ASHFORD LOCAL PLAN 2030

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Regulation 19
Version June 2016

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Planning our future **together**

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This Local Plan establishes a policy and delivery framework that provides clear and firm guidance to ensure that the Council's aims for the Borough are achieved where they relate to issues of planning and land use. It covers the period between 2011 to 2030. The policies included within this Plan are consistent with the Council's Corporate Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and in being so go to the heart of what sustainable development is and how good place making can be achieved. They also form the strategic context within which any neighbourhood plan should operate.

2.2 This Local Plan covers the whole borough, except for the area covered by the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan, as shown on the Policies Map (http://www.ashford.gov.uk/policies-proposals-map). Development proposals coming forward within the area covered by this Local Plan will be expected to adhere to the policies set out, as once adopted they will carry significant planning weight when it comes to the determination of planning applications. The Local Plan 2030 should be read and interpreted as a whole.

2.3 To be clear, this Local Plan supersedes the following:

- the saved policies within the Ashford Borough Local Plan 2000
- Ashford Core Strategy 2008
- Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan 2010
- The Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document 2010
- The Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan Document 2012

2.4 Once adopted, the Council's statutory development plan will consist of this Local Plan, the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (2013) and any adopted neighbourhood plans.

Duty to co-operate

2.5 In preparing this Local Plan, the Council has sought to fully co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other relevant bodies to ensure that strategic cross-boundary issues have been addressed and that the Plan is deliverable. The approach to the 'duty' is set out in more detail in the 'Duty to Co-operate' Statement which forms part of the evidence base for this Local Plan. This process has been assisted through a memorandum of understanding between ourselves and all of the East Kent districts (Thanet, Dover, Shepway and Canterbury) which has meant that any cross-boundary strategic issues have been dealt with in an open and transparent way. This has assisted not only the formulation of this Local Plan but also the evolution of each of the district's respective Local Plans. Given the Borough's central location within Kent, the Council's West Kent neighbours have also been thoroughly consulted at key stages of plan preparation to ensure the 'duty' has been adhered to fully.

Consultation

2.6 Significant engagement and consultation has been carried out in the development of this Plan and its supporting evidence. This has included engagement with key stakeholders and public sector partners, responsible for delivering a range of services and infrastructure. The Plan has also been subject to extensive public consultation, from the 'Plan it' exercises in 2013 to

formal consultation throughout its evolution, including with Ward Members and Parish Councils on potential site allocations. Where appropriate, comments from the public have directly helped and shaped the contents of this plan and it should be viewed as a document that has had significant public input into its evolution.

Policies Map

2.7 This Local Plan is supported by an interactive Policies Map which applies the relevant policies to the applicable spatial area within the borough. This includes showing the extent of the Borough's two AONBs, its many ecological conservation and open space areas and proposed development site allocations. This interactive map will be updated after the adoption of the Local Plan to ensure that it remains up to date (for example if new areas of open space are designated after adoption).

Neighbourhood Plans

2.8 This Local Plan will set out the strategic context within which any neighbourhood plan will operate. They must comply with national policy, with EU obligations and human rights requirements and with the strategic policies of the local development plan. Currently the Borough has seven designated neighbourhood areas at Wye, Rolvenden, Bethersden, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, Pluckley, Hothfield and Charing. The Neighbourhood Plans for these are at various stages in their evolution, with Wye being the furthest forward having passed examination and with a referendum to take place later this year. Where Neighbourhood Plan Areas had been established early on in the preparation of this Local Plan, proposals to allocate sites within these areas fall to the neighbourhood plan, where they are non-strategic in nature. Hothfield and Charing are more recent designations and it has therefore been necessary for the Local Plan to consider and make site allocations within those parishes, where appropriate. That should not exclude those parishes from considering alternative proposals for addressing the equivalent (or greater) amount of development through their Neighbourhood Plans.

2.9 The Borough Council intends to work closely with those parishes producing Neighbourhood Plans to ensure that such Plans are consistent with both government planning policy and emerging policies contained within this Local Plan in order that they may pass the 'basic conditions' test that Neighbourhood Plans are subject to at their examination stage.

Key evidence

2.10 The Local Plan 2030 has been influenced by a range of evidence which are background documents to the Plan itself. A full list of the evidence base is included at Appendix 2. The key evidence that supports this Plan is summarised below:

The Corporate Plan (2015)

2.11 This document sets out the Council's vision for the Borough up to 2020 and how the Council intends to realise that vision. It established the following 4 priorities:

Priority 1: Enterprising Ashford: economic investment and growth: To promote growth and achieve greater economic prosperity for Ashford borough. We will work to secure inward investment to create a wide range of jobs carried out by a highly skilled workforce.

Priority 2: Living Ashford: quality housing and homes for all: To secure quality homes across the borough, catering for a range of ages, tenures and need, in well planned and attractive new places.

Priority 3: Active and creative Ashford: healthy choices through physical, cultural and leisure engagement: To provide or enable a range of quality leisure and cultural activities where people can make healthy and affordable lifestyle choices and enjoy assets that create attractive, desirable and active communities.

Priority 4: Attractive Ashford: countryside and townscape, tourism and heritage: To achieve an environment that creates higher standards of public space design, alongside improved standards of presentation of key green spaces. To safeguard and conserve our local heritage and areas of outstanding landscape quality to ensure the very best attractive environment with thriving and vibrant town centres

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environment Assessment

An appraisal of the economic, environmental and social impacts of the Local Plan, prepared from the outset of the preparation of the process. The approach and policies listed in this Local Plan have been appraised to ensure that the accord with the principles and objectives identified within the sustainability appraisal. This has included assessment of options in terms of the levels of development proposed, the strategic distribution of development and specific site allocations. The Environmental Report demonstrates that the approach set out in this Plan is the most sustainable options, when considered against the reasonable alternatives.

Habitats Regulations Assessment 2016 (HRA)

This Plan has been subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment which has examined all the policies of this Plan in order to ascertain whether they are likely to have a significant, adverse, effect on the integrity of European Sites, protected under international law for their wildlife and/or landscape importance, both within, and in vicinity of, the Borough.

Strategic Employment Options Report 2012 (SEOR)

2.12 This SEOR considers and sets out a number of potential scenarios for economic growth in Ashford Borough to 2030. It forms the evidence base that informs the setting of the jobs target within this Plan.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 & 2015 (SHMA)

2.13 The purpose of the SHMA is to develop a robust understanding of housing market dynamics, to provide an assessment of future needs for both market and affordable housing and the housing requirements of different groups within the population. The SHMA covers Ashford's Housing Market Area and deals with the specific needs of the Ashford HMA. It provides a 'policy-off' assessment of future housing requirements, considering housing need and demand and also provides specific evidence and analysis of need and demand of different sizes of homes.

Strategic Housing and Employment Availability Assessment 2016 (SHELAA)

2.14 The SHELAA 2016 identifies and assesses the potential availability of land for new development in Ashford. It assesses the individual and combined potential capacity of sites that are considered to be deliverable or developable for housing and economic development over the plan period. This results in the identification of a future supply of land in the borough that may be suitable and available for development.

Employment Land Review 2016 (ELR)

2.15 The ELR assesses the Borough's employment sites with regard to their suitability and market attractiveness and their development potential and capacity. It analyses the current provision of employment land and sites in the Borough and potential sites which have been considered for allocation.

Whole Plan Viability

2.16 In line with the requirements of the NPPF, this Local Plan is supported by whole plan viability evidence which has tested the policies which have a direct and additional 'cost' to the development industry to ensure that the policy framework set out - at the macro level - can be delivered in a viable way and can achieve a reasonable return. In doing so, the strategic policies and approach as set out in this Local Plan can be considered viable within a whole plan viability context and therefore promotes a 'sound' planning approach.

2.17 This evidence has explored a range of factors and layers of evidence including, the level of S106 contributions the Council has historically collected, and which are likely to be collected in the future, the additional and assumed costs to the industry arising from new policy areas, the scale and type of infrastructure needed to support and mitigate new development and the land values and returns to the industry in various spatial areas within the Borough.

2.18 The outputs of this work has clearly shaped the policies in this Plan, in particular the affordable housing policy.

Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2016)

2.19 This iterative document sets out the infrastructure that is required to be delivered to support the planned development up to 2030. It has been informed by discussion with key providers and identifies (where known) how and when this infrastructure might be delivered and to what extent new development is directly reliant on its delivery as a means of prioritising the required infrastructure.

Working in partnership

2.20 The Council accepts that partnership working and co-operation is essential to deliver the vision and the future aspirations set out above. The following lists out the key arrangements that are in place to promote joint working:

South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

2.21 The SELEP is the key body determining strategic economic prioritises and investments for the area which includes East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. The Borough has already benefited from significant funding for projects through the SELEP Growth Plan and Local Growth Fund, including major contributions towards Junction 10a, Chart Road and Ashford College.

Ashford Strategic Delivery Board

2.22 Set up to support the delivery of (initially) eight priority projects which are seen as crucial to the future economic growth and prosperity of the Borough. The board comprises of Ashford Borough Council and other key public sector partners including Kent County Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, Skills Funding Agency, Arts Council England, the Highways Agency and Ashford College. The local Member of Parliament is also a Board member and the Board has a good track record in helping to get projects delivered and funded.

Kent County Council

2.23 The Borough and County Council have already achieved a lot by working together on projects over recent years. This approach is reflected in the 'Delivery Deal' signed by both Council - a formally agreed statement of the Council's shared commitment to work together in key areas. This is the first such agreement in Kent. A District Deal board oversees delivery of the agreed projects. .

2.24 The Delivery Deal provides the framework to focus on the delivery of the 'big 8' projects as well the coordinated delivery of range of services including economic development, housing, strategic planning, the environment, property and asset management, highways, transport and wastes and culture, town centre management and health and wellbeing.

Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board

2.25 A sub-committee of the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board. The aim of the board is to improve the health and wellbeing of Ashford's residents through joined up commissioning across the National Health Service, social care, borough council, public health and other bodies relevant to the health and wellbeing sector

Formal review of the Local Plan

2.26 This Local Plan is intended to be formally reviewed by 2023 to ensure that the wider policy position is suitably up to date and the development envisaged - and supporting infrastructure - has been delivered. This period of time provides the right balance between providing enough time to allow the policy framework to be implemented by the market and to give them certainty, with the inevitable need to respond to change as time goes by. However, should circumstances dictate, such as significant undersupply of housing delivery or the non-delivery of key infrastructure (namely Junction 10a) then an earlier formal review will be undertaken.

2.27 This will ensure that the Council can provide a suitable policy base to deal with the circumstances as needed in a plan led way - a key requirement of the NPPF.

3 STRATEGIC POLICIES

Vision and Strategic Objectives

3.1 National planning policy is very clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Finding what is sustainable development relies on a careful balance between economic, social and environmental factors and the National Planning Policy Framework gives guidance how to achieve this. It also makes it clear that Local Plans are the key to delivering sustainable development in a way that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities.

3.2 This approach lies at the heart of this local plan. The Plan seeks to achieve each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a way which avoids significant adverse impacts by reduce impacts by mitigation or compensatory measures.

3.3 The plan sets out the spatial implications of economic, social and environmental change and identifies opportunities for development. It has been based on early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with local communities and a range of other stakeholders. The plan aims to reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the Borough, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans.

3.4 The plan is positive, realistic and is focused on delivery.

The Vision

3.5 The following sets out the vision for Ashford Borough in 2030.

Ashford Borough will meet its housing and employment needs, and take account of the needs of investors, through the provision of new high quality development forming attractive places, with the necessary supporting infrastructure and services, and in sustainable and accessible locations that take account of the Borough's environmental constraints.

The town of Ashford will continue to be the main focus for development with the regeneration of the town centre and areas where there are existing environmental and social issues and the creation of attractive and vibrant new communities on the periphery of the town.

A regenerated Ashford Town Centre will expand significantly its leisure, cultural, educational and residential offer. A new Commercial office Quarter next to the railway station will be a major economic impetus for the area, helping to substantially increase employment, trigger more spending in the town centre economy, and improve wage rates and skills levels. The town centre's heritage will be conserved and enhanced alongside quality new public realm reflecting the various different character areas.

