isolated. This applies most notably to SW/133, in relation to which the Kent Highways review (2015) found: <i>“It is unclear whether the existing services in the vicinity of the site have the capacity to support a large development such as this. This site is therefore not particularly sustainable in terms of its proximity to public transport links, local amenities and services, although there is scope to include these as part of the development.”</i> With regards to the large sites located to the southwest of Minster (SW/194, 721), these are c.2km the centre of Minster (i.e. Minster Abbey); however, they are much closer to the local centre on the southern edge of Minster and the local centre at Halfway. The Kent Highways review established that that SW/194 has suitable access to services/facilities (although development would necessitate improvements to highways and walking/cycling infrastructure).</p>
Population	<p>The matter of sites being distant from services has already been discussed, under ‘Transport and traffic’, and it is not clear that there are any further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence. It can be argued that new housing would support the viability of community infrastructure (i.e. shops and services), but there is no certainty. It is</p>

²⁸ Data for Sites southwest of Minster (SW/184, 194, 721) is held by the Council, but is not yet available on magic.gov.uk.

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	noted that Minster/Halfway generally performs better, in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, than Sheerness and East Sheppey (although the output area on the southeast edge of Minster performs more on a par with the most deprived parts of Sheppey).
Health	See discussion above, under 'Population'. In respect of health, it is noted that the output area on the southeast edge of Minster is the fifth most deprived 'super output area' in Swale, in terms of health and disability.
Employment and skills	Building a strong, competitive economy for Sheppey is especially important. Despite investment in new road infrastructure, its economy is performing poorly and bore the brunt of the economic recession in Swale. However, the Island remains well placed to build on the investment in road infrastructure, with significant committed employment land at Neatscourt in Queenborough and on smaller sites at West Minster; and plans for mixed use regeneration at Queenborough/Rushenden set out within the submission plan. Furthermore, there are more long term aspirations to capitalise on major opportunities at the Port of Sheerness (e.g. there is the possibility of land reclamation, which would support a major expansion), and other more modest long term economic aspirations (e.g. evidence suggests potential for a small business centre for business startups in eastern Sheppey).
Economic growth	In light of this discussion, it can be argued that housing growth, particularly to the west in proximity to Sheerness and Queenborough/Rushenden, might help to attract new employers to the island in time; however, there is no certainty.

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- Danley Farm, Minster Road, Halfway (SW/021, 038) - flood risk and heritage constraints.
- Windy Gap, Chequers Road, east Minster (SW/780) - landscape constraints and intersects a SSSI (albeit designated primarily for geodiversity value).
- East of Scocles Road, southeast Minster (SW/133) - landscape constraints, poorly related to Minster, traffic impacts and would impact a listed building; albeit this is a large site that could deliver mitigation etc.
- South of Elm Lane, southeast Minster (SW/799) - constrained as per SW/133, albeit this is a smaller site.
- Parsonage Chase, southwest Minster (SW/184) - listed building impact, and orchard loss (BAP habitat).
- Sites to the rear of Chequers Road / Scocles Road / Nelson Avenue, east Minster (SW/459, 706, 793, 779) - landscape and heritage impacts, and SW/779 comprises Grade 3a agricultural land. SW/459 is small and is tight to the rear of existing properties, however, it is possibly somewhat incongruous.
- Southsea Avenue, northwest Minster (SW/321) - surrounded by existing development, and hence not constrained from a landscape perspective (albeit there may be some ecological value); however, it is constrained by flood risk (more than half zone 2, and some zone 3).
- R/o 33 Highfield Road, Halfway (SW/019, 158) - constrained by landscape (and whilst the smaller site - SW/158 - is on lower land, it does not relate well to the existing settlement edge).
- West of Barton Hill Drive, southwest Minster (SW/194) - would erode the Countryside Gap, and involve a scale of growth above that which the UELCS supports (i.e. more than 'a degree of residential extension'); however, the site extent has been amended to reflect concerns, and substantial landscaping/open space has been proposed. Development would represent a continuation of expansion to the south of Minster, with landscape and traffic implications; however, in respect of the latter point it is understood that development would support improvements to the Barton Road / Lower Road junction.
- Scocles Road/Elm Lane, southeast Minster (SW/705) - fairly unconstrained although traffic would be generated on Scocles Lane.
- Chequers Road, east Minster (SW/457) - a small site that is well related to the existing eastern edge of Minster, albeit there is a risk of setting a precedent for expansion into a sensitive landscape.
- Belgrave Road, Halfway (SW/165) - contained within the landscape and would represent a logical

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	'rounding-off' of Halfway. This site is also well located, in respect of employment growth area to the west. Finally, with regards to North of Lower Road, southwest Minster (SW/721), it is difficult to draw a conclusion. It is an extremely large site that would greatly erode the Minster/Halfway Countryside Gap, and impact significantly on the landscape more generally; however, it would deliver important new infrastructure.

Iwade

Sites examined are -

School Lane Farm, west of Iwade	SW/717
Coleshall Farm, southwest of Iwade	SW/199
Southwest of Iwade	SW/216
Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane, south of Iwade	SW/450
East of Iwade	SW/123 ²⁹

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Sustainability topic	Commentary
Air	There are no known air quality issues at Iwade, and its location adjacent to the A249 should mean that there is little potential for development to lead to air quality problems (although growth to the west could encourage traffic through Newington, where there is an AQMA).
Biodiversity	<p>Biodiversity is a major consideration at Iwade, given the proximity of the internationally important North Kent Marshes SPA, to the northeast.</p> <p>East of Iwade (SW/123) borders the SPA along its northeastern edge, and a large proportion of the site is within 400m (i.e. an easily walkable distance); however, footpath access is limited (specifically, there is one footpath at the site's northern extent and from that footpath the SPA is not reached for c.700m). This site is constrained; however, it is noted that there is a commitment to deliver extensive greenspace as part of the scheme - i.e. a level well in excess of what might typically be expected - which will perform the role of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), thereby mitigating recreational effects. It should also be the case that strategically located greenspace has the potential to mitigate other impact 'pathways', e.g. urbanisation effects (e.g. light), disturbance and dust from construction and operational activities, loss of supporting habitat and water related impact pathways relating to surface runoff. These matters are explored through HRA.</p> <p>Other sites perform better, given that they are further from the SPA (SW/717 is linked by a footpath, but the walking distance is approaching 2km), and there appear to be no other strategic factors to take into account (e.g. relating to on-site habitat).</p>
Cultural heritage	Whilst there is no designated Conservation Area, there is a 'historic core' to Iwade, centred on the Grade 1 listed church close to the village's northern extent. The flat landscape to the northeast provides a setting for the church, although there are no viewpoints (e.g. footpaths) in this direction until the A249 is reached (some 800-1000m distant). On this basis SW/123 is constrained; however, given the likelihood of extensive open space provision in this area

²⁹ This site incorporates SW/116, 117, 183. The smaller sites within SW/123 are not discussed individually, as it is not thought likely that any would be progressed in isolation.

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>(given the priority issue of mitigating impacts to the SPA), impacts will be mitigated to a large extent, and there may even be potential to enhance appreciation of the church as an asset.</p> <p>Away from the historic core, there is one other listed building - Coleshall Farm to the south, just beyond the extent of recent housing development. SW/199 would involve developing the land immediately surrounding the farmhouse; and it is also likely that the larger SW/216 would also impact its setting, although there mitigation could be possible. The UELC is clear that any development in this direction should be small-scale and the listed building should not be absorbed within the urban area of Iwade.</p>
Landscape	<p>Dealing firstly with SW/123 -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UELCS gave separate consideration to land east of Iwade and land northwest of Iwade, whereas there is now a site option under consideration - SW/123 - that would extend across both areas (primarily within the eastern area, but with a small part wrapping around to the north of the village). With regards to land to the east, the UELCS suggests ‘high’ capacity to accept change, albeit recognising that erosion of the Iwade/Sittingbourne gap is a concern. With regards to land to the northwest, the UELCS states that: <i>“There is a low capacity to accommodate change... However, a small amount of residential expansion would perhaps be acceptable on the periphery of Iwade providing that the new urban edge does not become visible in sensitive views from the marshes to the north and north west.”</i> Other considerations are - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To the north, despite ‘low capacity’, it is understood that development would provide an opportunity to improve/‘soften’ the current finished edge of the current village. ○ To the east, despite ‘high capacity’, concerns arise given the submission plan allocation at Northwest Sittingbourne (where the red line boundary extends almost to the southern extent of SW/123, albeit separated by the A249); however, policy is in place (Policy MU1) to ensure that the Northwest Sittingbourne allocation delivers a ‘network of green spaces and corridors throughout the allocation to achieve a minimum open space provision of 22 ha, with the concept diagram showing a ‘linear park’ running along the length of the A249. As such, there is potential for allocation of SW/123 to integrate and form a continuation of this green corridor, and ultimately ensure a legible settlement pattern / sense of place, to the benefit of the wider Swale Thames Gateway. <p>With regards to other sites around Iwade -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Lane Farm, west of Iwade (SW/717) - falls within the ‘northwest of Iwade’ landscape that the UELCS concludes has low capacity to accept change. The UELCS describes how: <i>“There are few urban influences within the Study Area and, despite the Sheppey Crossing and the recent development of Iwade, the landscape has a remote and tranquil character. This landscape borrows a considerable degree of its sense of place from the neighbouring marshlands, such as the flat and exposed nature of the landscape and the big skies.”</i> • Southwest of Iwade (SW/216) - would involve a further extension of a recent housing development. The landscape has ‘moderate’ capacity to accept change; however, the UELCS states that development should be small scale, with Coleshall Farm (Listed Building) avoided, as well as higher land to the north-west where <i>“any significant extended development would impose on the rural character of the landscape around School Lane”</i>. There may be scope to reduce the scale of the site, and implement landscaping, with a view to mitigating impacts; however, this is uncertain. • SW/199 is a smaller site within SW/216 that is not supported by the UELC on heritage grounds. ‘Pure’ landscape implications are unclear, although it is noted that the farmstead does currently provide a logical marker of Iwade’s south-western extent. • Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane, south of Iwade (SW/450) - would, in all likelihood, involve a southern extension to the SW/123 scheme. It would ‘jut out’ rather than forming a smooth boundary to the urban edge, and this would be a particular issue were the land to

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>the north (within SW/123) to be used for open space (which is highly likely, in-line with the concept of a green ‘half-ring’ to the village). This is also rising land (higher than SW/123), which highlights the value in keeping it open, as part of the Iwade/Sittingbourne gap (albeit part of the site is already developed).</p>
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates a mix of Grade 1 (i.e. ‘best and most versatile’, BMV), Grade 3 (<i>potentially</i> BMV) and Grade 4 (not BMV) agricultural land. To the south of Iwade is the high quality ‘fruit belt’, whilst to the north of Iwade is the lower quality land associated with the North Kent Marshes.</p> <p>Importantly, most of the land surrounding Iwade has also been surveyed using the ‘MAFF Post 1988’ criteria (which involves field work),³⁰ - and what this shows is that there is in fact a mix of Grade 3a (which is the lowest grade of BMV) and 3b (which is not BMV). The one area that has not been surveyed is that covered by SW/216 and SW/199; however, land immediately adjacent (which has now been developed) was surveyed and found to comprise a mixture of Grade 3a and 3b land. Of the sites that has been surveyed in detail, Grade 3a land primarily falls within SW/123 (and also intersects SW/450), and there is also a small patch of Grade 2 land here.</p> <p>N.B. It is also noted that all sites except SW/450 and SW/717 intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship ‘agri-environment’ agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.</p>
Water	<p>Flood risk is an issue, with the Iwade Stream running through the centre of the village. The flood risk zone constrains SW/123; however, it is not thought that this is an issue given the size of the site, and the fact that the area at risk would need to be used as greenspace. Also, to the southwest of the village (i.e. upstream) the flood risk zone runs through the centre of SW/216 and covers c.15-20% of the smaller SW/199.</p>
Transport and Traffic	<p>A large scheme to the east of Iwade (SW/123) is probably to be supported, from a transport perspective, as there would be access directly onto the A249. The part of the scheme that wraps around to the north of the village is less well located, as traffic heading south would pass through the village; however, the site does benefit from a second point of access from the north (which could be used by construction traffic, if nothing else).</p> <p>Development to the south (SW/216, 199) is also to be supported; however, development to the west (SW/717) is problematic as traffic would pass through the village (and there would be pressure on the rural lane to Newington).</p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good ‘accessibility’, thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect, all sites perform similarly. Sites to the south - SW/216, 199 - are most distant from the village centre (up to c.1km), but it is noted that there is a GP surgery closer, i.e. within the southern part of the village. SW/123 has the best potential to ‘integrate’ with the village, and would also enable longer distance cycling to Sittingbourne.</p>
Population	<p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Iwade to perform well, relative to other areas locally, although it is noted that there are some issues regarding community infrastructure. Iwade is reasonably close to Sittingbourne (and the school provision being planned at NW Sittingbourne); however, public transport services are not of the quality that they might be. There are question-marks regarding any future growth at Iwade, as it is not clear what potential there would be to fund the delivery of community infrastructure upgrades. SW/123, for example, would deliver extensive high quality open space, but it is not clear what other wider benefits development would bring. There is also a need to consider that villagers have dealt with the impacts of construction since the 1990s, when Iwade was first identified as a growth point, and there was an expectation that growth would cease.</p>
Health	<p>As discussed above, the Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Iwade to perform well, relative</p>