Tenterden will continue to serve the south western part of the Borough as a principal rural service centre with a strong offer of shops and services, conserving and enhancing its historic centre and accommodating development of a suitable scale, design and character.

The other rural service centres of Charing, Hamstreet and Wye will remain important providers of local shops and services, with care taken to conserve and enhance their historic centres and the delivery of limited development.

The identity and attractive character of the Borough's rural area, with its range of attractive settlements, wealth of heritage assets and its expansive countryside, including the Kent Downs AONB to the north and the High Weald AONB to the south, will be protected and enhanced.

The Boroughs green spaces will be protected and enhanced to serve expanding populations including two new strategic parks at Ashford and the promotion of sporting and recreational hubs in accessible locations; the retention of flood storage areas; reinforcement of wildlife corridors and an improved cycle network to foster healthier lifestyles for residents and workers.

A positive approach to the adaptation of climate change will be secured by avoiding development in areas at greatest risk of flooding; protecting and enhancing green networks; carefully considered new layouts and designs of housing areas; and promoting sustainable drainage and challenging water efficiency standards.

3.14 In order to deliver the vision, a number of strategic objectives have been developed, as set out in Policy SP1 below.

Policy SP1 - Strategic Objectives

To deliver the Vision, a number of strategic objectives have been identified. They form the basis of this Local Plan's policy framework, as well as providing the core principles that planning applications are expected to adhere to.

a. **To focus development at accessible and sustainable locations which utilise existing infrastructure, facilities and services wherever possible and makes best use of suitable brownfield opportunities**
b. **To protect and enhance the Borough's historic and natural environment including its built heritage and biodiversity;**
c. **To create the highest quality design which is sustainable, accessible, safe and promotes a positive sense of place through the design of the built form, the relationship of buildings with each other and the spaces around them, and which responds to the prevailing character of the area;**
d. **To ensure development is supported by the necessary social, community, physical and e-technology infrastructure, facilities and services with any necessary improvements brought forward in a co-ordinated and timely manner;**
e. **To promote access to a wide choice of easy to use forms of sustainable transport modes, including bus, train, cycling and walking to encourage as much non-car based travel as possible and to promote healthier lifestyles;**
f. **To meet the changing housing needs of the Borough's population, including affordable and starter homes, self build and custom build properties, specialist housing for older residents, accommodation to meet the needs of the Traveller community and spacious, quality family housing**
g. **To provide a range of employment opportunities to respond to the needs of business, support the growing population and attract inward investment**

Strategic Development Requirements

The strategic approach to housing and employment delivery

3.15 This section of the Local Plan outlines the strategic approach to housing and employment delivery up to 2030 setting out the overall housing and employment requirements, the approach to the strategic distribution of development around the borough and how this development should be delivered and phased.

3.16 The starting point for the approach is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the guidance contained within the national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). At its core, the NPPF sets out that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

3.17 Although the NPPF and PPG do not explicitly define what this means, there are a number of references, which taken together are relevant to how this ambition is achieved. These include social, economic and environmental factors; access to infrastructure and services (or the

ability to suitably provide such provision); ensuring that development can be delivered and is viable and ensuring that development is phased in an appropriate way.

3.18 The role of this Local Plan is to provide a policy framework that considers all of these factors – effectively setting out what sustainable development is within the context of the borough. These considerations have been applied as a series of layers and been informed by the evidence base that supports the Plan.

The overall housing requirement

3.19 *Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA):* The NPPF sets out that a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is the primary vehicle by which local planning authorities should assess their housing needs. This involves identifying the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that the local population is likely to need over the plan period to meet household and population projections, taking into account migration and demographic changes and addressing the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing. The Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) derived from the SHMA provides the starting point for the derivation of the Plan's housing target but the final target is based on a number of other considerations, outlined below.

3.20 In 2014, the Council commissioned specialist consultants to prepare an NPPF-compliant SHMA. This work was updated in 2015 to take account of new and more up to date demographic projection data. The SHMA identifies:

- that Ashford has a relatively contained housing market area that largely reflects the borough boundary;
- a total OAN of 13,813 dwellings between 2011-2030. This figure includes a small uplift to accommodate 'market signals' as recommended through the PPG;
- of this total, 6,253 dwellings should be 'affordable[1] ' which equates to around 45% of the overall figure.

3.21 *Constraints and context:* The PPG sets out that an understanding of the strategic constraints and context of an area is relevant to the setting of an individual LPAs housing target in a Local Plan.

3.22 Ashford's previous role as a regional Growth Area in the now revoked South East Plan was predicated on extensive improvement of the town's infrastructure, most notably in strategic highway capacity. Whilst some key infrastructure has been delivered in recent times (e.g. the upgrade to M20 junctions 9 and Drovers roundabout), there remains critical constraints to strategic growth at both M20 Junction 10 and along the A28 corridor to the west of the town. There are clear proposals to bring forward schemes to alleviate these constraints (see Infrastructure chapter) but, in the short to medium term, there are limitations to the scale of development that can be safely accommodated on the strategic highway network which will influence the council's strategy for development in this Plan.

3.23 In environmental terms, the borough enjoys a wide range of environmental 'assets' that contribute greatly to its overall character and attractiveness. Two Areas of Outstanding

[1] This need was calculated prior to the introduction of starter homes and therefore relates to traditional forms of affordable housing

Natural Beauty are complemented by large areas of unspoilt countryside which, although without a formal landscape designation, are rightly valued in their own right. Watercourses across the borough provide examples of rich areas for biodiversity whilst also providing natural areas for flooding along their lengths.

3.24 Natural environmental assets are complemented by the quality of the built environment with a number of attractive settlements, hamlets and farmsteads contributing to the overall character of the area. In addition, 43 Conservation Areas, over 3,000 Listed Buildings and numerous other heritage assets help to create the borough's rich character.

3.25 Whilst infrastructure provision clearly remains a significant issue, this Local Plan – supported by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and CIL charging schedule that has been produced in tandem – provides a policy framework that takes these constraints into account. In itself, these constraints do not mean that the OAN housing figure cannot be met over the Plan period but that there is a need to properly phase development and ensure the balance of development across the borough is controlled over the Plan period to take account of these constraints and the time necessary to resolve them. This is covered in more detail below.

3.26 *Economic considerations:* Another key consideration in the formation of the housing target in this Plan is the relationship between housing and job creation. In 2012, the Council commissioned economic forecasting work to establish the likely growth in job numbers over the Plan period and the sectors most likely to experience expansion of employment opportunities in the local area. This is described in more detail below but the forecasting reflected both macro-economic factors and more localised issues. It identified four potential economic scenarios for the borough, ranging from a 'downside risks' scenario at the lower end to an 'enhanced performance' scenario at the top end.

3.27 The initial assessment that a 'downside risks' scenario was most likely (reflecting a reduced rate of job growth in the borough over the Plan period) has since been reassessed by the Council based on the general move out of recession and towards modest but sustained economic growth. As a consequence, a job creation rate based on a 'baseline' trajectory (i.e. a continuation of job creation in the borough at rates that are largely pre-recession) was considered to be the most robust and realistic and that the housing target should be adjusted to reflect this conclusion. Consequently, a marginal uplift from the OAN based level of housing need is justified.

3.28 *Duty to Co-operate:* As mentioned elsewhere, the Council has fully engaged neighbouring Districts in the preparation of this Plan, recognising the proposed housing development strategies in the emerging Local Plans in those districts. In particular, the proposed Plans in Canterbury and Maidstone Districts, where there are very minor geographical housing market overlaps with Ashford borough, are intending to meet, at least, their respective OAN housing requirements. At the time of publishing this Local Plan, no other District has an outstanding request to this Council to assist meeting any unmet housing need in their area.

3.29 Therefore, there is no need for the housing target in this Plan to be adjusted to reflect an unmet housing need from either within the Housing Market Area or beyond.

3.30 *Future-proofing*:- Advice received from the Council's consultants suggests that demographic modelling of potential future in-migration flows to Ashford from London would equate to an average increase on the OAN figure in the SHMA by 55 dwellings per annum. This figure is

not part of the OAN as some elements of in-migration from London are already accounted for within the 'baseline' 727 p.a. figure above. However, the current prediction by the Greater London Authority is that out-migration from London will return to pre-recessionary levels soon and therefore districts with accessible links to London such as Ashford should plan for this rebalancing back to what were 'normal circumstances'. This is considered to be a sound and prudent aspiration for this Plan given Ashford's HS1 links to the London. As this relates to a future return to this level of migration, the suggested uplift should relate to the plan period following the adoption of this Plan, i.e. from 2017 onwards.

3.31 *Viability and deliverability:* Although viability and deliverability is linked to aspects of social, environmental, economic and other relevant considerations (such as infrastructure provision), the NPPF makes it very clear that these are significant considerations in their own right. This includes a reasonable assessment of market conditions – both at a macro-scale and of the local housing market, including land and sales values in different parts of the boroughs and for varying forms of residential development, plus analysis of how different types of sites may be able to come forward for development.

3.32 The policies and strategic site allocations within this Local Plan have been assessed within the context of whole plan viability to ensure that they do not place an undue burden on developers and therefore can realistically be delivered. Flexibility is also applied within the policy framework through a generic policy approach which gives schemes the optimum opportunity to still come forward where viability is an accepted issue.

3.33 In reaching an appropriate housing target for the Plan, the viability evidence supporting the Plan is clear that seeking to meet the 45% of the OAN figure that the SHMA indicates is 'affordable housing need' would not be viable as a policy requirement and would render residential development in the borough undeliverable. In order to fully meet the affordable housing requirements identified the SHMA through site allocations would necessitate an increase in the housing target of over 6,000 dwellings. In turn, this would require housing delivery hugely in excess of any annual level of housing completions the market has ever achieved in the borough. This is not considered to be a realistic or deliverable scenario notwithstanding the significant environmental implications of this scale of growth over such a relatively short period of time. The policy for affordable housing, including starter homes, is set out in policy HOU1.

3.34 *Sustainability appraisal*: Within the context of the issues discussed above, the Sustainability Appraisal of the Plan has tested a number of different levels of housing growth to assist in the determination of a housing target. This evidence showed that the optimum range for a housing requirement figure that could be considered sustainable within the context of social, environmental and economic factors suggested a target based on meeting the borough's overall OAN figure plus a small percentage uplift to allow for some flexibility in delivery rates across both allocated and committed sites identified within the Local Plan.

Conclusion

3.35 Based on the consideration of all of the above factors, an overall housing requirement of 14,680 dwellings is proposed to be delivered in the Borough between 2011 and 2030.

3.36 Table 1 sets out how this requirement is proposed to be met.

Table 1 - Meeting the Housing Requirement

Total Requirement (2011-2030)	**14,680**
Delivered since 2011	2,481
Residual Requirement (2016-2030)	**12,200**
Extant commitments (previously allocated sites)	2572[2]
Extant windfall commitments	445[3]
Town Centre policy area contribution	1,080
Chilmington Green	2,500
Future windfalls without planning permission	1000
Proposed allocations	5010
TOTAL	**12,600**

3.39 Housing completions in the borough from April 2011 to March 2016 have totalled 2,481 dwellings leaving a net target of 12,200 additional dwellings to be completed within the Borough by April 2030.

3.40 There are 2572 dwellings expected to be delivered through extant permissions on previously allocated sites. In addition to this 445 dwellings are expected to be delivered from extant permissions on windfall sites (this takes into account a 25% reduction in total extant windfall permissions to account for potential non-delivery).

3.41 A contribution of 1,080 units are expected to be delivered through proposals coming forward on key brownfield sites within the town centre policy area.

3.42 As set out in the housing trajectory at Appendix 5 of this Plan, Chilmington Green is assumed to deliver 2,500 units across the plan period.

3.43 In addition, paragraph 48 of the NPPF allows unidentified windfall sites to be taken into account based on the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA), historic windfall delivery rates and future expected trends. With regards to the SHELAA, over 700 sites were assessed following a 'call for sites' exercise in 2014, with over 200 sites progressing to the final stage of assessment.

3.44 Completions data over the last 10 years show a strong and consistent rate of windfall housing delivery with an average of 144 dwellings completed each year. It is considered to be highly likely that this consistent rate of delivery will continue and, indeed may well be exceeded. There are a number of reasons for this - the various extensions to permitted development rights via the prior approval process to allow conversions on various property types to residential use; the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development; and the Local Plan's proposed windfall development policy which is more permissive than the equivalent policy in previous Local Plans.

[2] Source HIA 2014/15
[3] Total extant windfalls reduced by 25% to take account for non-delivery

3.45 Based on these factors it is assumed that an additional 1000 units will be delivered between 2020 and 2030, at a annual rate of 100 dwellings per year, well below the historic trends for windfall completions even though this historic trend is likely to be exceeded.

3.46 This leaves a residual housing requirement figure of 4,602 dwellings to meet the overall housing target. Consequently, this Local Plan allocates sites for in the region of 5010 dwellings; 4,445 in Ashford urban area, and 566 in the villages.

3.47 Adopting this approach effectively provides for a buffer. This is considered to represent a sound planning approach as it gives the housing market some choice over the delivery of sites but also some contingency should some sites not come forward as planned.

Distribution of Housing Development

3.48 Historically, larger scale residential development in the Borough has been targeted towards the town of Ashford. All recent iterations of previous Local Plans, County Structure Plans and the South East Regional Plan gave clear and distinctive spatial guidance that focused growth towards Ashford and its immediate surroundings whilst applying a policy of limited growth to Tenterden and the main villages in the borough. In some instances, such as the Core Strategy 2008, there have been separate and distinctive housing growth targets for Ashford and the 'rest of borough' respectively. This recognised both Ashford town's role as an economic hub in the wider south east region and the borough, as well as the need to protect the more sensitive nature of the rural area.

3.49 The abolition of regional planning and the introduction of the NPPF and PPG changes the higher level context somewhat. There is no longer a higher level plan that pre-determines the amount of development each part of the Borough should deliver. However, it is clear that, in principle, the strategic spatial objectives of the previous approach are sound in planning terms and represent a policy approach that clearly resonates with the context of the NPPF and its desire to deliver sustainable development.

3.50 *The sustainability appraisal:* Various growth model scenarios have been tested through the sustainability appraisal. This evidence shows that:

- an appropriate balance of housing distribution is needed. Focusing most development towards Ashford with proportionate development elsewhere provides the maximum benefits in terms of the social, environmental and economic factors;
- moving away from the broad distribution strategy identified below can quickly lead to unsustainable development, imbalanced communities and harm to the environment;
- the countryside is not a sustainable location for large scale development, unless certain criteria or circumstances apply which make it so within the context of the NPPF;

3.51 With the above in mind – and taking into account a number of the considerations listed under the ‘housing requirement’ section above - the following distribution of housing development is proposed.

3.52 Development at Ashford: As the Borough's principal settlement, Ashford represents the most sustainable location within the borough and therefore where most development should be located. Ashford is home to about half of the borough’s population and where a large

proportion of local jobs are located and plans for future economic growth concentrated. There are a wide and full range of local services available and the town caters for its own residents' needs and those living in a wider rural hinterland. The town has expanded very significantly in recent years and plays an important role in the sub-regional economy of East Kent.

3.53 Ashford has always been a well-connected town in Kent with rail connections in 5 directions but since 2009, its prime location on the HS1 rail link to London St Pancras has resulted in a step-change in reducing journey times to the capital via the major new growth locations at Ebbsfleet and Stratford. The town straddles the M20 motorway with two junctions providing quick access to the M25 and London or to the coastal towns and the Continent via Dover and the Channel Tunnel. The Eurostar rail service provides direct international rail connections from Ashford International station to Paris, Brussels and other Continental destinations.

3.54 Aside from a limited number of development opportunities in the Town Centre (policy SP5 of this Plan), the existing urban area of Ashford provides relatively few opportunities for development on a significant scale. The major available brownfield sites in the town have been identified for redevelopment in the existing development plans, have planning permission or are under construction. Existing green open spaces within the urban area play important recreational and environmental roles in those neighbourhoods and so would not be suitable for allocation unless there were exceptional and specific local circumstances. Therefore, the existing urban area cannot play a major role (town centre apart) in accommodating new development outside those existing sites and allocations which may be brought forward.

3.55 The principal opportunities for new growth lie on the edge of the existing built up area of Ashford through carefully managed and planned growth. Here, although a number of well established environmental constraints exist in the form of the Kent Downs AONB and the floodplains of the Great and East Stour rivers, there are locations adjoining the town that could accommodate new development without seriously undermining the wider environmental objectives of this Plan.

3.56 As such, a realistic scale of development on the periphery of Ashford has been identified through the allocation of a number of sites which have the ability to be well integrated with the existing town and / or committed schemes. This approach has been influenced by a number of important factors, including the implementation of the Chilmington development across the Plan period, the availability of additional motorway junction capacity that is due to be created by the construction of the proposed M20 Junction 10a and the need to ensure a consistent supply of available housing sites to cater for different elements of the market.

3.57 It is considered that a strategy that relies too heavily on a small number of very large sites, such as Chilmington Green, to achieve the borough's development targets would not be sufficiently flexible and instead a more balanced approach that seeks to distribute new development across more locations is preferred. This distribution also takes account of the presence of existing strategic infrastructure and services and the ability to deliver new facilities as part of new sites that can come forward in the short to medium term. Similarly, a strategy that focuses on a larger number of small sites around Ashford would fail to deliver the critical mass and a comprehensive approach to masterplanning and the delivery of services that larger sites can achieve.

3.58 Development at Tenterden: Although only about one-tenth the size of Ashford, Tenterden is the second largest settlement in the borough and its only other town. It plays a main rural service centre role for much of the south-western part of the borough. It is an attractive, historic town which is relatively well served by shops and services and is an important tourist destination which contributes greatly to the rural economy of the borough.

3.59 Development in Tenterden is constrained by the High Weald AONB which surrounds it on three sides and a high quality, well-preserved Conservation Area in its heart that gives Tenterden its distinctive character. Traditionally, Tenterden has been the focus of relatively small-scale 'organic' growth which has been usually more on a village-type scale than the scale of allocations at Ashford. However, the previous Core Strategy identified increased levels of development for Tenterden and the Tenterden & Rural Sites DPD allocated a significant development area to the south of the town centre (TENT1) for which the first phase now has planning permission.

3.60 The high quality of Tenterden's landscape setting and its intrinsic historic character are factors that suggest that new development in the town should be limited, phased and very carefully planned. Piecemeal allocations would not be an appropriate response and therefore major new development in Tenterden is limited to the completion of the masterplanned southern extension to the town which can fulfil the town's development needs over the Plan period without adversely affecting the character of the town.

3.61 Development at villages: The borough is home to a wide range of smaller rural settlements which play a key part in establishing its overall character. Many lie in attractive and /or designated landscape settings and contain areas of historic value. Some fulfil a local service centre role and have a range of key local facilities such as a primary school or a post office.

3.62 The government's policy for development in rural settlements has changed since the advent of the NPPF and its supporting Planning Practice Guidance. In para.55 of the NPPF, the ability of development in one village to support services in a nearby village is cited as an example of sustainable development in the rural areas and the practice guidance states that *"all settlements can play a role in delivering sustainable development in rural areas and so blanket policies restricting housing development in some settlements and preventing other settlements from expanding should be avoided unless their use can be supported by robust evidence".*

3.63 In line with this approach, the Local Plan proposes an allocation strategy that has been assessed against a broad range of issues, promoting optimum sites that can provide a range of housing opportunities across the borough. This approach gives considerable weight to more 'local' factors and takes account of recent rates of development in different villages whilst encouraging the small-scale evolution of some smaller settlements which might otherwise stagnate.

3.64 In making Local Plan development allocations, the Council is also cognisant of several emerging Neighbourhood Plans being promoted by Parish Councils. The Council has worked closely with these parishes to ensure that their plans are consistent with the proposed strategy for development set out in this Local Plan and has encouraged them to include an appropriate scale of local development allocations in their respective Plans.

3.65 Development in the wider countryside: One of the NPPF's core planning principles is to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, although it is clear that this should not be interpreted as applying a blanket restriction on new development. Isolated new homes should be resisted, unless proposals meet the particular exception tests set out in the NPPF, but there may be scope for the potential re-use of suitable brownfield sites and there is a need to consider potential economic or tourist related development that will benefit the wider rural economy of the borough.

3.66 However, except for a handful of very minor site allocations dealing with gypsy and traveller accommodation and 'exclusive' homes, the council does not propose to allocate residential development sites in the wider countryside away from existing villages as such a location will be usually be more environmentally sensitive and less sustainable in respect of access to services and reasonable road or rail access. Instead, development in the countryside should be controlled through appropriate topic-related policies which are set out elsewhere in this Plan.

3.67 There are two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in the Borough – the Kent Downs and High Weald. These are statutory designations of national importance where the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and countryside is the nation's primary objective. The Council has a statutory duty to protect the character of the AONBs and major developments will not be permitted in AONBs unless there are exceptional circumstances where a need is proven, no other sites or alternative provision are available and any detrimental impact on the landscape and environment can be moderated. Also, development located outside an AONB but which would have a significant adverse effect on the setting of the AONB will also be resisted.

Phasing and delivery

3.68 The final strand relating to the promotion of sustainable development within the Borough is its phasing and delivery. These are crucial aspects to consider, particularly in the rural parts of the borough where it is more sensitive and too high a level of housing growth can quickly lead to unsustainable development that is inconsistent with the aims and objectives of the NPPF. In light of this, an identification of how housing development is envisaged to come forward over the Plan period is outlined in the housing trajectory which supports this Plan (see appendix 5) which has taken into account a number of important factors.

3.69 ***The spatial context and past completions:*** The proposed spatial distribution strategy for new housing in this Plan reflects the most sustainable model of housing delivery for the borough taking account of key social, economic and environmental considerations and following the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal process. This strategy is reflected in the site allocations identified in this Local Plan and it is expected that future windfall development will also follow these broad principles and in doing so be consistent with the policy framework of this Local Plan.

3.70 Underpinning this strategy needs to be a realistic and deliverable set of proposals that provide the best opportunity to meet the Plan's housing targets in a sustainable way.

3.71 In the past, especially the period since 2008, market evidence points strongly to a continuing and healthy demand for new residential development in the rural parts of the borough. The Core Strategy target for housing delivery in the rural areas has, in effect, been met some 5 years early.

3.72 In contrast, allocated sites in and around Ashford have not come forward at the rates necessary to meet housing targets despite full and up to date Local Plan coverage over many years. There are several reasons that explain this ranging from the effects of the wider macro-economic downturn that affected the general housing market, to site-specific issues of infrastructure constraints or viability holding up the commencement and subsequent progress of sites. For the major brownfield sites close to Ashford town centre, market confidence has only just returned to levels where developers are starting to bring proposals for these sites forward. The viability evidence supporting this Plan bears this contrast out.

3.73 The Local Plan therefore needs to ensure its policy framework strikes the right balance between what are two potentially competing aspirations in the NPPF – the aspiration to "significantly boost the supply of housing " and the aspiration to deliver 'sustainable development'. In general, it is the less sustainable parts of the borough that are most attractive to the housing market and provide the best returns for landowners and developers.

3.74 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 39 (2)) and the NPPF (paragraph 151) states that Local Plans must be prepared with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. A strategy that focused the delivery of housing in the rural parts of the borough would fail to achieve this be likely to result in many sporadic developments which together would seriously undermine the character and environmental assets of the borough. Hence, a balance should be found with a strategy that seeks to deliver new housing principally in areas that are best served by infrastructure, jobs and services or which have the means to deliver them, and is aspirational but realistic in terms of viability and deliverability.