³⁰ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the ‘Landscape’ tab)

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	to other areas locally. It is also noted that development is potentially to be supported from a perspective of supporting walking/cycling and access to greenspace.
Employment and skills	Iwade is in close proximity to employment growth areas at Sittingbourne, Ridham and Neatscourt, but otherwise there would appear to be no strategic issues.
Economic growth	

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- School Lane Farm, west of Iwade (SW/717) - would involve an extension to the west, away from the strategic road network and into a sensitive landscape, albeit this is lower quality agricultural land.
- Southwest of Iwade (SW/216) - would involve an extension to recent development. To the north the issue is rising and open land, whilst to the south Coleshall Farm (Listed Building), which is currently logically located at the settlement edge, would be enveloped. Also, the village centre would be c.1km distant.
- Coleshall Farm, southwest of Iwade (SW/199) - would impact the listed farmhouse, which is currently prominent at the settlement edge, with a 'setting' in the rural landscape beyond.
- Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane, south of Iwade (SW/450) - benefits from being partially brownfield, but is rising land that logically contributes to the Sittingbourne/Iwade gap.
- East of Iwade (SW/123) - would involve an extension in the most logical direction from a perspective of wishing to integrate with the existing village and minimise traffic impacts; and there is an opportunity to deliver strategic green infrastructure. There is the potential to ensure a legible settlement pattern / clear sense of place, with wide ranging benefits; however, there are concerns relating to: the adjacent SPA; landscape / traffic impacts resulting from the northern part of the scheme; and community infrastructure.

Newington

Sites examined are -

Northwest Newington	North of London Road	SW/217
	West of Church Lane	SW/124
Southwest Newington	Pond Farm	SW/164
	Pond Farm II	SW/707
Southeast Newington	The Tracies	SW/010
	Ellen's Place, High Street	SW/732
Northeast Newington	Church Rd, adj St Mary's View	SW/041
	North of the High Street	SW/407

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Sustainability topic	Commentary
Air	<p>The A2 through much of Newington is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and acts as a constraint to all sites. Sites at Pond Farm (SW/164, SW/707) perform on the basis that access would be outside the AQMA (perhaps by 100-200m); however, on the other hand, they are constrained on the basis that the predominant direction of travel will be east (through the AQMA) towards Sittingbourne. Another consideration is potentially, that two sites (SW/407, 732) would lead to cars joining the A2 at the eastern extent of the AQMA (which is possibly a positive, on the assumption that the predominant direction of travel will be east towards Sittingbourne). Finally, there is a need to highlight the potential for in-combination effects.</p>
Biodiversity	<p>None of the sites would impact on sites designated for their biodiversity value; however SW/041 to the northeast does comprise Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat ('traditional orchard'). Also, SW/010 to the south is a small wooded site (likely to be former orchard, but not listed as BAP priority habitat).</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>Newington has a tightly defined Conservation Area (CA), centred on the junction of the High Street and Church Lane, as well as a more extensive CA associated with the Church and associated high ground to the north of the village. Sites north of the train-line (SW/041, SW/124, SW/217) perform relatively poorly on the basis that the rising land contributes to the setting of the nearby Church CA, and traffic would pass down Church Lane through the Newington CA. Of these sites, SW/041 actually intersects the Church CA.</p> <p>The other site north of the High Street (SW/407) abuts the Newington CA, but it is not clear that it contributes to its setting. There would be access from the site to Church Lane (within the CA), but it is understood that this would be for walking/cycling only.</p> <p>South of the High Street, SW/010 is a small site that abuts the CA, is wooded and has a footpath running through it (which is possibly the primary walking route south, to higher ground). It abuts the garden of a listed building; however, it appears well contained.</p> <p>Finally, both sites to the southwest (SW/164, SW/707) would impact the setting of an adjacent listed building, although the extent of the smaller site is designed to mitigate impacts.</p>
Landscape	<p>The UELCS did not examine Newington, but it is nonetheless clear that there are a number of sensitivities, including on the basis of the undulating topography. There is also a ridge of higher ground to the north of Newington, upon which the church sits, which stretches north to the marshes and is designated as an AHLV (Swale-level).</p> <p>In light of these points, it seems that the three most northern sites - i.e. those to the north of the railway - are all relatively constrained in landscape terms. The other site to the north of the High Street (SW/407) is understood to be relatively well contained, sitting behind existing houses and bounded on its highest side by the railway.</p> <p>The three large sites to the south would impact on views from the A2 (southward, towards higher ground), and comprise ribbon development (particularly in the case of SW/732), but it is difficult to assign any significance to the landscape impacts that would arise. Views may be most sensitive across SW/732, but this is uncertain; and it is the case that the smaller 'Pond Farm' site is preferable to the larger site.</p> <p>The final site to the south is perhaps not constrained in landscape terms (although see discussion above, under 'Heritage').</p>
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates primarily Grade 1 (i.e. best quality nationally) and Grade 2 (also classified as 'best and most versatile') agricultural land; and none of the land around Newington has been surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work).³¹</p> <p>The low resolution national data-set suggests that the only site to intersect Grade 2 land is</p>

³¹ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>SW/217, to the northwest; however, it is not clear that this is a significant factor in its favour given: A) the unreliability of the dataset; and B) the fact that whether Grade 1 or Grade 2, the land is still classified as 'best and most versatile'.</p> <p>On this basis, it is only possible to highlight that the two sites in non-agricultural use perform relatively well - i.e. SW/041 and SW/010 - although as wooded sites they could potentially be brought into agricultural use (particularly the case for the larger SW/041).</p> <p>N.B. It is also noted that three of the four sites north of the High Street (i.e. all but the one comprising former orchard; SW/124, 217, 407) intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship 'agri-environment' agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.</p>
Water	Flood risk is not a strategic issue at Newington.
Transport and Traffic	<p>There are notable traffic issues, given: Newington's location on the A2 between Rainham to the west and Sittingbourne to the east; strong likelihood of 'rat-running' south to the M2 junction via Wormdale Hill / Bull Lane (a rural lane) and also constrained local roads within the historic northern part of the village.</p> <p>These matters highlight the possibility of in-combination effects; however, in terms of differentiating between the alternatives it is only possible to highlight that the three to the north that would rely on Church Lane (SW/041, 124, 217) are constrained.</p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good 'accessibility', thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect, none of the sites stand out as performing poorly given easy walking distance to the village centre. Also, the four sites to the north of the High Street perform well on the basis that the train station is very close.</p> <p>It is understood that some of the larger sites could potentially contribute to the delivery of necessary upgrades to community infrastructure in Newington; however, for the purposes of this appraisal there is no certainty.</p>
Population	<p>The matter of accessibility to services/facilities has already been discussed, under 'Transport and traffic', and there are few other further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence. The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Newington to perform well, relative to other areas locally, although it is noted that there are some issues regarding the capacity of community infrastructure in the village (notably no GP surgery), which indicates the possibility of in-combination effects. It might be that allocation of a large site could support upgrades to community infrastructure locally; however, this is uncertain.</p>
Health	<p>As discussed above, the Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Newington to perform well, relative to other areas locally, albeit there is an issue locally in that there is no GP surgery. It is also noted that development is potentially to be supported from a perspective ensuring access to high quality countryside.</p>
Employment and skills	<p>Newington is well located from a perspective of accessing employment opportunities in Sittingbourne, Rainham and beyond (given the train station); but otherwise there would appear to be no strategic issues.</p>
Economic growth	

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- Church Rd, adj St Marys View, northeast of Newington (SW/041) - comprises old orchard, intersects the Conservation Area, and distinct traffic/AQMA implications; albeit very close to the train station.
- North of London Road, northwest of Newington (SW/217) - landscape, heritage and distinct traffic/AQMA implications; albeit very close to the train station.

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West of Church Lane, northwest of Newington (SW/124) - as per SW/217, but constrained to a lesser extent as smaller. Pond Farm (SW/164), southwest of Newington - would impact a listed building, and valued views. Pond Farm II (SW/707), southwest of Newington - as per SW/164, but to a notably lesser extent. Ellen’s Place, High Street, southeast of Newington (SW/732) - would comprise ribbon development, and impact valued views. The Tracies, southeast of Newington (SW/010) - a small wooded site, well contained, but abuts the rear of the Conservation Area (specifically the garden of a listed building). Also, a footpath runs through the site to countryside beyond. Smaller site leads to low AQMA concerns. North of the High Street (SW/407) - seemingly the least constrained of the sites to the north of the village from a landscape/heritage perspective, although some uncertainty given proximity to the CA. As per the other sites to the north, it is well related to the village centre / train station.

Teynham

Sites examined are - ³²

Sites to the south, west of Lynsted Lane	Claxfield Farm	SW/143
	Lynsted Lane	SW/704
Sites to the south, east of Lynsted Lane	London Road/Cellar Hill	SW/723
	Lynsted Lane	SW/727
Sites to the northeast	Barrow Green Farm	SW/722
	Barrow Green Farm II	SW/373
	Barrow Green Farm III	SW/996

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Sustainability topic	Commentary
Air	<p>Air quality is a significant issue at Teynham, recognising that an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was recently designated for the village itself, and that all car journeys towards a higher order centre (Sittingbourne, Faversham, Canterbury) and/or the M2 will involve passing through another AQMA (either at Sittingbourne or at Ospringe). There is also a distinct risk of issues worsening, given that Teynham is already set to receive considerable growth over the plan period.</p> <p>The AQMA is designated either side of the A2/Lynsted Lane junction, which highlights the need to avoid worsening of queuing at this junction. As such, the two sites on Lynsted Lane</p>

³² Another option at Teynham, not considered in the table for conciseness, is land subject to Policy MU3 of the submitted plan. This land at Frognal Lane is allocated for mixed uses, including some 26,000 sq. m of employment. However, the landowner has offered to bring the employment land area forward as housing if this would be of benefit to the Council in terms of meeting its housing numbers. Whilst this could be achieved without harm to the wider locality, the loss of the employment allocation would diminish the Local Plan’s overall approach toward employment and dilute Teynham’s potential employment role as a RLSC.

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	- SW/704, 727 - are constrained.
Biodiversity	None of the sites would impact on sites designated for their biodiversity value; however SW/723 to the southeast does comprise Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat ('traditional orchard'). There is a particularly high concentration of traditional orchard BAP habitat at Teynham, although it is noted that one area is set to be lost to development as a result of a proposed allocation in the submitted plan (i.e. the baseline situation is set to worsen; albeit this issue may be addressed through modifications).
Cultural heritage	<p>A Conservation Area ('Cellar Hill and Greenstreet') is designated at the eastern extent of the village, and there is a high concentration of listed buildings along the A2.</p> <p>SW/723 performs notably poorly as it abuts the Conservation Area (CA), comprises traditional orchard and would intersect the CA at its access point onto Cellar Hill. It is also noted that the setting of the CA may be impacted over the plan period given the proposed allocation to the north (i.e. the baseline situation may worsen).</p> <p>Other sites are also constrained to some extent, given the risk of impacts to listed building either directly or indirectly (i.e. via traffic generation). Perhaps most notably: SW/143 would impact on the setting of Claxfield Farmhouse, a Grade II* listed building (only 5.5% of listed buildings nationally are Grade II*); and the two sites that would generate traffic on Lynsted Lane (see above) could impact on the cluster of listed buildings at the A2/Lynsted Lane junction. The three sites to the north stand out as having the least potential for impacts (although SW/722 does abut a listed building).</p>
Landscape	<p>The UELCS did not examine Teynham, but it is nonetheless clear that there are a number of sensitivities, including on the basis of the distinct settlement pattern (with the CA at one end of the village, frontage development with listed buildings along the A2, and then more recent housing estates north of the A2) and an undulating landscape that is in places open and in places characterised by traditional orchards.</p> <p>Having made these points, it is difficult to differentiate between the site options, with all being constrained to some extent. Perhaps most notably, development of SW/373 and SW/722 would fail to have regard to the valley and open character of the countryside (with the final site to the north - SW/996, which would involve a southern extension to an existing allocation - also resulting in issues, but to a lesser extent). Other sites would affect the 'frontage only' character of development to the south of A2, and impact views from lanes approaching Teynham (although the larger sites could likely deliver mitigation).</p>
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates Grade 1 (i.e. best quality nationally) agricultural land surrounding Teynham.</p> <p>Also, much of the land surrounding Teynham has been surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work).³³ This confirms that much of the land is Grade 1, but also shows some areas of Grade 2 land (which is also understood to be 'best and most versatile'). Three sites - SW/723 to the south, and SW/373, 996 to the north - comprise Grade 2 land.</p> <p>N.B. It is also noted that three of the sites to the south (SW/143, 704, 723) intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship 'agri-environment' agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.</p>
Water	Flood risk is not a strategic issue at Teynham, although the scale of development proposed over the plan period would highlight the need to consider surface water flood risk.
Transport and Traffic	Whilst Teynham has a train station, it is 6-8km in either direction by car to reach the strategic road network. This suggests the potential for in-combination effects, and also highlights those sites to the south as performing poorly given distance to the train-station (with SW/143 over 1km distant).