3.75 ***Meeting 5 year housing land supply:*** The NPPF (paragraph 47) requires local planning authorities to maintain at least a 5 year housing land supply against Local Plan targets. In recent years, except for 2015-16, housing completion rates in the borough have not kept pace with the annual requirement for new housing indicated by the SHMA or the proposed target in policy SP2 below.

3.76 The housing trajectory sets out a realistic timescale for the delivery of housing from committed sites and those allocated for development in this Plan, plus an assessment of windfall development on an annual basis. This takes account, in particular, of the timetable for the proposed M20 Junction 10a scheme indicated by Highways England, and the strategic constraint on the ability to fully develop out some sites until Junction 10a is in place.

3.77 The trajectory suggests that it will be unrealistic to expect completion rates over the next five years to be high enough to meet the annualised housing target for this Plan and also recover the accumulated shortfall against the OAN requirement since 2011. In order to achieve this, it would require a significantly greater scale of residential allocations across the rural part of the borough, which would greatly undermine the legitimacy of the strategic model for sustainable development in the borough which underpins the Plan.

3.78 Therefore, it is proposed that any accumulated shortfall in housing provision since 2011 is planned to be rectified over a period of longer than 5 years. The trajectory suggests that a more realistic and deliverable aim will be achieve this by 2023/24 thus enabling housing growth to be contained within the scope of the strategic principles of the Plan and to genuinely constitute sustainable development.

3.79 In order to achieve the Plan's objectives for the distribution of housing development, policy SP2 identifies that a minimum proportion of new housing development in the borough should be located in Ashford or on allocated sites on its periphery, with the balance attributed to the rest of the borough. The council accepts that there should be limited flexibility of 10% around these proportions to aid housing delivery rates but in general it would be unacceptable for significant additional housing development in the rural areas to substitute for housing development in and around Ashford itself.

3.80 Should a significant deficit in housing delivery remain in place by April 2021, then this would be dealt with via an earlier formal review of this Local Plan so it can tackle the issue in a controlled and plan-led way – a fundamental principle of the NPPF. Annual monitoring will ensure that the housing strategy remains up to date and on target and supports the market in a way that continues to deliver sustainable development.

Policy SP2 - The Strategic Approach to Housing Delivery

A total of 12,200 dwellings will be delivered in the Borough between 2016 and 2030 through a combination of committed schemes, proposed allocations and windfall developments.

The majority of new housing development will be focused at Ashford as the most sustainable location within the Borough based on its range of services and facilities, level of population and jobs, access to public transport hubs and the variety of social and community infrastructure available. With this in mind, land for a minimum of 10,125 dwellings in and around Ashford is identified, including land allocations for around 4,445 dwellings.

More limited development – at a scale that is consistent with their accessibility, infrastructure provision, level of services available, suitability of sites and environmental sensitivity – will take place on sites in the rest of the borough. With this in mind, land for the delivery of 1,030 dwellings is identified, including new land allocations for around 565 dwellings.

Windfall housing development will be permitted where it is consistent with the spatial strategy outlined above and is consistent with policies HOU3, HOU4 and HOU5 of this Local Plan, in order to ensure that sustainable development is delivered.

The Economy and Employment Development

Current position

3.81 With the growth of the town over the last few decades, the Borough's economy has grown, stimulated by critical drivers such as the introduction of International and domestic services on High Speed 1, transforming Ashford's location and connectivity. Enhancements to key road infrastructure such as junctions 9 and 10 on the M20 have enables employment land to continue to come forward in developments such as Orbital Business Park and Eureka Business Park. With the growth in population within the town, expansion of the retail and leisure offer has also delivered new jobs to the area with the introduction and now planned expansion of the Designer Outlet Village, the extension to County Square, the development of the offer at Eureka Leisure Park, and the introduction of brands such as Waitrose and John Lewis.

3.82 Ashford has traditionally had a very high employment rate within the area with lots of residents in employment (80%+), but the challenge has been improving the low average earnings levels, and bringing more highly skilled employment to the area. Average gross weekly wages have increased in the last 5 years above the local and regional averages, with increases of 5.7% from £479.10 in 2009 to £506.30 in 2014 for residents in Ashford borough. This is a stronger growth rate than Kent at 4.5% and the wider South East region at 5.6%. This shows positive progress for this continued challenge in improving the local productivity and prosperity of the labour market.

The Key Drivers for Growth in the Borough

3.83 The aspiration is for Ashford Borough to play a key role in terms of economic development in Kent, and this is built around its strategic location, excellent transport links, competitive costs, and the quality of lifestyle for residents and employees.

3.84 **Location** - The key driver for employment growth within the Ashford Borough is the impact of the introduction of HS1 and the critical investment in transport infrastructure. Ashford's business advantage is its location, as demonstrated through the results of the last Locate in Kent Perception Survey, which highlighted Ashford as Kent's number 1 business location.

3.85 **HS1** -The impact of a 38 minute journey time to London, Kings Cross / St Pancras will result in companies moving operations out of London to Ashford, but will also result in Kent companies locating to Ashford to take advantage of its central location within Kent and proximity to London.

3.86 **International Links** - Ashford is also the UK's International town, with direct train services to France's three largest cities, Paris, Lyon and Marseille, as well as to Brussels, Lille, Avignon and Disneyland Paris. With the tax and labour force advantages that the UK provides, Ashford continues to see the relocation of French companies into the area providing jobs and investment.

3.87 **Highly Competitive** – With commercial property costs up to 73% lower than central London, Ashford provides a real alternative for companies who want to do business within the capital, but without the continually rising costs.

3.88 **The importance of Place Making** – A key challenge over the next 15 years for Ashford will be the importance of developing the town into a memorable and sought-after location. Ashford already has many recognised benefits, but it's town centre and external image make the attraction of investment a continual challenge. The importance of quality place making through good design and streetscape will continue to be important in changing this image and attracting more employment and wealth to the area.

3.89 **Broadband infrastructure** – potential for strong broadband infrastructure available in parts of the Borough to attract investment, and support development of digital/ new media sectors will be critical in delivering greater productivity and prosperity within the local economy.

3.90 **Rural Enterprise** - Although the majority of employment growth will be centred around the Ashford Urban area, rural economy opportunities for development of rural enterprise, capitalising on quality of life and accessibility, and including the tourism economy, will ensure an enterprising and dynamic borough with a choice of employment locations and a choice in the price of accommodation.

Economic forecasting

3.91 The NPPF requires the Council 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.

3.92 In terms of business development the Council commissioned GL Hearn to carry out a Strategic Employment Options Report (SEOR) that developed a number of scenarios for economic growth in Ashford borough to 2030 that would be used to set a jobs target to be included within this Local Plan. There were four potential economic scenarios for the borough ranging from a 'downside risks' scenario at the lower end to an 'enhanced performance' scenario at the top end. This work was prepared in 2012 when economic conditions in the UK were significantly worse than they are now.

3.93 At the time, GL Hearn were suggesting that the 'downside risks' jobs scenario had the greatest probability of playing out based primarily on the macro-economic risks to the wider global economy creating weaker prospects for growth over a longer period of time. This was predicted to result in job growth of 9,200 (16%) between 2011-30.

3.94 In general, the forecasts made in the SEOR enable a range of eventualities to be covered and, given the current predictions for economic growth in the UK from the OBR and other institutions, some of the more negative aspects of the forecasts need to be reconsidered in choosing an appropriate employment target for the Local Plan.

3.95 The other economic scenarios considered in the report were a 'baseline' trajectory based on previous performance of both the macro-economic factors and local factors and two 'enhanced' scenarios based on a significant uplift in local performance and productivity. Both of the 'enhanced' scenarios would rely on strong growth in the office-based sectors and to a lesser degree, the industrial sector. These remain aspirations for Ashford and steps towards the creation of the Commercial Quarter are now well under way. However, the creation of a strong and vibrant office market will take some time and the allocation of an over supply of land in the early years, especially outside of the town centre, may be counterproductive in building on the solid foundations of a station-based new office market. The 2012 report

focused strongly on those aspects of the Ashford economy that have performed well and those where there is scope for improvement given the assets the borough has. This enables the council to focus land allocations towards the strongest sectors and put in place appropriate policies to protect existing active employment sites where possible.

3.96 As part of the GL Hearn commission there was an assessment of the current business sector strengths and the nationally forecast changes to employment by sector through to 2030. The sectors where the forecasts for the next 10 years show growth in jobs in Ashford include business services, professional services, computing services, hotels and catering, construction, retailing and education and health. Sectors that are likely to see lower employment growth due to macro-economic impacts or sectoral changes such as the automation of processes are manufacturing and public administration

3.97 It would seem prudent to set an employment target that is aspirational but also realistic in terms of its delivery over the next few years. The 'downside risks' scenario from the 2012 report now appears to be too pessimistic in terms of the macro-economic position in particular and a more appropriate response for the Local Plan would now be a jobs target based on the 'baseline' scenario of 12,600 new jobs over the Plan period.

3.98 The SEOR then derived a forecast of future employment land requirements based on the anticipated performance of the economy. Based on a jobs target of 12,600 jobs there is a requirement for 70.9 hectares of land for B class uses over the period form 2010 – 2030.

3.99 Since the GL Hearn forecasts for the 20 year period 2010 to 2030, and a target of 12,600 jobs for the Borough, survey figures have been published providing an updated position to 2014.1,500 jobs have been created within the Ashford Borough between 2010-2014, during a difficult national and global economic period. This 3% growth during this period is above the 2.4% average growth for Kent, but below the 3.3% growth within the South East and 5.2% national growth. This leaves a job target of 11,100 between 2014 - 2030.

3.100 An additional GL Hearn commission in 2016 to undertake an Employment Land Review: Site Assessment provides an up-dated employment land requirement for 2015-2030 of 66 hectares based on the baseline scenario from the 2012 SEOR report

Spatial Approach

3.101 As the main town within the borough and with the strategic transport links, it is proposed that growth in employment again is concentrated within and around Ashford town, and that due to its sustainable location, infrastructure and with its role as the heart of the town, that development is concentrated within the town centre on brownfield sites as the principal priority for the Local Plan.

3.102 The other primary locations for business demand for sites within the area are those with excellent access to the motorway network to support their operational needs. Industrial and Distribution companies have a specific need for good access to motorway junctions, to minimise the time for supplies to be delivered to and from the site. This also limits the impact on other areas of the town through additional traffic and congestion. For businesses requiring office space, as well as the locations in town centres, some companies will require a location that enables car bound access to clients across the County.

3.103 The challenge, spatially, and in the number of development sites within the Local Plan, will be to ensure that there is a choice of locations across the borough to support different business needs, and to support competition and choice within the market place. Both choice and the delivery of speculative employment space will stimulate relocations into the area. The allocation of sites needs to provide some flexibility for the market to adapt to changes in the economy, whilst providing a structure within which the aspirations of the plan can be achieved.

3.104 There are 4 key strategic sites for employment in Ashford – the Commercial Quarter, Waterbrook, Sevington and Eureka Park – but other employment areas also provide a range of alternatives options for business development.

3.105 **The Commercial Quarter –** This is the new main business sector of the town intended to stimulate investment opportunities in new large scale office space based around a high quality environment with a location close to the domestic and international railway stations. The site is proposed for up to 55,000 square metres of new office floorspace

3.106 **Eureka Park -** This large office based business park close to junction 9 provides a key strategic location with easy access to the motorway network and the rest of Kent. Previous planning permissions for B1 floorspace have delivered a number of phases of development. This is a substantial greenfield site with excellent connectivity to the M20 at junction 9 and the potential remains for primarily office development with the area being seen as different to the offer in the Commercial Quarter with lower density development in a landscaped setting. There is also the opportunity in this location to support more flexibility to deliver a smaller secondary element of other employment uses such as light industrial around the cleaner pharmaceutical, medical and health sectors, as well as space for uses such as private hospitals. The role of Eureka Park is also proposed to evolve with the introduction of higher quality residential development on an extended site to sit alongside the employment development

3.107 **Sevington –** this site was identified in the Core Strategy and subsequently the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD as a strategic employment site to provide for a range of employment types and uses but with the opportunity to cater for some of the larger scale employment uses that are less suited to higher density, mixed use environments.

3.108 Outline planning permission has been given (subject to a s.106) for a development of this sort at Sevington. Approximately 157,000 sq m of floorpsace is proposed in total. Within this figure there is flexibility for up to 140,000 sq m Class B8 (storage and distribution) use; up to 23,500 sq m of B1a/B1c Business (of which a maximum of 20,000 sq m of B1a); up to 15,000 sq m of B2 (general industry); up to 250 sq m of A1 (retail shops) and 5,500 sq m to accommodate the relocation of Kent Wool Growers from the town centre.

3.109 A masterplan has been produced showing how the quantum of development can be accommodated on the site whilst limiting the impact on the setting of Sevington church and the wider area. The masterplan includes substantial strategic planting to help reduce the impact of the large buildings proposed – this will be complemented by the planting proposed as part of the junction 10A scheme. This planting will obviously need to mature to deliver the full benefits – long term arrangements will be needed to make sure these areas are managed and protected, including the potential use of group Tree Preservation Orders.

3.110 It is likely that the phased development of this site will take some years to be completed. The planning permission given sets thresholds beyond which development cannot proceed before improved highways access arrangements are in place.

3.111 **Waterbrook –** this site is identified for mixed use development but to date only limited development has taken place on the site which currently accommodates the Ashford Truck stop and lies adjacent to the aggregates recycling facility and railhead. The adjacent Orbital Business park is nearing completion and there will be a requirement for similar types of provision with smaller industrial, distribution, office and other sui generis uses within the area to fulfil requirements that do not fit comfortably within the primary roles of Commercial Quarter, Eureka Park or Sevington.

Rural employment

3.112 Rural Ashford accounts for around a quarter of all jobs in the Borough, a proportion that has remained largely constant over the last 10 years or so. In the rural area workforce jobs have increased by around 14% between 2003 and 2012 – in absolute terms this represents an increase of approximately 1600 jobs.

3.113 In employment terms, rural Ashford's largest sectors in 2012 were business and retail, largely echoing the pattern of employment across the Borough as a whole. The social care, construction and wholesale sectors also accounted for significant shares of employment. The tourism sector also makes a significant contribution to the rural economy.

3.114 It is clear that the rural area plays an important part in the economic prospects of the borough and this will continue into the future.

Overall requirements

3.115 The Council has concluded that in broad terms there is sufficient land allocated already within existing adopted Plans to meet the overall land requirements to 2030 and that these should be rolled forward as allocations in this Local Plan. The range and type of site has been identified as an issue and there are new allocations identified at Leacon Road/Victoria Way and additional commercial land identified to be brought forward at the Waterbrook site.

3.116 In the rural area, a new allocation is specifically proposed at Tenterden at the Pickhill Indusctrial Estate but there has been a limited selection of other possible sites submitted for consideration. There is currently substantial small scale employment provision in the rural area and hence the approach is to support appropriate, small scale expansion of existing sites, subject to necessary planning policy criteria(see policy EMP3).

Policy SP3 - Strategic Approach to Economic Development

Job growth and economic prosperity will be supported in order to enable the achievement of a sustainable economy with the intention to deliver 66 hectares of new employment land and a total of 11,100 jobs in the Borough between 2014 - 30. This will be achieved by the following measures:-

a) **The promotion and development of the employment locations identified within this Local Plan;**
b) **The appropriate retention of the existing industrial/commercial/business land, premises and estates;**
c) **The maximisation of town centre employment opportunities in accordance with the strategic approach to the town centre set out in this Local Plan;**
d) **Taking a positive approach that reflects a presumption in favour of sustainable economic development;**
e) **Promoting appropriate rural employment opportunities in sustainable locations**
f) **Improving skills in the workforce**

Retail and Commercial Leisure Development Needs

3.117 Retail and leisure development plays an important role in the economy of Ashford Borough, and it is expected that these sectors will continue to contribute to the local economy over the plan period. This type of development is particularly important in supporting and developing a vital and viable Ashford town centre.

3.118 National Planning Policy requires local planning authorities to plan to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full, adopting a 'town centre' first approach.

3.119 The Local Plan should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres.

3.120 The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment 2015 (RLNA), provides an up to date assessment of the quantitative and qualitative need for new retail (comparison and convenience goods) and commercial leisure floorspace in Ashford Borough, up to 2030.

3.121 Tables 2 and 3 below outline the quantitative need for comparison and convenience retail development.

Table 2 - Convenience Retail Need 2015 to 2030 for Ashford Borough

	2020	**2025**	**2030**
Ashford Town Centre (m^2 net)	106	200	289
Tenterden Town Centre (m^2 net)	-455	-196	50
Local/Village Centres (m^2 net)	119	225	324
Rest of the Borough (m^2 net)	-2,085	-774	464
TOTAL BOROUGH (m^2 net)	**-2,315**	**-544**	**1,127**

3.122 The evidence shows there is limited quantitative need for new convenience floorspace over the Plan period across the Borough. However, there is currently an imbalance of convenience retail expenditure to out of centre stores, particularly in the Ashford urban area, which is influenced by a lack of foodstore provision in Ashford Town Centre. The RLNA therefore considered a potential scenario where 'claw back' of expenditure was achieved from out of centre food stores. This increases the forecast need for Ashford Town Centre to 751m^2 by 2025 and 1,084 m^2 by 2030. Alternatively, this provides the potential to support a deep discount foodstore of up to 1,673 m^2 by 2025 or 2,413 m^2 by 2030.

Table 3 - Comparison Retail Need 2015 to 2030 for Ashford Borough[4]

	2020	**2025**	**2030**
Ashford Town Centre (m^2 net)	-714	4,017	9,170
Tenterden Town Centre (m^2 net)	9	541	1,122
Local/Village Centres (m^2 net)	93	259	440
Rest of the Borough (m^2 net)	-3,107	771	5,032
TOTAL BOROUGH (m^2 net)	**-3,719**	**5,588**	**15,764**

3.123 In the short term, there is limited quantitative need for comparison retail development, when taking into account the re-use of existing vacant prime retail floorspace.

3.124 With regard to commercial leisure development, the leisure needs assessment identified the potential to support new cinema screens in the Borough, new food and drink beverage outlets (A3 to A5), and new gym facilities.

Meeting the need for Retail and Leisure Development

3.125 In accordance with National Planning Policy it is important that new retail and leisure development is focused at Ashford Town Centre first, to help to maintain and strengthen its role in the network and hierarchy of centres. The 'Rest of the Borough' retail need identified above should therefore be planned for within Ashford Town Centre.

3.126 Since the RLNA was completed, planning permission has been granted for a six-screen cinema, hotel, restaurants and cafes, at Elwick Place, adjoining the primary shopping area. Permission has also been granted for an extension to the Designer Outlet, which provides additional comparison floorspace and restaurants and café uses.

3.127 These committed developments provide for the need for comparison retail up to at least 2025, and cinema, restaurant and café development, for the whole plan period, in Ashford Town Centre. Given the uncertainty regarding retail forecasts beyond this time, it is not considered appropriate to allocate additional sites to accommodate the remaining need for the last few years of the plan period. In any event, there are sites within the Ashford Town Centre Policy Area, as set out in Policy SP5 which provide opportunities for development.

[4] Based upon constant market share and taking into account re-use of vacant prime retail floorspace in Ashford Town Centre

3.128 With regard to the provision of convenience retail need, in order to maintain flexibility, it is not considered appropriate to allocate a specific site. The need is only required if it is possible to re-distribute the market share to improve Ashford's convenience provision, therefore the delivery of such a proposal will be very much market driven. It is considered that a flexible approach should therefore be maintained to enable this proposal to come forward within the Town Centre Policy area, as set out in Policy SP5 . Proposals will be required to demonstrate that they accord with Policy EMP9 (Sequential and Impact Assessments) and proposals for convenience provision out of town will be strongly resisted through that policy.

Policy SP4 - Delivery of Retail and Leisure Needs

The need for retail and leisure development for Ashford Town will be met within the Ashford Town Centre Policy Area as defined in Policy SP5; through the delivery of existing commitments, development proposals in the pipeline, and site redevelopment opportunities.

The need for retail development in Tenterden and the local/village centres will be met through small scale development and changes of use within and adjoining the existing centres.

Delivering a Sustainable Town Centre

3.130 Ashford town centre is the key focus for shopping and services in the borough and will play an increasingly important role at the heart of the Borough's economy. The town centre is the most accessible location in the Borough and, with an attractive historic core, is a pleasant place to visit. It is an important shopping centre, especially for people living in the urban area, but it competes with centres such as Canterbury, Maidstone and Bluewater. Many Borough residents living outside the town visit less frequently and do their 'comparison' shopping (clothes and one-off purchases) elsewhere. The town centre needs to respond to this diversion of 'spending power' by strengthening its role and its own special offer and identity.

3.131 With fast rail access not just to and from London but also to the continent, the town centre is well placed to cater for a growing office market. In addition, the availability of substantial space in the form of vacant or underused brownfield sites near to the stations present opportunities for development and change that is unique when compared to other south east of England locations.

3.132 However current market confidence remains cautious with 'pioneer investors' inevitably carrying higher initial risk. This position is reflected in the viability evidence that supports this Local Plan which shows that schemes are highly sensitive to change and can become unviable very quickly. The Local Plan responds to these sensitivities by adopting a flexible policy approach that is not overly prescriptive and the level of requirements sought from development here.

3.133 That said, Ashford town centre is very much on the cusp of a major transition with an emerging office market and growing market interest in investment in other sectors such as

leisure, buy to rent apartment schemes. This is reflected in recent planning applications and current ongoing discussions with developers around a number of schemes on important sites within the town centre. It is therefore crucial that the Local Plan's emergence does not undermine these discussions or current interest.

3.134 Where these schemes are expected to contribute to the Borough's overall housing numbers, the sites are referred to in the housing trajectory that supports this Plan (Appendix 5). For the non residential development requirements the contributions from these schemes are reflected in Policy SP3 and SP4 of this Local Plan.

Vision

3.135 A thriving town centre is crucial for the people who use it day to day but also, more generally, to make it a more attractive destination for residents of the wider area and for tourists. The more people that use the town centre the more successful it will be. As town centres change in response to the internet and the changing retail market, so the town centre needs reshaping to provide not just for essential daily needs, but also to create a mix of more quirky, varied and specialist shopping and entertainment opportunities. This will attract people in from a wider area, over a longer part of the day and evening.

3.136 The strongest town centres have an 'all day economy' – busy lunchtimes as a large local workforce takes a break and lively evenings after work and as people come back to the town centre for specific attractions such as the cinema and to eat and drink. Healthy town centres also tend to have a significant resident population which helps the place feel active at all times and brings more spending to town centre businesses.

3.137 So the Council's vision is of a town centre that offers a wide and entertaining mix of activity throughout the day and evening; with a strengthening 'leisure shopping' offer including a growing mix of interesting, independent retailers; and a fast growing resident and working population that brings more activity and spending power to the town.

3.138 Helping to drive delivery of that vision Ashford also has a unique opportunity. High speed rail services give access to and from London in 38 minutes and this, coupled with the potential for an expanding range of rail services to the continent, places Ashford town centre in a very special position. Combining the three key factors of fast travel times, relatively low average house prices and the quality of life offered in the area, Ashford is now in a very competitive position in south east England to attract inward investment and jobs growth.

3.139 The supply of readily available land in the town centre for growth – especially in the area between the stations and the shopping core is the final, critical ingredient. The town has the opportunity to move from a relatively small provincial office market to a centre of much higher ranking by creating a high quality business centre, as an integral part of a stronger town centre.

3.140 In short, the town centre will be a key motor for Ashford's growth in the coming years. Jobs in the new Commercial Quarter will tend to be at higher skill levels and provide opportunities both for the local workforce and for some of those people currently commuting who would like to work closer to home. As this town centre office sector grows, a range of secondary services will be needed to support new office businesses – many sectors of the Ashford economy will benefit. More jobs in the town centre will bring more spending power for the

day and evening economy and help to drive a better range of opportunities to eat and drink, shop and enjoy leisure time.