³³ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good ‘accessibility’, thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect, sites to the south perform better as most facilities are to be found on the A2. However, no sites perform poorly (e.g. there is a GP and school on Station Road, north of the A2).
Population	The matter of accessibility to services/facilities has already been discussed, under ‘Transport and traffic’, and there are few other further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence. The Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Teynham to perform well, relative to other areas locally, although it is noted that the quantum of growth that the village is set to receive over the plan period may put a strain on local services/facilities.
Health	As discussed above, the Index of Multiple Deprivation shows Newington to perform well, relative to other areas locally. It is also noted that development is potentially to be supported from a perspective ensuring access to high quality countryside.
Employment and skills	There is good access to employment opportunities in Sittingbourne, Faversham and beyond (given the train station); but otherwise there are no strategic issues.
Economic growth	

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- London Road/Cellar Hill (SW/723), to the south - loss of traditional orchard and impacts to the Conservation Area.
- Barrow Green Farm (SW/722), to the north - landscape impacts, given topography and open nature.
- Claxfield Farm (SW/143) - impacts to a Grade II* listed building, landscape impacts (albeit potential for mitigation) and distant from the train station.
- Barrow Green Farm II (SW/373), to the north - landscape impacts, given topography and open nature; albeit to a lesser extent than SW/722, and comprises Grade 2 (as opposed to Grade 1) agricultural land.
- Both sites at Lynsted Lane (SW/704 and SW/727), to the south - junction impacts within the AQMA, and also some heritage/landscape impacts.
- Barrow Green Farm III (SW/996), to the north - would involve a southern extension to an existing allocation. The linear shape gives rise to some issues (e.g. access), but also leads to fewer landscape concerns. Comprises Grade 2 (as opposed to Grade 1) agricultural land.

East Sheppey

Sites examined are -

Sites at Leysdown and Warden	SW/758, 781
Sites at Eastchurch	SW/129, 197
Sites between Eastchurch and Minster	SW/001, 155, 159, 196,

The table below presents a commentary on these sites -

Sustainability topic	Commentary
Air	There are no designated air quality management areas on the Isle of Sheppey, and it is not likely to be the case that there are any locations in East Sheppey where traffic congestion leads to problems in relation to poor air quality.
Biodiversity	<p>The Sheppey Cliffs and Foreshore SSSI abuts the eastern edge of Warden, with SW/758 being the closest site (c.500m); however, this SSSI is designated primarily for its geological value, and so may have limited sensitivity to recreational pressure.</p> <p>Perhaps a more important consideration is recreational pressure on the North Kent Marshes SPA, which is accessible from all locations (most notably sites at Leysdown and Warden - SW/758, 781 - which are c.1.5-2km distant). It might be that allocation of several sites in combination would lead to a risk of impacts (which would then be examined through HRA).</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>There are no Conservation Areas that might be affected; whilst listed buildings in are sporadically located, with a cluster in Eastchurch near to the Grade 1 listed church.</p> <p>SW/781 at Leysdown is a large site in close proximity to a single listed building. It seems that vegetation screens the building from view; however, the open fields that comprise the site may contribute to setting.</p> <p>At Eastchurch, SW/129 is almost adjacent to the historic core; however, the site is screened by buildings and so may not contribute to setting. As for SW/197 at Eastchurch, there would be a buffer between the site and the historic core, but this is elevated land and so may contribute to setting (and it is noted that a footpath runs adjacent, from the historic core).</p>
Landscape	<p>The UELCS examined the landscape parcel between Eastchurch and Minster, concluding 'low' capacity to accommodate change. Elsewhere, there is some potential for differentiation on the basis of topography and other factors. Relatively constrained sites are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW/001 - located in a rural location (i.e. unrelated to a settlement), on a pleasant lane; • SW/129 - forms a pleasant vista on the approach to Eastchurch; and • SW/155 and SW/196, between Eastchurch and Minster - located on prominent ground (within a large parcel of land to the east of Minster that the UELCS assigns 'low' capacity for change), with SW/196 particularly likely to result in significant landscape impacts given its size (it being the case that the UELCS does suggest some potential at SW/155); and • SW/197, to the north of Eastchurch - a large site recently been scaled back in extent in order to reduce adverse landscape impacts, recognising its elevated and exposed position. <p>On this basis, the sites at Leysdown and Warden (SW/758, 781) perform well; as does SW/159 between Eastchurch and Minster (which is located along the same 'pleasant lane' as SW/001, but is smaller and adjoins existing frontage development).</p> <p>It is also the case that various combinations of sites could lead to in-combination effects, recognising the rural character of this area.</p>
Soil	<p>The low resolution national dataset indicates widespread 'Grade 3' agricultural land, with the likelihood of some Grade 2 in the northwestern area (i.e. to the east of Minster). However, this data-set gives no indication of whether the Grade 3 land is likely to be Grade 3a (and therefore classified as 'best and most versatile') or Grade 3b.</p> <p>Only one site has been examined in greater detail - i.e. surveyed using the 'MAFF Post 1988' criteria (which involves field work),³⁴ - and that is SW/197 to the north of Eastchurch, which is found to comprise Grade 3a land (the low resolution national dataset having indicated Grade 3). Also, the land adjacent to SW/196, between Eastchurch and Minster, has been surveyed and found to comprise a mixture of Grade 3b and Grade 2 land (the low resolution national dataset having indicated Grade 2).</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, it is very difficult to confidently differentiate between the sites in terms of the quality of agricultural land that would be lost.</p>

³⁴ Both agricultural land datasets are available at magic.gov.uk (under the 'Landscape' tab)

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	N.B. It is also noted that four sites (SW/196, 197, 758) intersect with agricultural land that is farmed under an Environmental Stewardship 'agri-environment' agreement; however, it is not clear that this is a strong indication of land quality.
Water	The coastal flood risk zone encroaches upon the two sites at Leysdown and Warden (SW/758, 781); however, only to a very minor extent.
Transport and Traffic	<p>Traffic is an issue on Sheppey, particularly along the A2500 Lower Rd, which links the east of the Island to the A249. See further above, under 'West Sheppey'.</p> <p>On this basis, there is clear potential for in-combination effects; however, it is not possible to differentiate between the site options.</p> <p>Another important consideration is the potential for development to support good 'accessibility', thereby reducing the need to travel by car (i.e. supporting walking, cycling and public transport). In this respect, none of the sites perform well in absolute terms - recognising that Eastchurch and Leysdown some 6 and 10 km respectively from the strategic road network - however, the sites at Eastchurch (SW/129, 197) perform relatively well given proximity to the village centre. The site at Leysdown (SW/781) is almost 1km from Leysdown village centre; whilst the site at Warden (a lower order settlement) is more isolated. Similarly, the sites between Eastchurch and Minster (SW/001, 155, 159, 196) perform are relatively isolated (with it possibly being the case that SW155 and SW/196 perform better as busses pass along Eastchurch Rd).</p>
Population	<p>The matter of sites being distant from a higher order centre, and some sites being distant even from a lower order centre, has already been discussed, under 'Transport and traffic', and it is not clear that there are any further issues that enable the site options to be differentiated with confidence.</p> <p>East Sheppey is relatively deprived (within the 20% most deprived areas of Swale); however, there is little reason to suggest that development would stimulate new employment or infrastructure (that might assist with regeneration). It can be argued that new housing would help to ensure the continued viability of existing community infrastructure (i.e. shops and services), but there is no certainty.</p>
Health	See discussion above, under 'Population'. In respect of health, it is noted that the part of East Sheppey closest to Minster performs worse than the area furthest east (despite the isolation of the eastern part of the island). It is the third most deprived 'super output area' in Swale, in terms of health and disability (whereas the eastern-most area ranks sixth).
Employment and skills	There are few arguments for or against housing growth in East Sheppey, from an economy/employment perspective, although it might be suggested that worsened traffic could impact on rural businesses (and potentially functioning of the prison, which is a significant employer).
Economic growth	

Conclusions

On the basis of this discussion, it is possible to place the sites in a very rough order of preference (from least preferred to most preferred):

- Land adj to Kingsborough Farm, Eastchurch / Minster (SW/196) - not well related to either settlement and would result in landscape impacts, given its size.
- Marrow Bone Hill, Plough Rd, Eastchurch / Minster (SW/001) - landscape impacts, unrelated to a settlement and located on a quiet lane.
- North of Eastchurch (SW/197) - despite relating well to the village and having recently been scaled back in size to avoid landscape impacts, would still result in landscape impacts.
- Land at Warden (SW/758) - given that Warden sits at the bottom of the Swale settlement hierarchy, and Leysdown is some way distant.
- Land adj St Clements School and the George Wharton Centre, Leysdown (SW/781) - close to a listed

Sustainability topic	Commentary
	<p>building and comprises open fields across which there are views, albeit c.1km from centre of Leysdown.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chequers Stables, Eastchurch Rd, Eastchurch / Minster (SW/155) - smaller but would still result in landscape impacts (albeit the UELCS supports limited development), and does not relate to a settlement. • Land adj to Dantlings, Plough Road, Eastchurch / Minster (SW/159) - less sensitive from a landscape perspective, but unrelated to a settlement and on a quiet lane. • The Bunny Bank, Eastchurch (SW/129) - landscape impacts, but adjacent to village centre.

Other villages

Sites options are -

Sites at Selling	SW/784, 785, 786, 787
Sites at Dunkirk	SW/757, 759, 790
Sites at Painter's Forstal	SW/702, 753
Sites at Lynsted	SW/458, 078
Sites at Upchurch	SW/049, 085, 086 , 718,
Sites at Bredgar	SW/193, 715, 724, 726
Sites at Bapchild	SW/101, 410, 412, 411, 453
Site at Doddington	SW/789

These sites have not been examined further, recognising that the issues associated with development at lower order villages, and at villages in the AONB, are relatively well understood (e.g. see the findings of GIS analysis in Appendix II).

APPENDIX IV: RANKED ASSESSMENT OF SITE OPTIONS

Introduction

As explained in Chapter 4, throughout the plan-making / SA process, in addition to appraisal of reasonable alternatives (i.e. mutually exclusive approaches to addressing policy issues), there has been a focus on appraising site options (i.e. the pool of sites that are available and deliverable, and thereby in contention for allocation).

The **aim of this appendix** is to

- 1) explain the methodology used to rank site options in order of preference; and
- 2) present the site options, ranked in order of preference.

N.B. Site options that are a focus here are only those that -

- Are 'reasonable' options at the current time (see Appendix I); and
- Are associated with a settlement that falls within one of the top four tiers of the settlement hierarchy (as per Policy ST3 'Settlement Strategy').
 - Whilst a number of site options at fifth tier villages ('Other villages with built up area boundaries') can be considered reasonable site options at the current time (see Appendix I), it has not been possible to rank them using the methodology discussed below. Analysis of these **rural site options** can be seen in Appendix II (GIS analysis) and the Council's SHLAA.

Methodology

The methodology is very similar to that applied in 2015, i.e. that explained across pages 2 and 3 of the 'Ranked Assessment of Non-allocated Site Options' report (2015). The methodology was discussed at Examination Hearings, and determined to be appropriate, despite its obvious limitations.

Sites are placed within tiers as follows -

- Tier A lists sites that may be unconstrained, and broadly suitable for allocation.
- Tiers B - F list those with no significant environmental constraints, but with landscape issues.
 - Tier B sites have the lowest landscape constraint, i.e. a constraint level of 1; whilst Tier F sites have the greatest constraint, i.e. a constraint level of 5
 - Tiers B - D sites, whilst having a landscape constraint, do not intersect a designated landscape
 - Tier E sites intersect a 'Swale-level' AHLV; whilst Tier F sites intersect a 'Kent-level' AHLV
- Tier G lists sites associated with 'significant' environmental constraints.
 - A conservative approach has been taken, particularly in respect of heritage constraint. Almost 50% of sites are identified as having a heritage constraint, often relating to the presence of a listed building in close proximity; however, in practice it is recognised that there is often good potential to mitigate impacts to the setting of listed buildings (and potentially even enhance setting and appreciation).
 - Unlike in 2015, no sites have been identified as having a significant 'air quality' constraint.

Also, within tiers, sites are ordered according to -

- 1) Landscape sensitivity (only applicable to Tier G);
- 2) the location of the site in terms of the settlement strategy, with account also taken of whether a site sits within or outside the settlement boundary; and
- 2) the size of the site, with larger sites ranking higher.

Unlike in 2015, no account is taken of the quality of agricultural land lost. This is because the nationally available agricultural land quality data-set is now understood to be unsuited to the task of differentiating between site options at a given settlement.

For additional methodological discussion, please see the 2015 report.

Ranked assessment of site options

Rank	Tier	Site ref	Address	Significant constraint?	Landscape constraint (1-5)	Settlement tier	Area
1	A	SW/531	Land at East Hall Farm, Sittingbourne - Trenport	None	None	1	1.3
2	A	SW/343	Bell Centre, Bell Road Sittingbourne	None	None	1	0.9
3	A	SW/334	Former Nova Furniture Site, Graveney Road	None	None	2	3.0
4	A	Policy MU6	Nova site, Faversham (proposal to switch from employment to housing)	None	None	2	2.0
5	A	Policy A6	Land north of Graveney Road, East of Faversham	None	None	2	2.0
6	A	Policy MU3	Land at Frognal Lane, Teynham (proposal to switch from MU to housing)	None	None	4	18.0
7	B	SW/796	179-183 Borden Lane, Sittingbourne	None	1	1	0.4
8	B	SW/418	Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall, Sittingbourne	None	1	1	0.4
9	B	SW/413	Perry Court Farm, Faversham	None	1	2	30.0
10	B	SW/441	Land West of Brogdale Road	None	1	2	3.6
11	B	SW/165	Land at Belgrave Road	None	1	3	5.2
12	B	SW/705	Land at Scocles Road/Elm Lane, Minster	None	1	3	2.8
13	B	SW/457	Chequers Road	None	1	3	0.4
14	B	SW/159	Land adj to Dantlings, Plough Road, Minster	None	1	3	0.2
15	B	SW/434	Land R/O 111, The Street	None	1	4	0.2
16	B	SW/758	Land at Warden	None	1	5	6.6
17	C	SW/233	Preston Fields, Canterbury Road, Faversham	None	2	2	14.4
18	C	SW/194	Barton Hill Drive	None	2	3	25.3
19	C	SW/158	Land rear of 33 Highfield Road, Minster	None	2	3	1.5
20	C	SW/155	Chequers Stables, Eastchurch Rd	None	2	3	0.4
21	C	SW/407	Land off High Street, Newington	None	2	4	6.9
22	C	SW/996	Barrow Green Farm, Barrow Green, Teynham	None	2	4	2.2
23	C	SW/450	Halfway Egg Farm, Featherbed Lane	None	2	6	3.0
24	D	SW/080	Land East of Love Lane	None	3	2	67.5
25	D	SW/196	Land adj to Kingsborough Farm	None	3	3	18.5
26	D	SW/044	Adjacent 24 & 26 Chequers Road, Minster	None	3	3	3.8
27	D	SW/019	Land situated at the top of Southdown Road, Halfway	None	3	3	2.5
28	D	SW/799	Land south of Elm Lane, Minster	None	3	3	2.5
29	D	SW/001	Land at Marrow Bone Hill, Plough Rd, Minster.	None	3	3	1.8
30	D	SW/722	Barrow Green Farm, Teynham	None	3	4	13.7

Rank	Tier	Site ref	Address	Significant constraint?	Landscape constraint (1-5)	Settlement tier	Area
31	D	SW/717	Land at School Farm, Iwade	None	3	4	11.8
32	D	SW/197	Garretts Farm, Eastchurch	None	3	4	10.7
33	D	SW/704	Lynsted Lane, Teynham	None	3	4	4.9
34	D	SW/129	The Bunny Bank	None	3	4	4.7
35	D	SW/373	Barrow Green Farm	None	3	4	2.5
36	D	SW/732	Land at Ellen's Place, High Street, Newington	None	3	4	2.3
37	D	SW/727	Land at Lynsted Lane, Teynham	None	3	4	1.8
38	D	SW/211	Ruins Barn Road, Tunstall	None	3	6	3.0
39	E	SW/714	Land North of the Street, Boughton	None	4	4	5.3
40	F	SW/050	Chilton Manor Farm, Highsted Road, Sittingbourne ME9 0AA	None	5	1	26.9
41	F	SW/107	Land at Chiltern Manor/Muddy Lane	None	5	1	7.8
42	F	SW/179	Land at Ruin Barns Road (The Old sale Field)	None	5	1	3.5
43	F	SW/721	Land north of Lower Road, Minster	None	5 ³⁵	3	75.5
44	G	SW/321	Southsea Avenue, Minster	Flood risk	0	3	3.4
45	G	SW/047	London Road/Water Lane	Heritage	1	2	11.5
46	G	SW/440	West of Water Lane, Ospringe.	Heritage	1	2	8.2
47	G	SW/433	A2/Western Link	Heritage	1	2	3.4
48	G	SW/794	Perry Court Farmhouse and farmyard, Faversham	Heritage	1	2	2.6
49	G	SW/081	Mindon, Ashford Road	Heritage	1	2	2.5
50	G	SW/435	Queen Court farm, Water Lane	Heritage	1	2	2.3
51	G	SW/751	Land adj 9 Ashford Road and Orchard Cottage, Canterbury Road	Heritage	1	2	2.1
52	G	SW/046	Land fronting London Rd	Heritage	1	2	1.3
53	G	SW/021	Danley Farm, Minster Road	Heritage, flood risk	1	3	8.0
54	G	SW/184	Land Top of Parsonage Chase	Heritage	1	3	0.9
55	G	SW/038	Danley Farm, Minster Road, Minster	Heritage, flood risk	1	3	0.7
56	G	SW/010	The Tracies, Callaways Lane, Newington	Heritage	1	4	0.3
57	G	SW/701	Queen Court Farm, Ospringe	Heritage	1	6	32.0
58	G	SW/797	Land at Vicarage Lane, Ospringe	Heritage	1	6	1.6
59	G	SW/703	Southwest Sittingbourne	Heritage	2	1	30.0
60	G	SW/422	Land at Ufton Court Farm, Sittingbourne	Heritage	2	1	27.2
61	G	SW/135	Land at Grove End Farm	Heritage	2	1	22.6

³⁵ As this is an extremely large site it has been assigned a landscape constraint score of 5, as a special case.

Rank	Tier	Site ref	Address	Significant constraint?	Landscape constraint (1-5)	Settlement tier	Area
62	G	SW/459	Land off Scocles Road, Minster	Heritage	2	3	0.6
63	G	SW/123	Land East of Iwade	Biodiversity, heritage	2	4	55.0
64	G	SW/216	Land south west of Iwade	Heritage	2	4	29.7
65	G	SW/707	Pond Farm London Road Newington	Heritage	2	4	8.0
66	G	SW/041	Land off Church Rd, Adj St Marys View	Heritage, biodiversity	2	4	5.7
67	G	SW/124	Land West of Church Lane, Newington	Heritage	2	4	4.4
68	G	SW/781	Land adj St Clements School and the George Wharton Centre, Warden Bay	Heritage	2	4	4.0
69	G	SW/723	Land at London Road/Cellar Hill, Teynham	Heritage, biodiversity	2	4	1.5
70	G	SW/199	Coleshall Farm, Iwade	Heritage	2	4	1.0
71	G	SW/028	Land at Borden Lane	Heritage	3	1	3.1
72	G	SW/431	Abbey Fields - Option 2	Biodiversity, heritage	3	2	18.8
73	G	SW/700	East of Ham Road, Faversham	Biodiversity	3	2	5.5
74	G	SW/430	Abbey Fields, Faversham	Biodiversity, heritage	3	2	3.8
75	G	SW/795	Land at 39 Abbeyfields, Faversham	Biodiversity, heritage	3	2	1.0
76	G	SW/133	Land East of Scocles Rd	Heritage	3	3	27.5
77	G	SW/779	Land at Gilbert Hall Farm, Minster	Heritage	3	3	20.5
78	G	SW/780	Land at Windy Gap, Chequers Road, Minster	Biodiversity	3	3	17.8
79	G	SW/793	Rear of Nelson Road/Scocles Road, Minster	Heritage	3	3	4.0
80	G	SW/706	Rear of Chequers Road/Scocles Road	Heritage	3	3	2.2
81	G	SW/217	Land North of London Rd, Newington	Heritage	3	4	35.9
82	G	SW/143	Land between Claxfield Farm & Lynsted Lane	Heritage	3	4	13.5
83	G	SW/164	Land at Pond Farm, Newington	Heritage	3	4	12.8
84	G	SW/204	Land at Muddy Lane, Sittingbourne	Flood risk	5	1	4.4
85	G	SW/733	Land at Bysing Wood, Faversham	Heritage, biodiversity	5	6	1.0

APPENDIX V: SPATIAL STRATEGY ALTERNATIVES APPRAISAL

Introduction

As explained within 'Part 1' above, a focus of work in early 2016 (i.e. in the build-up to preparing proposed modifications for publication) was the development and appraisal of 'reasonable' spatial strategy alternatives, with a view to informing a decision on best to meet objectively assessed housing needs.

Reasonable spatial strategy alternatives developed/appraised to inform 'modification-making'

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at Sittingbourne (extension to the southeast)
Sittingbourne	700	700	1300
West Sheppey	800	1400	800
Iwade	600	0	0
Faversham	800	800	800
Newington	100	100	100
Teynham	0	0	0
East Sheppey	0	0	0
Boughton	0	0	0
Other villages	0	0	0
Total additional allocations through mods	3,000	3,000	3,000

Whilst Chapter 7 presents summary appraisal findings, the **aim of this appendix** is to present detailed appraisal findings.

Appraisal methodology

For each of the alternatives, the assessment identifies / evaluates 'likely significant effects' on the baseline, drawing on the sustainability topics / objectives identified through scoping (see Chapter 3) as a methodological framework.

Green is used to indicate significant positive effects, whilst **red** is used to indicate significant negative effects. Every effort is made to predict effects accurately; however, this is inherently challenging given the high level nature of the policy approaches under consideration. The ability to predict effects accurately is also limited by understanding of the baseline (now and in the future under a 'no plan' scenario). In light of this, there is a need to make considerable assumptions regarding how scenarios will be implemented 'on the ground' and what the effect on particular receptors will be.³⁶ Where there is a need to rely on assumptions in order to reach a conclusion on a 'significant effect' this is made explicit in the appraisal text.

Where it is not possible to predict likely significant effects on the basis of reasonable assumptions, efforts are made to comment on the relative merits of the alternatives in more general terms and to indicate a **rank of preference**. This is helpful, as it enables a distinction to be made between the alternatives even where it is not possible to distinguish between them in terms of 'significant effects'.

³⁶ Considerable assumptions are made regarding infrastructure delivery, i.e. assumptions are made regarding the infrastructure (of all types) that will come forward in the future alongside (and to some extent funded through) development.

Finally, it is important to note that effects are predicted taking into account the criteria presented within Regulations.³⁷ So, for example, account is taken of the duration, frequency and reversibility of effects. Cumulative effects are also considered (i.e. where the effects of the plan in combination with the effects of other planned or on-going activity that is outside the control of the Swale Local Plan).

Appraisal findings

Appraisal findings are presented below within 14 separate tables (each table dealing with a specific sustainability topic) with a final table drawing conclusions. The appraisal methodology is explained above, but to reiterate: For each sustainability topic the performance of each scenario is categorised in terms of ‘significant effects (using red / green) and also ranked in order of preference. Also, ‘ = ’ is used to denote instances of all alternatives performing on a par.