3.141 There are several very important themes that will guide the Council's approach as the town centre evolves.

3.142 ***Quality place-making****:* The Council is wedded to delivering quality places, spaces and buildings for people to enjoy in the town centre. The attractive medieval core of the existing centre, including over 100 listed buildings and the Conservation Area, needs protecting but alongside this a harmonious blend of new development is needed with bustling streets and attractive public spaces. By continuing to demand high design standards this not only brings pleasure to town centre users but it helps to encourage investor confidence in the town and the emerging Commercial Quarter office market and will help to attract further investment.

3.143 Design quality means not just the way a building looks but the contribution the scheme makes as a whole – how it animates the street by including active uses on ground floors; how the spaces around the buildings work and link into the wider townscape; and how special care is taken to create character at key junctions, corner plots and focal points in important views. The Council will continue to use its independent Design Panel to help assess the all round quality of town centre schemes.

3.144 ***A vibrant town centre:*** National Planning Policy requires local planning authorities to plan to meet the needs of main town centre uses in full, adopting a 'town centre' first approach to the provision of new shopping and leisure development. A Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment (2015) has been carried out which shows that the quantitative need for new retail floorspace in the town centre over the plan period is low. The Study found an imbalance between town centre and out of town food shopping and identifies the potential for additional food shopping space in the town centre to help address this.

3.145 Shoppers today are tending towards more varied 'leisure shopping' in good quality environments with a range of other activities – eating, drinking, entertainments - on offer. Strong town centre management is key to success and this includes the Council's direct influence as landlord of the Park Mall shopping centre.

3.146 Ashford, like strong town centres elsewhere, needs to complement traditional strong Saturday retail trading with an 'all day economy' – busy lunchtimes as a large local workforce takes a break, and lively evenings after work and as people come back to the town centre for specific attractions such as the proposed cinema and to eat and drink.

3.147 ***A place to live in:*** The town centre's resident population is growing rapidly. This growth is likely to continue as people are attracted by competitive prices, an improving town centre with an easy walk to the stations and quick access to London. There are sites available which can provide for significant residential development. One residential market that may emerge strongly is institutionally funded apartments in the private rented sector. This sort of development would help to increase the range of housing choices available; it can be built to generous space standards but at a relatively high density typical of a town centre; and will therefore lead to a substantial increase in town centre residents.

3.148 More residents brings more support for the shops, services and entertainments provided in the town centre and helps to animate the town day and evening. Coupled with the growing

number of office jobs in the Commercial Quarter and the student numbers at Ashford College this will create a significant and sustained impetus for town centre regeneration.

3.149 ***A place to work:*** The Commercial Quarter has the space to create an important new office centre in south east England. It sits alongside the stations and occupiers will benefit from the high speed domestic and international train services. The area can meet the demands of an emerging office market within an overall masterplan designed to create a fine new place, characterised by excellent quality treatment of the public realm. As a major landowner the Council is well placed both to drive delivery in this area and to set and achieve high design and place-making standards.

3.150 A range of supporting services will be needed as this Quarter grows - these will include specialist financial, IT, marketing and legal services as well as catering, buildings maintenance and office supplies. This will benefit town centre businesses as well as firms in the wider Ashford economy.

3.151 ***Local skills to match opportunities:*** As the office sector expands a growing workforce with a wider range of skills will be needed providing excellent career opportunities for local people. The construction of Ashford College in the heart of the town centre, offering increased choice for local students in both further and higher education, is a crucial component of the wider economic development of the Borough as a whole. The Council will continue to work with the Hadlow Group both to help shape the curriculum to meet emerging needs and to expand the presence in the town.

3.152 ***Movement and parking:*** A careful balance needs to be struck between providing town centre parking to serve the retail, leisure and commercial facilities on offer balanced with an awareness that there is finite road capacity in the town centre. Successful towns attract traffic and as the economy strengthens this issue will become more important. In the early years a relatively high level of parking provision is likely to be sought by investors to help attract tenants – especially for new offices. As the market strengthens parking on site to support future schemes may need to be provided at a lower ratio to make sure that the available road space is managed effectively, including making enough provision for shoppers and residents needs.

3.153 Much has been achieved to make the town a pleasant place for people on foot, including the pedestrianised centre, the Elwick Road shared space and other street improvements (e.g. to West Street). As a result it is easier for pedestrians to walk to the town centre ands to enjoy it once there. The Council will continue this approach by making sure that developments in the town centre play their part to improve the pedestrian environment and the attractiveness of the town centre as a whole.

3.154 ***A deliverable strategy:*** The opportunities in the town centre are considerable and there is growing market interest. Evidence indicates, however, that many schemes remain only marginally viable and the comparatively high build costs needed to deliver a quality product are not yet reflected in returns from development. Pioneer investments in relatively untested sectors of the Ashford town centre market – e.g. new town centre offices; private rented apartments; leisure projects – may therefore be unable to support the full range of normal developer contributions set out elsewhere in this Plan. Where this is the case, viability assessments will be needed to test these issues with a realistic approach being taken that reflects the risks investors are taking and the need to help stimulate investor

confidence. Once confidence has been created further investments are likely to flow that will benefit the town centre and Borough as a whole.

3.155 Experience of viability assessment in the town centre shows that residential schemes are, as yet, generally unable to meet the range of developer contributions to infrastructure that is needed, including affordable housing. The Council has a track record of working with developers to minimise these costs to avoid inhibiting regeneration in the town centre, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. Private rented sector apartment schemes will bring a new product to the choice of homes on offer in the town, help broaden the market and are supported by national planning policy. In the light of this, the Council recognises that it may be inappropriate to meet the policy requirement for affordable housing on town centre housing sites where viability is an issue, as set out in policy HOU1.

3.156 As the Council is a major landowner in the town centre – including the Park Mall shopping centre; Vicarage Lane car park and a substantial part of the Commercial Quarter – it is able to help deliver well planned and high quality development. Over the duration of the Plan this can make a huge contribution to the regeneration of the town centre.

3.157 The Town Centre policy below picks up these themes – it is supported by a specific site policy for the Commercial Quarter (see site policy S1). The general policy approach is deliberately flexible to accommodate a range of potential uses in the town centre that help to meet the vision and approach set out above. In an emerging market a degree of pragmatism is essential to be able to respond to changing market demands. National planning policy supports a market-aware approach of this sort.

SP5 - Ashford Town Centre

Proposals coming forward in Ashford town centre (as shown on the policies map), will be supported in principle where they help to deliver the vision set out above and where they promote high quality design that is appropriate to their location. A range of principal uses may be acceptable including retail, offices, leisure, residential and hotel. Other complementary uses may include, voluntary and community uses and health facilities. Proposals in the town centre will need to comply with sequential test requirements set out in policy EMP9 .

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

a. **All schemes will need to demonstrate a quality of design that makes a significant contribution to improving the character of the town centre. This includes not just the buildings proposed but the spaces around them and links to the wider public realm. Mixed use developments are encouraged and street frontages of buildings should include active uses that help bring a sense of vitality to the street scene. New development proposals on major and/ or prominent sites will be expected to have been subject to public exhibition/ consultation and be subject to review by the independent Ashford Design Panel**
b. **Residential development in the town centre is encouraged, for example, making use of space above shops but the opportunity also exists to provide a range of types of home, including the potential for serviced private rented apartment schemes.**
c. **Further expansion of further and higher education facilities at the Kent College complex will be supported subject to design and other site-specific considerations.**
d. **A balanced approach to office parking needs will be taken in order to help stimulate early investment in the town centre, whilst considering long term impacts on road capacity and the needs of shoppers, residents and other users. As the market strengthens and further developments come forward this approach is likely to be subject to formal review.**
e. **Where a development proposal comes forward that clearly demonstrates it would meet the vision and design quality set for the town centre but is of marginal viability, the Council (taking specialist advice) will explore a flexible approach to seek to reduce the costs of contributions to infrastructure and affordable housing, provided the resulting proposal does not create a serious and unacceptable level of impact.**

Promoting High Quality Design

Design Quality

3.158 Delivering development that is of high design quality and is sustainable is a key Council priority. The National Planning Policy Framework is unequivocal in the 'great importance' the Government attaches to design as 'a key aspect of sustainable development….indivisible from good planning' (para 56 NPPF). The Framework requires 'robust and comprehensive policies' (para 58) in local plans – this chapter sets these out.

3.159 The need for good design applies in all areas of the Borough, whether in a sensitive village or countryside setting; on the periphery of Ashford or within the town area. Given the scale of development that needs to be planned for in the Borough – especially in and around Ashford town - it is crucial that high quality design and place-making sits at the top of the Council's agenda. To be successful it is critical that as strong a consensus as possible is built with local communities affected by development. For over a decade the Council has worked in this way and has received national awards reflecting the best practice it has set.

The design process

3.160 Design issues start to emerge even before the draft local plan stage when potential site allocations are discussed with local people and site promoters before becoming site policies in the Plan. To build community involvement from the outset and work with local people to drive design quality the Council may use a variety of tools – such as public exhibitions/ surgeries and collaborative design workshops. The actual combination of tools used will depend on the scale and nature of the site in question. National design guidance such as 'The Manual for Streets';the Kent Design Guide, development briefs and Supplementary Planning Documentsand, in the rural areas, Village Design Statements help to make up the package of supporting design guidance.

3.161 The 'Building for Life' toolkit is a useful tool for the Council and local people to use to explore design options and then to help assess housing proposals. As the most strategic local plan site allocations come forward, the Council will set up design workshops, funded by the developer, to bring representatives of the local community to work together with developers, their designers and service providers. This is established best-practice in line with NPPF advice (para 66). These workshops help to build a masterplan based on key principles of place-making and are a well established part of the planning process in the Borough that helps to provide a clear basis for planning applications. By building a consensus with the community and other stakeholders they create greater certainty for investors with the cost savings that implies.

3.162 There is a long established and independent Ashford Design Panel that the Council uses to test emerging proposals and to allow those promoting development to explain their design approach. The expert second opinion the Panel provides is invaluable and the conclusions it reaches are used to help inform officers' assessments of proposals and the Planning Committee in making decisions. Larger developments, or those of smaller scale but on a prominent site, are referred to the Panel at the applicants' expense. This happens relatively early in the design process to help shape good quality proposals and avoid wasting time and

money on poorly designed schemes. This reflects the advice in the NPPF (para 62) that local authorities should have such arrangements in place.

3.163 Design and Access statements are required with most types of planning application. They should demonstrate how the Council's key design principles, set out below, and those in Neighbourhood Plans have been taken into account and reflected in project design. The findings of any public involvement in exhibitions or design workshops should be summarised with an explanation showing where they have influenced the design.

3.164 If good design is undermined during the construction process then any amount of good design on paper can be undone. Large construction projects are complex with many players – sub-contractors, service providers, etc – and it is not surprising that genuine mistakes can happen. Sometimes the problems are compounded by poor workmanship; the use of the wrong materials; or not following the agreed plans.

3.165 Creating great places demands an attention to detail and care in construction. The Council has had too many examples of poor delivery on site which lets down residents and undermines the quality of place aspired to in Ashford. As a result a 'Quality Monitoring Initiative' has been set up which involves specialist officers working with site managers to regularly check that schemes are being delivered correctly. Spotting any issues early will reduce the risk of repetitive mistakes being made and the costs of putting things right. Developers are encouraged to work with the Council in this way to the mutual benefit of all parties.

Key Design Qualities

3.166 **a) Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place:** The Borough is made up of many different places, each with their own distinctive characteristics of development form, landscape and surrounding space, both historic and new. All development proposals need to reflect their local context, particularly where this has a special character or features of interest, whether built or natural.

3.167 Where the built environment is of decent quality, new proposals should be sensitive in terms of scale, height, layout and massing to the surrounding buildings. Where the surrounding development is fragmented or of poor quality, development proposals will be expected to help repair the urban fabric and generate distinctiveness, with good quality architecture and careful treatment of the space around the building. Public art has a key role to play in helping to add to local character and people's enjoyment of places.