Sustainability Topic: <u>Air</u>			
	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	★ 1	★ 1	3
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	<p>There are five Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Swale, with four lying along sections of the A2 at Faversham (Ospringe), Teynham, Sittingbourne and Newington, and another along a section of the B2006 in central Sittingbourne. Generation of additional car movements (commuting for work and day to day activities) is a key issue, as it leads to traffic congestion and hence air pollution. There is a need to minimise car movements through the AQMA, and also ensure that traffic flow is maintained (i.e. avoid queuing at junctions). Taking the three options in turn -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Iwade (Option 1) is well-related to the strategic road network (A249), and hence does not give rise to air quality concerns. • Growth locations on Sheppey (Option 2) might be a little way from the strategic road network, but there are not thought to be air quality concerns on Sheppey. • Expansion southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3) might lead to an increase in traffic through the Sittingbourne A2 AQMA (due to car movements west, towards M2 J5) and the Teynham AQMA (if residents travelling east, e.g. to Canterbury, choose not to first ‘double-back’ to M2 J5); however, there is much uncertainty. <p>On balance, it is appropriate to conclude that Option 3 is worst performing; however, it is not possible to conclude ‘significant negative effects’, given the uncertainties.</p>		

³⁷ Schedule 1 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

Sustainability Topic: Biodiversity

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourrne (extension to the SE)
Rank	3	★1	★1
Significant effects?	Yes	No	
Discussion	<p>Taking the three options in turn -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Iwade (Option 1) is constrained by the adjacent internationally important North Kent Marshes Special Protection Area; however, examination through Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has identified the likelihood that sufficient mitigation can be implemented (primarily in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, SANG). There would also be the potential for targeted green infrastructure provision on quite a large scale, potentially leading to certain biodiversity benefits. • Higher growth at West Sheppey (Option 2) would probably not give rise to biodiversity concerns, recognising that development 'tight' to Minster/Halfway is some distance from the North Kent Marshes SPA to the south. One site that might come into contention (SW/721, Southsea Avenue) is heavily vegetated (albeit previously developed) and adjacent to Minster Marshes, which is an extensive area of BAP priority habitat (grazing marsh) and designated as a locally important Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). • Expansion southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3) gives rise to few concerns. The site abuts an SNCI woodland (former quarry), but there is little reason to believe that impacts are likely (assuming a landscape buffer). <p>On balance, it is appropriate to conclude that Option 1 is worst performing, and it is appropriate to 'flag' the risk of significant negative effects (whilst at the same time directing the reader to the stand-alone HRA, where risks are explored in greater detail).</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Climate change mitigation

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourrne (extension to the SE)
Rank	N/a		
Significant effects?	N/a		
Discussion	<p>Development viability does vary across the Swale Thames Gateway (highest at Sittingbourne and the Rural Local Service Centres; lowest on Sheppey), and it can be suggested that larger sites are more 'viable'; however, there are not thought to be any opportunities to deliver low carbon infrastructure (e.g. district heating) in practice.</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Cultural heritage

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourrne (extension to the SE)
Rank	=	=	=
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	<p>Taking the three options in turn -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Iwade (Option 1) is constrained by the adjacent Grade 1 listed church (and two nearby listed buildings, which together comprise a small historic core to the village); however, given the likelihood of extensive open space provision in this area (given the priority issue of mitigating impacts to the adjacent SPA), impacts will be mitigated to a large extent, and there may even be potential to enhance appreciation of the church as an asset. . • Higher growth at West Sheppey (Option 2) could give rise impacts were there to be development of the land to the rear of Chequers Road / Scocles Road / Nelson Avenue, east of Minster, which is in close proximity to Minster Abbey, albeit to the rear of existing properties. The Urban Edge Landscape Capacity Study did not examine this land, but there are clear heritage concerns given the rising topography, and the bisecting footpath. There is one smaller site, within this land parcel, that perhaps could be accommodated; however, there is uncertainty. • Expansion southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3) would not be in proximity to a Conservation Area or Listed Building, but there would be the possibility of rural rat-running through Conservation Areas to the south of Sittingbourne; and the gap between Sittingbourne and the Rodmersham Green Conservation Area would be eroded (with a gap of at least 600m remaining). <p>It is difficult to differentiate between the alternatives with any certainty. Option 1 is perhaps best performing, recognising that the historic core to Iwade is not a Conservation Area and less sensitive than Minster Abbey; however, impacts at Iwade are dependent on matters of masterplanning/design. What is more certain is that significant effects are unlikely.</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Landscape

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourrne (extension to the SE)
Rank	★ 1	2	3
Significant effects?	No	Yes	
Discussion	<p>Taking the three options in turn -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Iwade (Option 1) gives rise to some concerns, in-light of the findings of the Urban Edge Landscape Capacity Study (UELCS); however, there is understood to be much potential for mitigation and indeed there is a significant opportunity to be realised. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To the north, the landscape has 'low' capacity to accommodate change; however, it is understood that development would provide an opportunity to improve/'soften' the less 		

than successful finished edge of the current village.

- To the east, despite the UELCS concluding ‘high’ capacity to accommodate change, concerns arise given the submission plan allocation at Northwest Sittingbourne. However, policy is in place (Policy MU1) to ensure that the Northwest Sittingbourne allocation delivers a ‘network of green spaces and corridors throughout the allocation to achieve a minimum open space provision of 22 ha’, with the concept diagram showing a ‘linear park’ running along the length of the A249. As such, there is potential for a scheme east of Iwade to integrate and form a continuation of this green corridor, and ultimately ensure a legible settlement pattern / sense of place, to the benefit of the wider Swale Thames Gateway.
- Higher growth at West Sheppey (Option 2) will inevitably mean development of relatively prominent land, even if development is directed to the west of Minster where the topography is less of a constraint. For example, sites that might come into contention are ‘R/o 33 Highfield Road’ (SW/019, 158), which are located on high ground that “provides wide panoramic views across the marshland to the south” according to the UELCS. The smaller site (SW/158) is on lower land; however, it does not relate well to the existing settlement edge and the previous Local Plan Inspector concluded that development here would be highly intrusive. Development ‘R/o 33 Highfield Road’ would also impact the Minster/Halfway settlement gap, recognising that a large scheme west of Minster (Barton Hill Drive, SW/194) is assumed under this option (indeed all options).
- Expansion southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3) is constrained by landscape as the designated area of high landscape value (Kent level) would be impacted; plus there would be (less significant) coalescence considerations. Recent site specific work commissioned by the Council (DHA, 2015) has confirmed (after having given consideration to proposed mitigation measures) that there would be impacts to the designated landscape, stating: *“the proposed development, given its size and extent, would be likely to result in significant, demonstrable harm to the North Downs Special Landscape Area, as defined within the adopted Swale Borough Local Plan 2008, bearing in mind much of the land designated at the South Eastern edge of Sittingbourne would be physically effected by the development.”* The UELCS identifies a land parcel comprising most of this site as having a ‘moderate’ capacity for change; however, on closer examination it seems that there is distinct variation within this landscape parcel. The UELCS states that “[s]ensitivity increases to the south from where the urban edge is not evident and the distinctiveness and remoteness of the landscape are stronger”; and suggests that ‘minor’ (to the west) or ‘very minor’ (to the east) expansion of the urban edge would ‘perhaps’ be acceptable. Also, the UELCS mentions the orchards that comprise the south-western part of the site, finding that they should be conserved as they *“provide scenic quality and a sense of remoteness and tranquillity”*.

On balance: Option 1 (Iwade) is best performing, although there are some concerns regarding the part of the scheme that wraps around the north of the village, and there is a degree of uncertainty given that much relies on masterplanning/design measures; and Option 3 (Sittingbourne) performs worst, given impacts to a landscape designated as being of ‘larger than local’ importance. Significant negative effects are predicted for both Option 2 (West Sheppey) and Option 3 (Sittingbourne) as there are clear sensitivities and there is limited potential for avoidance/mitigation.

Sustainability Topic: Soil

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	3		3
Significant effects?	Yes	No	Yes
Discussion	<p>Agricultural land is generally 'best and most versatile' to the south of Sittingbourne (with much highest quality Grade 1 land), whilst there is known to be a significant resource of non-best and most versatile (Grades 3b and 4) on Sheppey. Iwade is situated within something of a transitional zone.</p> <p>On the basis of this discussion, Option 3 might be assumed to be worst performing. However, the situation is not clear cut as site specific survey work has found the site to comprise a mixture of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3b land. Similarly, at Iwade the situation is not clear cut, as site specific survey work has found the site to comprise a mixture of Grade 3a and 3b.</p> <p>On balance, it is appropriate to conclude that Option 2 (West Sheppey) is best performing, despite there being some uncertainty (without knowledge of specific sites / in the absence of site specific survey work). Options 1 and 3 would lead to the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and so would lead to significant negative effects.</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Transport and traffic

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank		3	3
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	<p>Taking the three options in turn -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of Iwade (Option 1) is well related to the strategic transport network, and its location close to employment growth areas should help to minimise the reliance on commuting by car via Junction 5 of the M2 (which has major capacity / safety issues that are set to be resolved through improvements to commence in 2019/20, with completion by 2024). Bus services are limited, but there is the opportunity for enhancement; and there will be good opportunities for cycling to Sittingbourne. • Higher growth at West Sheppey (Option 2) gives rise to few concerns, on the assumption that there wouldn't be significant growth to the east of Minster such that there would be increased traffic along Scocles Road / Lower Road. Most locations are relatively well located to services and facilities at Minster/Halfway, with bus services to Sheerness and Queenborough. However, there is a high incidence of commuting off the island, and this pattern is likely to continue in the short to medium term. • Expansion to southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3) would mean that residents need to travel through Sittingbourne to reach the strategic road network by car, and there would be a likelihood of rural rat-running. However, the site benefits from relative proximity (c.1km) to 		

the town centre.

On balance, Option 1 (Iwade) performs best; however, this is marginal. Significant negative effects are not predicted, although there is some uncertainty in the absence of detailed work to explore M2 J5 impacts.

Sustainability Topic: Waste

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	N/a		
Significant effects?			
Discussion	There is no potential to differentiate between alternatives with any confidence. Sustainable waste management should be possible under any foreseeable scenario.		

Sustainability Topic: Water

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	=	=	=
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	Flood risk is a constraint east of Iwade (Option 1) and southeast of Sittingbourne (Option 3); however, in both cases it should be possible to avoid development encroaching on the flood risk zone (i.e. with land at flood risk retained as open space). At West Sheppey it is fair to assume that the sites at flood risk would be avoided, although it is noted that the coastal flood risk zone encroaches on Southsea Avenue (SW/721) on the western edge of Minster.		

Sustainability Topic: Crime

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	-	-	-
Significant effects?	-	-	-
Discussion	The alternatives do not have notable implications in terms of crime related issues/objectives.		

Sustainability Topic: Health

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	=	=	=
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	<p>The Index of Multiple Deprivation dataset shows health deprivation to be focused on Sheppey to a large extent; however, it is not clear that there are opportunities to address this through directing additional housing growth to the island (Option 2), particularly given the assumption that additional development under this option would be somewhat dispersed (rather than at a strategic site, that deliver community infrastructure upgrades). It could, in fact, be suggested that additional dispersed housing growth on Sheppey should not be supported, from a health perspective, as there would be additional strain on facilities; however, it is not clear that this is an issue. One other consideration is the potential for Option 1 (Iwade) to involve delivery of high quality green infrastructure that supports walking, cycling and outdoor recreation; however, it is not clear that this is a strategic consideration.</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Housing

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank		2	
Significant effects?	Yes		
Discussion	<p>All options would involve delivering the quantum of additional housing needed to ensure that objectively assessed housing needs are met locally; and so all would lead to significant positive effects. However, it is fair to say that Option 2 performs least well as dispersed development on Sheppey would not enable affordable housing delivery (given poor development viability).</p>		

Sustainability Topic: Population

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	=	=	=
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	<p>All options would direct additional housing to the Swale Thames Gateway, in-line with the objective of stimulating regeneration within this area. Issues of relative deprivation are particularly concentrated on the Isle of Sheppey, which might suggest that Option 2 performs best; however, it is not clear that this is the case (see discussion above, under 'Health').</p> <p>There are question-marks regarding any future growth at Iwade (Option 1), as it is not clear</p>		

what potential there would be to fund the delivery of community infrastructure upgrades; and there is also a need to consider that villagers have dealt with the impacts of construction since the 1990s. However, it is not clear that there is the potential to conclude that this option is worst performing, given that development will deliver high quality new green infrastructure.

Sustainability Topic: Economic growth, employment and skills

	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)	Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)	Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)
Rank	=	=	=
Significant effects?	No		
Discussion	As discussed above, all options would direct additional housing to the Swale Thames Gateway, in-line with the objective of stimulating regeneration within this area; however, none would directly support employment growth and so significant effects are not predicted. An extension to the southeast of Sittingbourne would be less well related to employment growth areas on Sheppey and north of Sittingbourne, but is well related to Sittingbourne Town Centre.		

Conclusions						
	Option 1 Higher growth at Iwade (extension to the east)		Option 2 Higher growth at West Sheppey (at smaller sites)		Option 3 Higher growth at S'bourne (extension to the SE)	
Air	★1		★1		3	
Biodiversity	3		★1		★1	
Cultural heritage	=		=		=	
Landscape	★1		2		3	
Soil	3		★1		3	
Transport and traffic	★1		3		3	
Water	=		=		=	
Health	=		=		=	
Housing	★1		2		★1	
Population	=		=		=	
Economy / employment	=		=		=	
Rank summary ³⁸	Best in terms of: • Air • Landscape • Transport • Housing	Worst in terms of: • B'diversity • Soil	Best in terms of: • Air • B'diversity • Soil	Worst in terms of: • Transport • Housing	Best in terms of: • B'diversity • Housing	Worst in terms of: • Air • Landscape • Soil • Transport
Significant effects summary	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • B'diversity • Soil	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • Landscape	Positive in terms of: • Housing	Negative in terms of: • Landscape • Soil
Summary discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1 (Iwade) stands-out as performing best in terms of a number of objectives, although it performs worst in terms of 'biodiversity' (see the HRA for detailed discussion) and 'soil', as there would be some loss of 'best and most versatile' agricultural land. Option 2 (West Sheppey) notably performs best in terms of 'soil', but performs relatively poorly from a 'housing' perspective given poor development viability. Option 3 (Sittingbourne) is notably worst performing in terms of 'landscape', and also gives rise to some transport / air quality concerns. 					