3.168 In areas of significant new development very careful attention needs to be given to creating new places with their own sense of character and place. Larger developments may need to be broken down into separate areas with their own character but within an overall masterplan linking the parts together. Part of this involves working with existing character, for example, retaining historic reference points to help create a sense of local identity and distinctiveness. Masterplans and development briefs which are prepared to support site policies have a key role to play in helping shape a sense of place and supporting planning applications, infrastructure planning and delivery.

3.169 More generally, where historic features exist - including listed buildings, conservation areas, ancient roads, green lanes and byways and sites of archaeological interest – these must be

respected by new development and, where appropriate, carefully integrated with new development.

3.170 **b) Ease of Movement:** Places should be designed so that they are easy to use on foot but also successfully cater for cars and other vehicles. Major developments – whether in town centres or peripheral new housing areas – need a network of inter-connected routes that tie them into the surrounding area. This offers pedestrians and cyclists more choices of route and these people help to animate places. Likewise new housing areas based on linked routes perform better than extensive cul-de-sac systems.

3.171 Equally new developments need to be designed with the needs of vehicle users in mind and parking.Sufficient spaces are needed to avoid inappropriate parking and these need to be well designed so that they are used by residents. Often visitor parking is best accommodated on-street with the street designed to provide clear parking spaces but also having sufficient width to allow this without causing congestion.

3.172 **c) Legibility:** Places should have a clarity of form and layout that create identity and help people understand them. This can be achieved through street layout and variation in density in particular – the centre of places often being marked by an increase in the density and height. Other important tools include the placing of more interesting, 'landmark' buildings at the end of vistas and views, on corners and intersections or incorporating natural features like mature trees and ponds. Legibility (and sense of place) is undermined by unthinking repetition, blandness in design and a lack of reference to context.

3.173 **d) Mixed Use and Diversity:** All successful centres – whether in town, village or new housing area - rely on a mix of uses, activities and variety and choice of property types. In Ashford town active uses on ground floor frontages of the main streets is needed helps to bring life to the centre. In a similar way within new housing areas a grouping of local shops, live-work units and community facilities can help create a successful centre. Building-in flexibility is important – space reserved for future facilities and buildings designed to be capable of residential or shop/ office use on the ground floor are good examples.

3.174 **e) Public safety:** Designs should be based on a clear distinction between public and private spaces. New buildings and/or landscape should create continuity of form and enclosure to the street, and allow overlooking and natural surveillance of the street or open space. This clarity in design thinking will help create a safe environment by reducing the potential for anti-social behaviour and crime.

3.175 **f) Quality of Public Spaces and their future management:** The quality of public spaces does much to define the overall quality of the place. It depends on a number of elements which need to be carefully taken into account at the design stage - accessibility, degree of enclosure, size, the quality of materials and street furniture, lighting, planting, orientation, public art, how well it is overlooked and the uses in and surrounding the space.

3.176 The pattern of public spaces and how well they are linked together is crucial in an urban setting but also in new developments. The functions of the space need to be understood and reflected in masterplanning and detailed design.

3.177 The quality of the public realm depends on how well it is maintained. Too often private management arrangements put in place by developers have not been robust and residents

have suffered as a result. Properly funded, long-term management and maintenance arrangements are needed to make sure that the quality of place is protected in future. The basis for such arrangements will need to be clear when planning applications are made – the Council firmly believes that these schemes work best where there is a strong degree of resident involvement.

3.178 **g) Flexibility and Liveability:** Refurbishment, conversion and extension are usually more sustainable and energy efficient than demolition and new build. With an ageing population the adaptability of homes is more important than ever. New homes should be designed with sufficient space to provide a good quality of life for residents – both issues are now dealt with in the Building Regulations. The Council's local guidance complements this national framework – for example, dealing with external space in gardens and balconies, and external storage (for bins etc).

3.179 Major new developments also need to have some adaptability built in for example in new local centres, land may need to be reserved to help provide for future needs as they emerge; and the ground floor design and ceiling height of buidings at key locations can be designed to accommodate a range of future uses.

3.180 Communications infrastructure needs to be able to cope with today's demands and likely future demands in mind. The normal expectation will be that new development includes ducting and fibre optic cabling to the home unless there are technical issues that prevent this or abnormal costs.

3.181 Developments should be adaptable and designed to reduce vulnerability to the effects of climate change. This may involve a range of features – for example, on site sustainable drainage to help deal with intense rainfall events, and tree planting on the northern sides of streets and in public spaces to provide shade in summer and reduce 'heat island' effects. Practice will inevitably change and further guidance will be produced when needed.

3.182 **h) Richness in detail:** Attention to detail is an essential part of design quality. Visual richness requires quality in design, materials and workmanship. In larger buildings, the design of the facades will need to be broken down to ensure that they have a human scale, avoid the repetitive use of the same visual elements and are visually interesting. Details such as window design, recessed and projecting features, surface treatment and transition between materials need as much attention as any other aspect of design.

3.183 There is clearly a role for high quality traditional designs in an area with a strong historic character but quality modern buildings will introduce variety and interest into the townscape and present a good opportunity to add examples of the architecture and styles of our own period into the landscape.

3.184 **i) Efficient use of natural resources:** Buildings and landscapes should be designed to make efficient use of natural resources during construction, operation and maintenance. This will contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and reduce the ecological footprint of Ashford's growth. The Council will actively encourage the design of new buildings that minimise the need for energy and water consumption, use renewable energy sources, provide for sustainable drainage, support water re-use and incorporate facilities to recycling of waste and resources. Sunlight and energy efficiency should be considered as an

integral part of the layout through passive solar design and natural ventilation systems. Developments should also consider whole-life performance and costs. Ashford Borough is a largely rural area and includes an area which is one of the least polluted by artificial light in south-east England. Protecting the rural parts of the Borough – and particularly the Dark Sky area – will help to protect the character of the countryside and reduce wasted energy use (see policy ENV4).

Policy SP6 - Promoting High Quality Design

Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a careful consideration of and a positive response to each of the following design criteria:

a. **Character, Distinctiveness and Sense of Place**
b. **Ease of Movement**
c. **Legibility**
d. **Mixed use and Diversity**
e. **Public safety**
f. **Quality of Public Spaces and their future management**
g. **Flexibility and Liveability**
h. **Richness in Detail**
i. **Efficient use of Natural Resources**

Development proposals should show how they have responded positively to the design policy and guidance in relevant Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements.

Developers are strongly encouraged to participate in the Council's 'Quality Monitoring Initiative' which works to make sure that the approach agreed to design quality when planning permission is given is delivered on site.

4 SITE POLICIES

4.1 This section of the Local Plan deals with a set of detailed site specific policies.

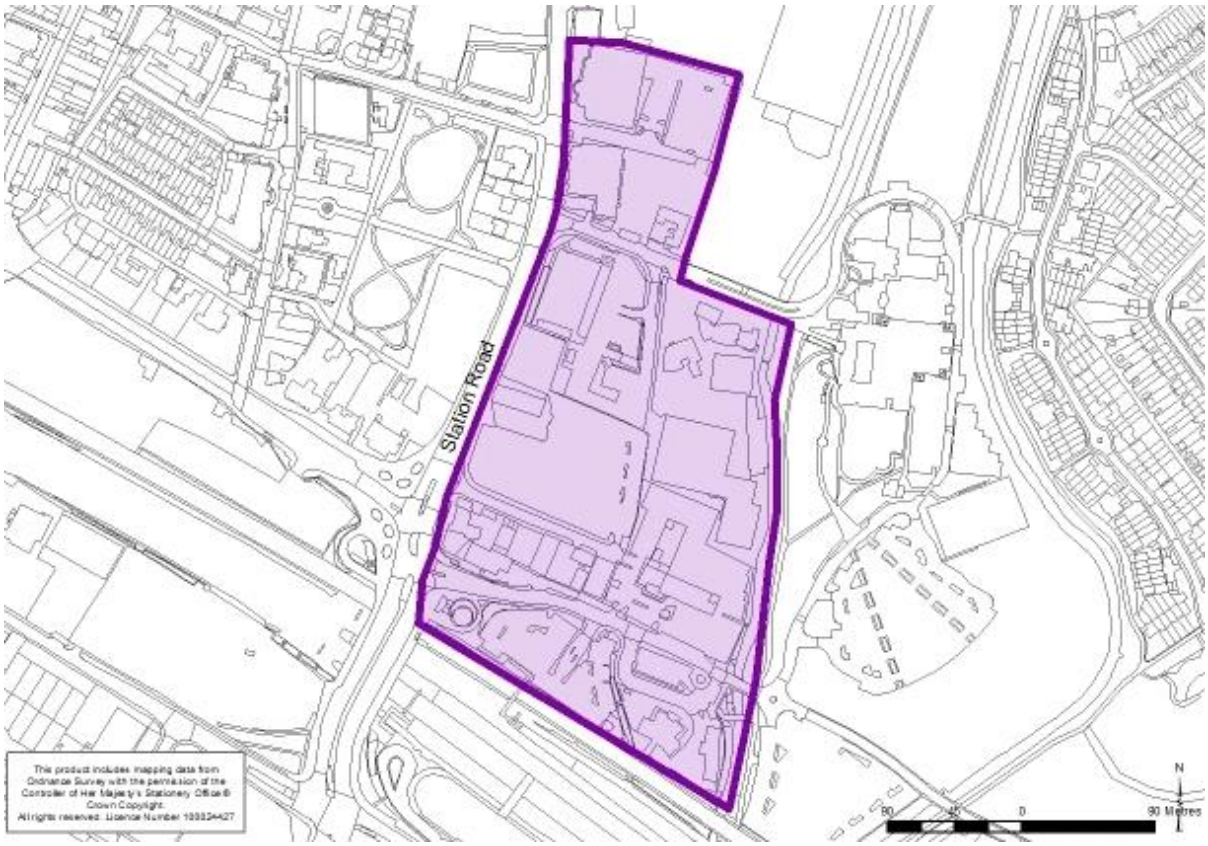
4.2 These site policies set out a range of criteria that development of the site must adhere to and the policy should be read in conjunction with the reasoned justification that precedes it. There are number of other relevant policies set out in this Plan that will apply to all sites, as well as those specific criteria set out in the site policy, which have not been repeated in the site policies. These include, but are not limited to:

- affordable housing requirements (policy HOU1),
- Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (policy ENV9),
- parking provision (policies TRA3 (a) and (b),
- improvements to bus services (policy TRA4),
- the protection of the integrity of European Sites and enhancement of biodiversity (ENV1),
- sewerage and draining provision (policy ENV8),
- delivery of community provision and facilities (policy COM1),
- delivery of sports, recreation and play space (policy COM2),
- delivery of needed infrastructure (policy IMP1).

4.3 The Local Plan should be read as a whole, but in the event of any conflict between a site specific policy and a generic policy, the site specific policy should take precedence.

Ashford Urban Area

Commercial Quarter



4.4 This area, adjacent to the stations, will become the dynamic new main business sector of the town – a new office quarter complemented with smaller scale residential, retail and space for eating and drinking. The area plays a key part in delivering the wider vision for the town centre and, for this reason, a specific site policy is needed.

4.5 Throughout the area the emphasis will be on creating a network of routes and space and a very high quality public realm – each phase of development making its contribution to this. This network should be animated by local amenities such as small shops, cafes or bars and public art. A central public space within the Quarter will enable a local focal point to be created. This will help set a standard that will give added confidence to future investors and help bring forward further growth. An approved 'Design Framework' provides the basis for this development – this may well require updating to reflect market trends as these change over the relatively long period it will take to complete all phases of the Commercial Quarter.

4.6 Different parts of the site have different roles to play. In the Dover Place area, there is potential to reuse heritage buildings and create new flexible space to house smaller office users – for example, IT and media businesses and small workshop space office suites as well as supporting retail and venues for food and drink. This is the entrance to the area from the stations and needs to take advantage of the inherent character of some of the buildings that remain to provide an appealing and welcoming with a lively mix of uses, with existing buildings and new ones working in an interesting juxtaposition. The benchmark for the

quality of public realm expected throughout the area has already been set in the works carried out in this area.