³⁸ N.B. The aim is to discuss the relative merits of the alternatives in terms of the SA framework - i.e. in terms of competing sustainability objectives - rather than to identifying an option that is best performing or 'most sustainable' overall.]

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Habitats Regulations Assessment: Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 In April 2015, AECOM (formerly URS) undertook HRA for the Bearing Fruits 2031: Swale Borough Local Plan - publication version which was submitted for examination. The 2015 HRA for the Local Plan¹ identified that there would be no likely significant effects upon internationally designated sites (principally the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites) as a result of increases in recreational pressure, provided that residential development within 6km of the internationally designated sites (and particularly large developments beyond 6km) pay appropriate financial contributions towards delivery of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the Swale SPA and Ramsar site, and Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. No impact pathways relating to recreational pressure stem from jobs target numbers. Air quality and water quality impacts were scoped out during the Local Plan HRA process. Proximity impacts do potentially exist, depending on the allocated sites in question, and were fully examined during the Local Plan HRA. The publication version Local Plan provided for 10,800 net new dwellings (including meeting the needs for Gypsies and Travellers) within the lifetime of the Plan (which at the time of submission was from 2011 through to 2031). In addition, the Local Plan provided for a job target of 7,053.
- 1.1.2 In September 2015 AECOM undertook an analysis of the implications of the Swale Housing Scenarios on the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites². The Housing Scenario document is not a stand-alone document and should be read in conjunction with the April 2015 HRA for the publication version Local Plan. It was not therefore intended to consist of a full HRA report by itself but was rather a specific consideration of the potential implications of several alternative development options on internationally designated sites. The Housing Scenario document analysed potential impacts of three levels of housing provision identified in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Scenarios for Housing Provision and Associated Population Growth within Swale Borough to the End of the Plan Period (2031)

Scenario	Dwellings (dpa)	Projected Population Increase (plan period)	Total Population (end of plan period) ³
A ⁴	637	17,307	158,107
B ⁵	776	25,397	166,197
C ⁶	861	25,491	166,291

- 1.1.3 Ultimately this concluded that under Scenario B/C (the scenarios with providing for the largest increase in population), would probably not increase visitor pressure on the SPA to such an extent that it could not be addressed by the additional SAMMS contributions that would be made by those dwellings. It was noted that the conclusions of the Housing Scenario analysis were theoretical and would require verification through monitoring of the effectiveness of the SAMMS delivery.
- 1.1.4 Since that time, AECOM has been appointed to undertake HRA of Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 (known as 'the Plan'). Once again, this HRA document is not a stand-alone document but is the latest in a series of updates that track the plan through the stages of development to adoption. Therefore, this report does not reproduce information regarding the background to the European designated sites or potential impact pathways. These were detailed in full within the April 2015 HRA, which is referenced as required.

¹ AECOM (was URS). (April 2015). Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Submission Version. Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening.

² AECOM (September 2015). Supplement to Bearing Fruits 2031 Swale Borough Local Plan Part 1: Submission Version Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Analysis of the Implications of the Swale Housing Scenarios on the North Kent Marshes Internationally Designated Sites

³ Based on a mid-year population estimate for Swale at the start of the plan period (2014) of 140,800 people. Figure supplied by Peter Brett Associates

⁴ Current Local Plan

⁵ PBA 04-14 (preferred OAN)

⁶ ONS /CLG 2012

- 1.1.5 Although one of the main elements of the Proposed Main Modifications concerns an increase to the overall quantum of housing and employment to be delivered across Swale over the Local Plan period, the implications of that increase at the strategic level were discussed in the September 2015 HRA analysis. It is therefore unnecessary to repeat that discussion in this document. Rather, this document focusses upon assessment of the implications for European sites of:
- Changes to allocated development sites, and in particular the allocation of a series of new sites, to meet that overall increased quantum of housing and employment; and
 - Major changes to policy wording.
- 1.1.6 The following chapter contains the screening assessment of these main modifications to policy text in the Proposed Main Modifications document.

2 Assessment of Proposed Main Modifications to Policy Text

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following sections contain the screening assessment of the main modifications to policy in the Proposed Main Modifications document. As previously stated the following screening assessment only assesses the modifications and not Plan policies in their entirety. Table 2 presents screening assessment of most modifications to policy text, with the exception of Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets, which for clarity is assessed in Table 3.

2.2 Screening Assessment of Policy Text of the Proposed Main Modifications Document

2.2.1 The following table provides the screening of main modifications to policy text only. It does not repeat the full policy text but merely summarises any relevant modifications to policy. For full perspective and detail of the Plan, the Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 document should be referred to.

2.2.2 Where the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column is coloured **green**, this indicates that the modifications to policy will not result in a new impact pathway beyond that previously addressed within the April 2015 (or September 2015) HRAs and the modifications to the policy can be screened out in terms of impact upon the integrity of internationally designated sites. If this column is coloured **orange**, this indicates that there is potential for the modification to policy to result in likely significant effects upon an internationally designated site. Recommendations are also included in the table and are identified by text in **bold**. Provided that these recommendations are included within policy, it is considered that they will enable the modification to policy to be screened out from adversely impacting upon the integrity of an internationally designated site.

2.2.3 For completeness, all policies of the Local Plan are listed within the below table. If modifications are not made to a policy, the policy is not assessed and this is stated. These policies will not be coloured within the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column.

2.2.4 In-combination impacts have already been assessed within the April 2015 HRA and the September 2015 Housing Scenario assessment. No modifications to policies result in in-combination effects beyond those discussed within these previous HRA documents in support of the production of the Swale Local Plan.

Table 2: Screening Assessment of Policy Text of the Proposed Main Modifications Document.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy ST1: Delivering sustainable development in Swale	This policy provides for minor changes to text, including the promotion of ' <i>sustainable design and construction</i> '. There are no new HRA implications identified.
Policy ST 2: Development targets for jobs and homes 2011-2031	This modification provides for 130,000sq.m of B Class Employment floor space rather than a jobs target of 7,053. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA so do not require further consideration. Modifications identify a target for housing provision of 13,192 dwellings to the end of the plan period, up from 10,800, an increase of 2,392 new dwellings from the April 2015 HRA. In practice, the actual provision during the plan period is 14,130 dwellings (831 dwellings per annum). The September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis assessed a hypothetical increase in housing provision in Swale of up to 861 new dwellings per

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>annum and this determined no likely significant effects provided strategic mitigation is adhered to. As such, this impact modification can be screened out.</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy ST 3: The Swale settlement strategy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets	<p>All reference to retail and leisure floor space has been removed as has reference to sites for Gypsies and Travellers. Modifications also detail changes in the total amount of dwellings, and industrial floor space development commitments as at 1st April 2014. The total additional quantum of employment space and cumulative additional dwellings were screened out within the April 2015 and September 2015 HRA, so do not require further consideration in this document.</p> <p>Modifications provide for amendments to the quantum of housing and industrial /office floors pace provided within existing site allocations in addition to making new allocations. These allocations are discussed within Table 3 (see site allocation relating to 'Village expansion (north, east and southern areas' – new site allocations SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123). Ultimately, sufficient amendments were made to relevant site-specific policies following the initial iteration of this HRA (particularly that regarding Iwade Expansion) it was possible to screen it out.</p>
Policy ST 5: The Sittingbourne area strategy	<p>The modifications to point 8 remove reference to the protection of internationally designated sites.</p> <p>The modifications to point 9 remove reference to the need for assessments of '<i>noise and other disturbances to enable control of any adverse effects on wintering SPA birds on Milton Creek</i>'. New text to this point states 'In accordance with Policy CP7, minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS)', thus providing suitable protection for internationally designated sites.</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications</p>
Policy ST 6: The Isle of Sheppey area strategy	<p>Modifications to this policy are either minor text changes or are positive as they provide specific protection to internationally designated sites as follows: '<i>...minimise and mitigate impacts on internationally designated sites for biodiversity, including, from developments within 6km of an SPA, contributions toward the North Kent Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) in accordance with Policy CP7.</i>'</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.</p>
Policy ST 7: The Faversham area and Kent Downs Strategy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP1: Building a strong, competitive economy	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy CP 2: Promoting sustainable transport	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy CP 3: Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 4: Requiring good design	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy CP 5: Health and wellbeing	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 6: Community facilities and services to meet local needs	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy CP 7: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - providing for green infrastructure	<p>Text has been amended for clarity to provide sufficient protection of internationally designated sites as follows: <i>'Ensure that there is no adverse effect on the integrity of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site, alone or in combination with other plan and projects, as it would not be in accordance with the aims and objectives of this Local Plan'</i> <i>'Require the completion of project specific Habitats Regulations Assessment, in accordance with Policy DM28, to ensure there are no likely significant effects upon any European designated site. For sites within 6km of the North Kent Marshes development must contribute to its Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'.</i></p> <p>This is the 'hook' policy that provides protection of internationally designated wildlife sites from development as outlined within Swale Plan.</p> <p>This is a positive modification. There are no impact pathways identified by this modification.</p>
Policy CP 8: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 1: Existing committed employment locations	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 2: Land south of Kemsley Mill	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 3: Land at West Minster, Sheerness	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 4: Land at Cowstead Corner, Queenborough	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 5: Land at Selling Road, Faversham	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 6: Land at Graveney Road, east of Faversham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 7: Thistle Hill, Minster, Isle of Sheppey	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy A 8 Stones Farm, Canterbury Road, Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy A 9: Land at Crown Quay Lane, Sittingbourne	<p>This is a largely amended policy. It provides for an increase in housing provision from 474 dwellings to 650 dwellings. As previously identified this site poses no site-specific HRA implications (beyond the general contribution to recreational pressure associated with all housing within 6km of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site). The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.</p> <p>Modifications to this policy do not identify any new impact pathways that have not already been screened out.</p>
Policy A 10: Milton Pipes, Mill Way, Sittingbourne	Modifications to this policy provide for an increase in housing provision from 190 dwellings to 240 dwellings. The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	The remainder of the modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications
Policy A 11: Land at Plover Road	Modifications provide for a decrease in housing provision from 130 dwellings to 97 dwellings. Other modifications are minor text changes. There are no HRA implications to the modifications.
Policy New AX 1: Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/165. It provides for 620 dwellings. The site is located 1.1km from the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with no direct footpath access. The site itself is an arable field located less than 700m from a substantial area of grazing marsh. Its location immediately adjacent to the existing settlement of Halfway renders it less likely to constitute significant high-tide roosting/foraging habitat than more remote fields. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA to have a site-specific effect on the SPA itself. In addition, the supporting text to the policy makes it clear that any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 2 Land at Belgrave Road, Halfway	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/194. It provides for 140 dwellings. The site is located 800m north of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with no direct footpath access.</p> <p>The site is a large complex of arable fields with no substantial development intervening between it and the SPA/Ramsar site. It is possible that it could provide important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds such that further investigations into this issue would be required for any planning application. The proximity of the fields immediately adjacent to the existing settlement renders it less likely to constitute significant high-tide roosting/foraging habitat than more remote fields such that this matter does not present a likely impediment to delivery of the site. In addition, the supporting text to the policy makes it clear that any planning application is likely to be supported by a wintering bird survey to confirm its use by bird species associated with SPA.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy A 12: Land at the Western Link, Faversham	<p>Modifications to this policy provides for an increase in housing provision from 240 dwellings to 250 dwellings. The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.</p> <p>The remainder of the modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications</p>
Policy New AX 3: Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham	This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/334. It provides for a minimum of 90 dwellings. The site is located just over 1km south of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site with what appears to be no direct footpath access. MAGIC ⁷ identifies areas of grazing marsh outside the SPA but which could constitute supporting habitat for the SPA located approximately 250m north of the development site, on the opposite side of the railway embankment. The railway embankment will provide screening and as such it is considered unlikely that disturbance of any SPA/Ramsar birds that may be using the grazing marsh would occur during construction on this development site.

⁷ www.MAGIC.gov.uk [accessed 13/04/16]

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 4: Land at Preston Fields, Faversham	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/233. It provides for a minimum of 217 dwellings. The site is located 2km south of the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site. Aerial photography indicates that this is an arable field. However, its location on the far side of Faversham from the SPA/Ramsar sites indicates that it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy New AX 5: Iwade expansion	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123. Collectively these provide for 572 dwellings. The site boundary lies immediately adjacent to the SPA/Ramsar site although the most distant parts of the site are located c. 1km away from the SPA/Ramsar site. Although a ditch provides a barrier to direct access into the SPA/Ramsar site from much of the allocation, there appears to be potential for direct access from the north-western end. Potential impacts pathways are: recreational pressure (alone and in-combination), urbanisation, disturbance from construction and operational activities, loss of supporting habitat, water related impact pathways relating to surface runoff, and dust deposition.</p> <p>This policy provides for the following text: '<i>provision shall also include a significant proportion of natural and semi-natural greenspace and green corridors, incorporating existing/new footpath and cycle routes, and attractively designed balancing ponds and wetlands</i>' Whilst this is positive text, the provision of '<i>incorporating existing/new footpath and cycle routes</i>' has potential to lead to an increase in recreational pressure on the designated site dependant on where these routes are. These would therefore require careful designing at the planning application stage.</p> <p>This policy does recognise the potential for recreational impacts on the SPA/Ramsar site above and beyond that which may be addressed by financial contributions to the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy. The policy provides for the following bespoke recreational mitigation solution: '<i>The Masterplan and planning applications will: ...Be informed by an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment to include on site mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for protected habitats species and off-site contributions for residual impacts further afield, in accordance with Policy CP7 and DM28</i>'. In total the allocation site allows for c. 35ha of greenspace, which would enable an appropriate SANG to be delivered, depending on the precise details. As such, it is considered that no further adjustments are required to policy in order to ensure that adequate safeguards exist to prevent this allocation from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA/Ramsar site via recreational pressure.</p> <p>In the initial iteration of this report the following additional matters were identified that required additions to the policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From reviewing aerial imagery it appears the site consists of a network of arable fields which could constitute supporting habitat to the

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p>SPA/Ramsar site given its proximity adjacent to the site. <u>For the purposes of the planning application it is recommended that wintering bird surveys are conducted to determine if significant populations⁸ of birds for which the Swale SPA/Ramsar site are designated use the site as functionally supporting habitat, and if necessary mitigation be provided. This requirement should be included in the policy. This is not considered to be a fundamental constraint to delivery as it is known from other schemes in the area that arable fields can be located adjacent to the SPA/Ramsar site and yet not be used by significant numbers of SPA/Ramsar birds.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For this site there is also a risk of disturbance of SPA/Ramsar birds at the most sensitive periods (generally October to February for wintering birds, although the most sensitive period for breeding marsh harrier is the spring), or conceivably direct incidental damage to the site or effects on drainage and water quality into the SPA/Ramsar site, if construction work takes place without adequate controls (such as minimising winter construction activity and where it cannot be minimised using close-board fencing, damped piling and other measures set out in British Standards guidance to reduce noise to non-disturbing levels). It is therefore considered necessary that the policy for this site includes specific reference to the need for planning applications to include protocols for avoiding disturbance and other adverse effects on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site during the construction process, as has already been included in policies for other existing allocations. <u>It is therefore recommended that wording similar to the following is included in Policy AX6 (or possibly in the preamble, since it is an advisory note for the benefit of the applicant): 'In addition to recreational pressure considerations, the HRA will need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues'.</u> <p>These recommendations have now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.</p>
<p>Policy New AX 6: Land rear of High Street, Newington</p>	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/010, SW/407. It provides for a minimum of 115 dwellings. The site is located 2.4km from the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site. The site itself is an arable field. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>Site SW/010 is also assessed in Modification 132.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
<p>Policy New AX 7: Land East of Station Road, Teynham</p>	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/144. It provides for a minimum of 107 dwellings. The site is located 1.8km from the Swale SPA/ Ramsar site. The site itself is a parcel of land comprising an orchard and cultivated land, which is unlikely to be used as supporting habitat by SPA birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p>

⁸ Normally defined as regular use by more than 1% of the SPA/Ramsar site population

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications																										
	As such, this policy can be screened out.																										
Policy A 13: New allocations on sites within existing settlements	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.																										
Policy A 14: Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements	<p>This policy provides for new residential site allocations and amendments to existing residential site allocations as follows: items crossed through have been removed. Items in bold are new modifications.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="582 355 1836 683"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="582 355 896 414">Location of allocation</th> <th data-bbox="896 355 1209 414"></th> <th data-bbox="1209 355 1523 414">Site area (ha)</th> <th data-bbox="1523 355 1836 414">Minimum no. of dwellings</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 414 896 454">Sittingbourne</td> <td data-bbox="896 414 1209 454">2. Manor Farm</td> <td data-bbox="1209 414 1523 454">2.3</td> <td data-bbox="1523 414 1836 454">20 30</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 454 896 582" rowspan="2">Minster and Halfway</td> <td data-bbox="896 454 1209 518">3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane</td> <td data-bbox="1209 454 1523 518">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 454 1836 518">50</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="896 518 1209 582">4. Land at Chequers Road</td> <td data-bbox="1209 518 1523 582">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 518 1836 582">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 582 896 646">Faversham</td> <td data-bbox="896 582 1209 646">8. West of Brogdale Road</td> <td data-bbox="1209 582 1523 646">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 582 1836 646">66</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="582 646 896 683">Newington</td> <td data-bbox="896 646 1209 683">10. Land at The Tracies</td> <td data-bbox="1209 646 1523 683">-</td> <td data-bbox="1523 646 1836 683">5</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane: (site allocation SW/705) This site is located 2km north of the Swale SPA/Ramsar site, 1.5km from the nearest area of grazing marsh according to MAGIC and 1.2km from the nearest section of coast. Site is located immediately adjacent to existing development and appears to be fallow grassland. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect. It is considered that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p>4. Land at Chequers Road: (site allocation SW/457) This site is located 2.5km north of the Swale SPA/Ramsar site and the nearest significant area of grazing marsh. Site is located close to existing housing development and appears to consist of overgrown grassland and scrub which all render it very unlikely to provide important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect. Coupled with the small number of dwellings proposed it is considered that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p>8. West of Brogdale Road: (site allocation SW/441) Located 2km south of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site on the opposite side of Faversham. Aerial photography indicates that this is a fallow grassland field. Location on the far side of Faversham indicates it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds. It is sufficiently distant from the SPA/Ramsar site that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p>10. Land at the Tracies: (site allocation SW/010) The site is located 2.4km from the SPA/Ramsar site. The site itself is an arable field. There is no indication that it is likely to be of significance for SPA birds and the site is too distant from the SPA or the nearest area of grazing marsh to have a site-specific effect. It is considered that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally. Please also see modification 126.</p>				Location of allocation		Site area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings	Sittingbourne	2. Manor Farm	2.3	20 30	Minster and Halfway	3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane	-	50	4. Land at Chequers Road	-	10	Faversham	8. West of Brogdale Road	-	66	Newington	10. Land at The Tracies	-	5
Location of allocation		Site area (ha)	Minimum no. of dwellings																								
Sittingbourne	2. Manor Farm	2.3	20 30																								
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	4. Land at Chequers Road	-	10																								
Faversham	8. West of Brogdale Road	-	66																								
Newington	10. Land at The Tracies	-	5																								

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	<p><u>16. Land East of Station Road: (site allocation SW/144)</u> See modification 128 (Policy New AX 8: Land East of Station Road, Teynham) for screening assessment</p> <p>The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration.</p> <p>Other modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications</p>
Policy MU 1: Land at North-West Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications
Policy MU 2: Land at North-East Sittingbourne	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy New MUX 1: Land at south-west Sittingbourne	<p>This is a new policy relating to new site allocation SW/703. It provides for 565 new dwellings. The site is located 4km from the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. Aerial photography indicates that this site is a complex of arable fields. Location on the far side of Sittingbourne at a distance of 4km from the SPA indicates that it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds.</p> <p>This site does have potential to result in in-combination impacts upon the designated sites as a result of increased recreational pressure from new housing. The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>This policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy MU 3: Land at Frogna Lane, Teynham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy MU 4: The Oare gravel workings, Oare Road, Faversham	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy MU 5: Land at Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy New MUX 1: Perry Court Farm, Faversham	<p>This is a new policy relating to site allocation SW/413. It provides for a minimum of 370 new dwellings and 3ha of B1a, B1b, B1c class employment use. The site is located 2km south of The Swale SPA/Ramsar site on the opposite side of Faversham. Aerial photography indicates that this is a complex of arable fields. Location on the far side of Faversham indicates it is unlikely to constitute important high tide roosting/foraging habitat for SPA/Ramsar birds. It is sufficiently distant from the SPA/Ramsar site that no site-specific recreational pressure effect is expected, except as part of the 'in combination' growth of housing in Swale borough generally.</p> <p>The modifications include reference to the need to include '<i>financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</i>' to address this issue. The total increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. As such, it does not require further consideration here.</p> <p>As such, this policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy Regen 1: Central Sittingbourne regeneration area	This policy wording has not itself changed. However, the main modifications associated with this policy have identified that the quantum of some SHLAA sites already mentioned in association with this policy has increased, while an additional SHLAA site has been referenced (Land at The former Bell Centre, Bell Road: The redevelopment of this site for residential development, offices and community facilities will be able to provide a minimum of 120 dwellings).. As with the other SHLAA sites in this area that have already been identified in the Local Plan, the only potential for

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	impact on European sites from the former Bell Centre is the incombination recreational pressure impact. This has been addressed already in the policy which states 'Ensure that, through both on and off site measures, any significant adverse impacts on European sites through recreational pressure will be mitigated in accordance with Policies CP7 and DM28, including a financial contribution towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy'. As such, the main modifications associated with this policy can be screened out.
Policy Regen 2: Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Area	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy New Regen X 1: The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area	<p>This is a new policy providing for the regeneration of the port area at Sheerness, including the maintenance and enhancement of the port. This has potential to impact upon the Outer Thames Estuary SPA (see paragraph 6.3 of the April 2015 HRA for background/ previous screening). Any port expansion at Sheerness would result in an increase in patterns or levels of shipping and recreational boating. It is not possible to undertake HRA in detail at this level since the details of the regeneration are still be determined. To ensure no likely significant effect result, the initial iteration of this report made the following recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> it is recommended that development proposals for the Port of Sheerness are accompanied by a project specific HRA to ensure that the integrity of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA and other European sites is retained. <p>This recommendation has now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.</p>
Policy New Regen X 2: Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, Regeneration Area	<p>This is a new policy, supporting proposals <i>'that will consolidate and expand its role as a business cluster of regional significance, specialising in technology and knowledge-based businesses'</i>. The site is located 4.8km from the Swale designated sites. This policy has potential to result in reductions in air quality and water quality. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA so do not require further consideration. As previously detailed within the April 2015 HRA, the Plan contains suitable policy to ensure that no likely significant effects result.</p> <p>This policy can be screened out.</p>
Policy NP 1: Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan	This policy is not subject to change. The housing numbers advocated for this area by Policy ST4 have reduced following the recommendations of the Examiner for the Neighbourhood Plan. A reduction in housing numbers does not introduce new likely significant effects.
Policy AS 1: Safeguarded area of search: Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road - The A2 link	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 1: Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and viability of town centres and other areas	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 2: Proposals for main town centre uses	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 3: The rural economy	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 4: New holiday parks or extensions to existing parks	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 5: The occupancy of holiday parks	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 6: Managing transport demand and impact	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy DM 7: Vehicle parking	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 8: Affordable housing	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 9: Rural exceptions housing	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 10: Gypsy and Traveller sites	Modifications to this policy are small. They provide for increased protection of designated sites via the provision of the following text: 'Cause <i>no significant harm to the AONB, national/local landscape or biodiversity designations...</i> ' There are no impact pathways present.
Policy DM 11: Extensions to, and replacement of, dwellings in the rural area	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 12: Dwellings for rural workers	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 13: Extending the garden of a dwelling in the rural area	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 14: General development criteria	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 15: New shopfronts, signs and advertisements	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 16: Alterations and extensions	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 17: Open space, sports and recreation provision	The provision of open space, sports and recreation provision is positive, as these sites can be used to divert recreational pressure away from internationally designated sites. In the original iteration of this HRA the following recommendation was made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifications to this policy provide the definition for 'destination sites' used for the provision of open space and recreational purposes. The definition of 'destination sites': '<i>Includes areas recognised for significant importance and biodiversity</i>' The inclusion of this text could provide for increased recreational use of internationally designated sites, with potential to result in likely significant effects upon a designated site. Whilst this modification does not explicitly state internationally designated sites (it states '<i>local nature reserves, woodlands and country parks</i>'), it does not provide sufficient clarity and protection. It is recommended that this policy is re-worded to clearly ensure that the location of new open space and recreational activities do not result in increased levels of recreational pressure in internationally designated sites. This recommendation has now been incorporated into the policy, and as such it is considered that this policy can be screened out, since it now provides a sufficient mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites
Policy DM 18: Local green spaces	Modifications to this policy provide for an additional local greens space: Holmside Recreation Field (0.8ha in size). This site does not provide any impact pathways and can be screened out.
Policy DM 19: Sustainable design and construction	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.

Policy	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
Policy DM 20: Renewable and low carbon energy	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 21: Water, flooding and drainage	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications. Changes are positive: ' <i>Protect water quality, including safeguarding ground water source protection zones from pollution, to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency</i> '. There are no impact pathways present.
Policy DM 22: The coast	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 23: Coastal change management	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 24: Conserving and enhancing valued landscapes	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 25: The separation of settlements - Important Local Countryside Gaps	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 26: Rural lanes	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 27: The keeping and grazing of horses	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 28: Biodiversity and geological conservation	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 29: Woodlands, trees and hedges	This policy has been re-written. It relates to woodlands, trees and hedgerows. There are no impact pathways present. This policy can be screened out.
Policy DM 30: Enabling development for landscape and biodiversity enhancement	Modifications are minor text changes that do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 31: Agricultural land	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 32: Development involving listed buildings	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 33: Development affecting a conservation area	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 34: Scheduled Monuments and archaeological sites	Modifications to this policy do not have HRA implications.
Policy DM 35: Historic parks and gardens	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy DM 36: Area of high townscape value	This policy is not subject to change so is not assessed.
Policy Imp 1: Implementation and Delivery Plan	Modifications to this policy do not have HRA implications.

2.3 Screening of Sites Identified in Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets

- 2.3.1 The below table is the screening assessment of modification 49 (Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets) as identified in Table 2. Text in **bold** is new text, text ~~crossed through~~ has been deleted. Only sites where there is a modification have been included in this table.
- 2.3.2 Where the 'HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications' column is coloured **green**, this indicates that the modifications to policy will not result in a new impact pathway beyond that previously addressed within the April 2015 HRA and the modifications to the policy can be screened out from impacting upon the integrity of internationally designated sites. If this column is coloured **orange**, this indicates that there is potential for the modifications to Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets to result in likely significant effects upon an internationally designated site alone. Recommendations are included to enable site allocations to be screened out.
- 2.3.3 In-combination impact have been assessed within the April 2015 HRA and the September 2015 Housing Scenario assessment. No modifications to polices will result in in-combination effects beyond those discussed below.

Table 3: Screening of Sites Identified in Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan Development Targets

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
<u>Sittingbourne allocations:</u>			
Land at NW Sittingbourne (comprising land north of Quinton Road, land at Pheasant Farm, Bramblefield Lane and land at Great Grovehurst Farm)	1,370 1,450	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Land at SW Sittingbourne	564	0	This is a new site allocation SW/703. Please refer to Table 2 for screening of associated modification 110, Policy New AX 1: Land at south-west Sittingbourne for screening assessment.
Milton Pipes (Cooks Lane)	190 240	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Crown Quay Lane	465 650	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Manor Farm	20 30	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the central regeneration area	296 567	38,194 To be determined within future phases	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Sittingbourne</u>	3,585 4,417 (excl. 50)	238,094 153,985	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
	beyond plan period)		There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Faversham allocations:</u>			
Land at the Western Link	240 250	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Oare gravel workings, Oare Road	300 330	1,500	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Lady Dane Farm, east of Love Lane (Phase I and II)	200 260	20,000	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Land at Graveney Road	90	0	This is a new site allocation SW/334. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 120, Policy: New AX 4: Land north of Graveney Road, Faversham for screening assessment
Perry Court Farm, Ashford Road	370	18,525	This is a new site allocation SW/413. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 158, and Policy: New MUX 1: Perry Court Farm, Faversham for screening assessment.
Land west of Brogdale Road	66	0	This is a new site allocation SW/441. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy: A 13: New allocations on sites within existing settlements 8. West of Brogdale Road for screening assessment
Preston Fields, Salters Lane	217	0	This is a new site allocation SW/233. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 122, and Policy: New AX 5: Land at Preston Fields, Faversham) for screening assessment.
<u>Total Faversham (including a reduction in the quantum to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Plan area from 103 to 94)</u>	905 1,739	34,800 53,325	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Minster & Halfway allocations:</u>			
Belgrave Road	140	0	This is a new site allocation SW/194. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 116, and Policy New AX 3: Land at Belgrave Road, Minster for screening assessment.
Land west of Barton Hill drive	620	0	This is a new site allocation SW/165. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 114, and Policy New AX 2: Land west of Barton Hill Drive, Minster for screening assessment
Jnc Scocles Road and Elm Lane	50	0	This is a new site allocation SW/705. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy A 13 New allocations on sites within existing settlements 3. Jnc. Scocles Road and Elm Lane for screening assessment
Land at Chequers Road	10	0	This is a new site allocation SW/457. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 132, and Policy A 13 New allocations on sites within existing settlements 4. Land at Chequers Road for screening assessment.
Plover Road (Thistle Hill)	430 97	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale.

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
			There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Scocles Road (Thistle Hill)	294 473	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Minster and Halfway</u>	619 1,494	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Queenborough & Rushenden allocations:</u>			
Within the regeneration area	4,135 1,180	137,011	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total Queenborough & Rushenden</u>	4,200 1,245	425,440 142,611	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Iwade allocations:</u>			
Village expansion (north, east and southern areas)	572	0	This is new site allocations SW/117, SW/183 and SW/123. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 124 and Policy New AX 6: Iwade for screening assessment. Due to the proximity of these sites to designated sites, these site allocations are discussed further in Modification 132. Ultimately, changes were made to the Iwade Expansion policy that enabled it to be screened out.
<u>Total Iwade</u>	34 603	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Newington allocations:</u>			
Land north of High Street	115	0	This is new site allocations SW/010 and SW/407. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 126 Policy New AX 7: Land rear of High Street, Newington for screening assessment
The Tracies	5	0	This is a new site allocation SW/010. Please refer to Table 2, Modification 126, Policy A 14 Smaller allocations as extensions to settlements.
<u>Total Newington</u>	14 134	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Teynham Allocations:</u>			
Land east of Station Road	420 107	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified

Policy ST 4: Meeting the Local Plan development targets			
Settlement/ site of allocation	Dwellings	Industrial/ office floor space (sq. m)	HRA Discussion of Proposed Main Modifications
<u>Total Teynham</u>	423 410	26,840	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>From within broad locations (windfalls):</u>			The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of Sittingbourne, Faversham, Sheerness, Queenborough, Halfway and Minster.	945 823	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Within the defined built-up area boundaries of villages and in the wider rural area in accordance with national planning policy	430 387	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Total broad locations</u>	1,345 1,210	0	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>Pending losses arising from draft allocations</u>			
To be deducted from provision being made	0	96,950 44,380	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
<u>TOTAL PROVISION BEING MADE</u>	11,314 14,130 (excl. 91-50 dwellings phased beyond the plan period.)	533,400 499,299	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Surplus against planned requirement	827	369,299	The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
Planned Area totals (committed and allocated dwellings)	Thames Gateway 12,009 (85%)		The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified
	Faversham and rest of Swale 2,121 (15%)		The increased quantum of housing provided within Swale has already been assessed in the HRA of Housing Scenarios for Swale. There are no new HRA implications beyond those already identified

3 Conclusion

3.1 Discussion

- 3.1.1 Table 2 and Table 3 undertook the screening assessment of the modifications to policy identified in Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016. Modifications provide for an increase in housing provision within Swale from 10,800 new dwellings previously identified in the publication version - Local Plan, up to 13,192 new dwellings within the Proposed Main Modifications document. As previously stated, proposed modifications identify a target for housing provision of 13,192 dwellings to the end of the plan period, up from 10,800, an increase of 2,392 new dwellings from the April 2015 HRA. In practice, the actual provision during the plan period is 14,130 dwellings (831 dwellings per annum) due to a surplus contingency of dwellings being allocated over and above the housing target. The September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis assessed a hypothetical increase in housing provision in Swale of up to 861 new dwellings per annum. That analysis concluded that no likely significant effects would result, provided that residential development within 6km of the internationally designated sites (and particularly large developments beyond 6km) pay appropriate financial contributions towards delivery of the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) for the Swale SPA and Ramsar site, and Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA and Ramsar site. As previously highlighted, the conclusions of the Housing Scenario analysis were theoretical and would require verification through monitoring of the effectiveness of the SAMMS delivery. The provision of new dwellings in The Swale Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications June 2016 document is less than the worst case scenario assessed in the September 2015 Housing Scenario analysis, and this overall increase in housing provision of new dwellings identified within the Proposed Main Modifications document can be screened out providing the SAMMS strategy is contributed to appropriately.
- 3.1.2 Modifications also provide for 130,000sq.m of B Class Employment floor space rather than a jobs target of 7,053. Impact pathways relating to employment space were screened out within the April 2015 HRA and as such modifications that resulted in changes to quantum of employment floor space do not require further consideration within this document.
- 3.1.3 In the initial iteration of this HRA report, the screening undertaken in Table 2 identified three policies that potentially contained impact pathways that could result in likely significant effects upon internationally designated sites. Recommendations were made to enable policies to be screened out. Related to the Iwade Expansion policy New AX 5, a single modification (site allocation SW/117, SW183, SW123) was also identified in Table 3. Modifications that required further discussion and recommendations to enable modifications to be screened out are summarised as follows:

Policy New AX 5: Iwade Expansion

- 3.1.4 This is a new policy for a new site allocation that is located immediately adjacent to the Swale SPA/Ramsar site. The site provides for 572 new dwellings. Potential impact pathways include:
- recreational pressure (alone and in-combination),
 - disturbance from construction and operational activities,
 - loss of supporting habitat,
 - impact pathways relating to surface runoff, and
 - dust deposition
- 3.1.5 The following text acknowledges the sensitivity of this site and provides the following protection for internationally designated sites:
- 3.1.6 'The Masterplan and planning applications will: ...Be informed by an appropriate Habitats Regulations Assessment to include on site mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) for protected habitats species and off-site contributions for residual impacts further afield, in accordance with Policy CP7 and DM28' Modification 163.' This policy also provides for 'existing/new footpath and cycle routes' which have potential to lead to an increase in

recreational pressure on the designated site dependant on where these routes are located. These would therefore require careful designing at the planning application stage.

- 3.1.7 Due to the location of the site within arable land in close proximity to the Swale SPA/Ramsar site, this new policy has potential to act as functionally supportive habitat to SPA bird features. To inform the HRA assessment of this project it is recommended that wintering bird surveys are conducted to determine if significant populations of designated birds use the site as functionally supporting habitat, to enable appropriate avoidance measures to be identified and implemented.
- 3.1.8 Given the proximity to the European sites it is also recommended that that wording similar to the following is included in Policy AX5 (or possibly in the preamble, since it is an advisory note for the benefit of the applicant): 'In addition to recreational pressure considerations, the HRA will need to include assessment of impact pathways from disturbance including noise, lighting or visual intrusion on the integrity of the European designated SPA/Ramsar site both during construction and throughout the operation of the site. Planning permissions should ensure that necessary mitigation is provided as necessary to address these issues'.

Policy New Regen X 1: The Port of Sheerness Regeneration Area

- 3.1.9 This is a new policy providing for the regeneration of the Sheerness port area including the maintenance and enhancement of the port. This has potential to impact upon the Outer Thames Estuary SPA. (see paragraph 6.3 of the April 2015 HRA for background/ previous screening). Any port expansion at Sheerness would result in an increase in patterns or levels of shipping and recreational boating. To ensure no likely significant effect result, it is recommended that development proposals for the Port of Sheerness are accompanied by a project specific HRA to ensure the integrity of the Outer Thames Estuary SPA is retained.

Policy DM 17: Open space, sports and recreation provision

- 3.1.10 The provision of open space, sports and recreation provision is positive. These facilities can be used to divert recreational pressure away from internationally designated sites, reducing/ preventing pressures from recreational activities occurring.
- 3.1.11 Modifications to this policy provide the definition for 'destination sites' used for the provision of open space and recreational purposes. The definition of 'destination sites' is as follows: '*Includes areas recognised for significant importance and biodiversity*'. The inclusion of this text could provide for increased recreational use of internationally designated sites, with potential to result in likely significant effects upon designated sites. Whilst this modification does not explicitly state internationally designated sites (it states '*local nature reserves, woodlands and country parks*'), it does not provide sufficient clarity to prevent internationally import biodiversity sites being used for these types of recreation.
- 3.1.12 It is recommended that this policy is re-worded to clearly ensure that the location of new open space and recreational activities do not result in increased levels of recreational pressure in internationally designated sites.

3.2 Other plans and projects

- 3.2.1 A detailed consideration of other plans and projects was made for the spring 2015 HRA of the submitted Local Plan and no significant additional plans and projects have emerged since that time that would lead to new potential pathways for an in combination effect. The main potential for an in combination effect is that of cumulative recreational pressure in combination with the Local Plans or Core Strategies of other local authorities planning to deliver net additional recreational development within 6km of the Thames Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site, Medway Estuary & Marshes SPA/Ramsar site and Swale SPA/Ramsar site. This issue has been thoroughly explored in earlier HRAs for the Swale Local Plan and independently as part of the strategic access management and monitoring strategy. The contribution of housing set out in the Swale Local Plan to mitigation of this in combination effect is already set out in Local Plan policy. As such, no new in combination effect arises from these Proposed Main Modifications.

3.3 Conclusion

- 3.3.1 All of these recommendations have now been incorporated into the relevant policies, and as such it is considered that the Proposed Main Modifications can be screened out (i.e. that they will not result in a Likely Significant Effect either alone or in combination), since they now provide a sufficient

mechanism to require and facilitate the delivery of measures and safeguards to protect the European sites.

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