4.7 The riverside frontage of the site is well suited to a residential-led mix of uses providing riverside access and direct pedestrian access over a new bridge to the South Park and Stour Centre. The listed Whist House should be restored as part of the development of this part of the site either to its former residential use or a suitable alternative use.

4.8 The first phase office development is likely on the area of the existing car park and at least two further phases can be accommodated on land controlled by the Borough Council. As the development progresses the remaining uses on the site – the Kent Woolgrowers and the Royal Mail – have previously indicated they will seek to relocate, creating space for a further series of phased developments. The Design Framework provides an indicative phasing and car parking strategy as development takes place.

4.9 The northern part of the site also includes existing offices and Ashford Bowling, alongside a public car park owned by the Council. This land is not required to come forward to deliver the level of development envisaged in the policy below but are suitable locations for office development and are well placed to respond if the Commercial Quarter develops as proposed. The car park is considered a suitable location for a future Multi Storey Car Park, utilising its accessibility to the Town Centre and existing access onto Station Road. Should this come forward, the possibility of providing an additional access onto Tannery Lane should be considered as part of the proposal to help with traffic movements in this area. Proposals coming forward on the northern part of the site will need to demonstrate how they will complement the delivery of what is envisaged on the remaining parts of the Commercial Quarter.

4.10 Unlike many parts of the town centre where a predominant, historic scale of 3-4 storeys exists, there is the opportunity for larger scale development blocks here. The topography of the Quarter slopes away from the town centre so that taller buildings are less prominent and, of course, International House is a existing landmark feature. It is not proposed to replicate the height of International House - development fronting Station Road should average 5-6 storeys. There may be scope for building(s) of 7-8 storeys closer to the centre of the Quarter and International House but this would depend on a clear design rationale being agreed for the site as a whole and this would need to be tested through detailed modelling. On the riverside, 2-4 storeys is likely to be the appropriate range.

4.11 Non-residential development in the Commercial Quarter will be required to provide proportionate contributions towards the delivery of strategic parking provision in the town, such as the delivery of a Town Centre Multi Storey Car Park and or a Park and Ride site outside the Town Centre area.

Policy S1 - Commercial Quarter

The Commercial Quarter is proposed to become an important new office based district playing a key role in creating jobs for the town centre and growing the wider economy of the Borough. The site has the potential to deliver up to 55,000 sq m of new office floorspace.

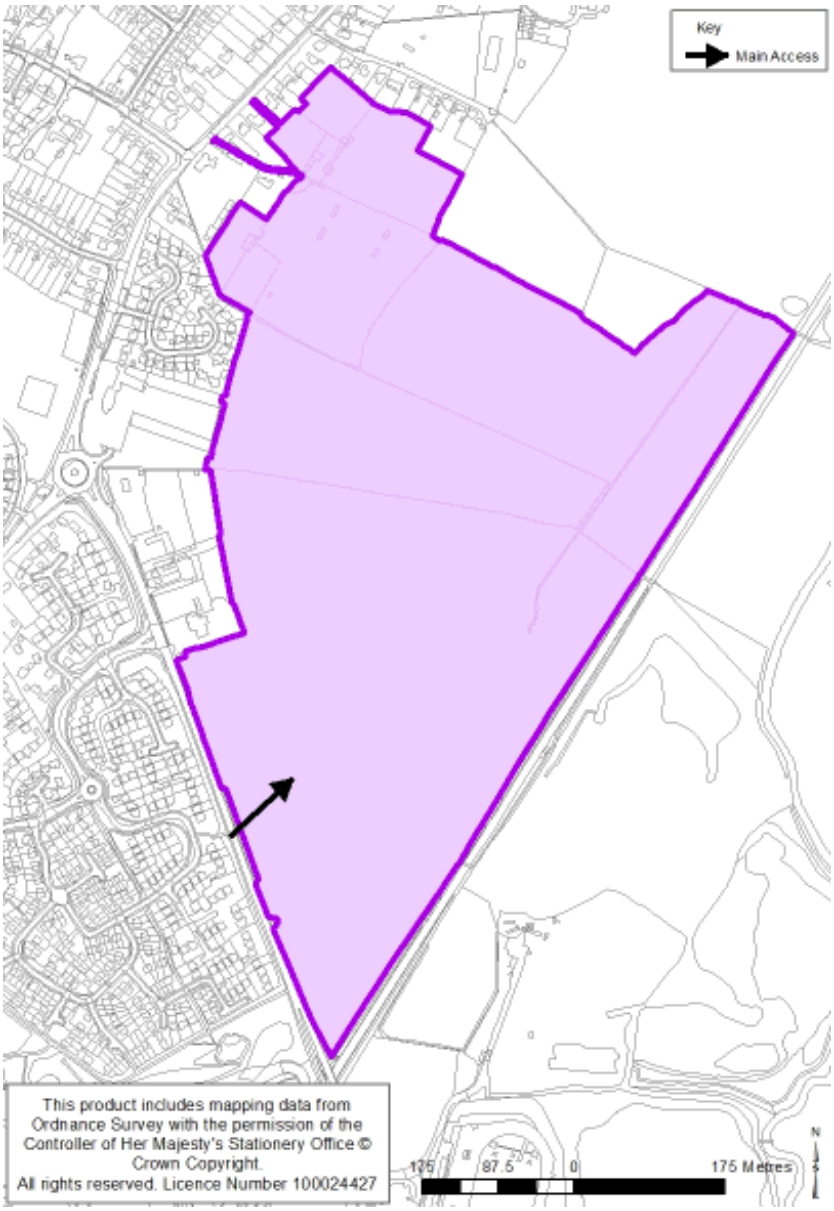
In addition to offices, other secondary uses such as residential apartments, small scale retail and/ or leisure uses and a hotel would also be appropriate in this Quarter, providing they complement the wider objective to deliver the substantial commercial space envisaged here. The site also has the potential to deliver residential apartments. To the northern part of the site, a multi storey car park is envisaged to come forward.

The Quarter should be delivered in phases and this needs to be guided by a 'Design Framework' which may need revising as the Quarter is developed. The quality of the public realm linking the component parts of the Quarter and more widely to the stations and shopping heart of the town centre needs to be of an especially high quality and each phase will need to be designed and delivered with this in mind. Active uses will be needed to help animate key routes and important focal points at junctions.

Development in this Quarter should generally be an average of 5-6 storeys above ground level although slightly taller buildings may be appropriate towards the heart of the site. The riverside frontage should generally not exceed 4 storeys.

Non-residential development in the Commercial Quarter will be required to provide proportionate contributions towards the delivery of strategic parking provision in the town, such as the delivery of a Town Centre Multi-Storey Car Park and / or a Park and Ride site outside the Town Centre area.

Land North-East of Willesborough Road, Kennington



4.12 The site is located on the north-eastern edge of the built up area of Ashford. It is bounded to the west by Willesborough Road, and the residential development of Little Burton Farm. To the east is the Ashford to Canterbury railway line, with Conningbrook Country Park and Julie Rose Stadium over the railway line. Residential development is proposed (part of which has planning permission) on the Conningbrook site, and will run from Willesborough Road, along half of the site's eastern boundary, on the other side of the railway line. Linear residential development along Canterbury Road forms the north-western boundary of the site. To the north and east lies further agricultural land.

4.13 The site is best and most versatile agricultural land (approximately 60% being Grade 1) predominantly in arable use, with a small area of the northern corner of the site, being a separate smallholding not in active use. This part of the site contains redundant agricultural buildings. The site is slightly undulating and slopes downwards from south-west to north-east, towards the railway line and the open countryside to the north.

4.14 The site is located on the edge of the existing urban area, and half of its boundaries are currently adjacent to residential development. Once the Conningbrook site has been developed, the site would form a wedge of open land between residential developments on three of its sides. The site is located close to existing services, and in particular there is an opportunity for the Conningbrook Country Park and Julie Rose Stadium to become a hub for local facilities, adjacent to the site.

4.15 The site is proposed as one of the strategic housing allocations in this Plan, and is considered appropriate for residential development in line with the strategy for the distribution of housing as outlined in Policy SP2 . The boundary of the site has been informed by the characteristics of the existing built form, in particular the extent of residential development along Canterbury Road, and to minimise the extent to which the development extends into open countryside.

4.16 The site, which is approximately 40 ha in size, is allocated for primarily residential development with a capacity of up to 700 dwellings. The site should also include a serviced area of land sufficient for the provision of a Two Form Entry Primary School (currently 2.05 hectares).

4.17 Development of the site will need to pay particular regard to the topography of the site, and its relationship with the surrounding built development. The design and layout of the site must take into account the residential amenity of the occupiers of existing residential properties along Canterbury Road, Willesborough Road, Canon Woods Way and Orchard Lane.

4.18 The existing tree/hedge lines along the boundaries of the site shall all be maintained and improved other than along Willesborough Road where there may be some loss in order to provide the necessary vehicular accesses to the site. The provision along the railway line should provide a suitable visual and acoustic barrier.

4.19 The landowner of the northern corner of the site has indicated an interest in delivering self-build properties on that area of the site. In accordance with policy HOU6 the development will be required to deliver a minimum of 5% of the dwellings as self-build, and this area of the site is considered to be suitable to provide for this requirement.

4.20 The primary vehicular access to the site should be provided from the Willesborough Road. The exact location and form of the access shall be determined following an assessment of the traffic generation onto the Willesborough Road. A secondary/emergency vehicular access to the site should also be provided, and the most appropriate location for this will need to be considered in liaison with the Local Highways Authority.

4.21 There are also two potential minor access points to the site from Canterbury Road, however they are relatively narrow and located between residential properties and the Croft Hotel, and it may not be possible to obtain the necessary visibility splays. These accesses are therefore only likely to be suitable for very limited levels of traffic, however they may be considered for the secondary/emergency access. Development proposals for the site must therefore include a detailed assessment as to the suitability of any access onto Canterbury Road, in liaison with the Local Highways Authority.

4.22 The transport modelling carried out in support of the Local Plan has demonstrated there will be an impact of the proposal upon the wider transport network. A Full Transport Assessment will be required to be submitted in support of a planning application for development of this site. This should consider the impact of the proposal on the wider road network, and make recommendations to improve capacity at existing junctions where necessary and possible. Funding for an extension of existing bus services in the area should be part of a package of measures designed to ameliorate the impact of additional traffic.

4.23 The combination of this proposal and the development permitted and proposed in policy S19 at Conningbrook means that there will be additional traffic at M20 Junction 10. Consequently, no occupations of the residential development on this site may take place prior to the completion of Junction 10a, in accordance with Policy TRA1.

4.24 There are two public rights of way running east-west across the site. One provides an at-grade pedestrian crossing over the railway line into the Conningbrook Country Park. The other diverts north to meet a further public right of way which runs just beyond and along the northern boundary of the site, and provides a further at-grade pedestrian crossing over the railway line. Given the proposed scale of development here, combined with that at Conningbrook means that considerable additional use of the at-grade crossing could be expected. The Council's preferred solution would be to replace the existing crossing with a new pedestrian / cycleway bridge over the railway in order to provide safer access into the Country Park from the site and wider area. Therefore, proposals for the development of the site must fully investigate the potential for it to deliver a new single bridge crossing over the railway line, with the intention of retaining the PRoWs as far as possible. In addition, the proposals for the site must also include cycleways and pedestrian routes that link Willesborough Road and Canterbury Road through the site.

4.25 Part of the site, along the eastern boundary with the railway line is located within Flood Zone 2. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, it is unlikely that residential development on this part of the site would be considered acceptable but a full flood risk assessment will need to be carried out in consultation with the Environment Agency. In the event that this area cannot be used for residential development, it should be utilised for publically accessible open space.

4.26 Development of this site presents an opportunity to incorporate a sustainable drainage system that will contribute to managing surface water for the benefit of flood risk, water quality, biodiversity and amenity. A drainage strategy will be required to show how the impact of the development will be reduced through site design and SUDS techniques.

4.27 It is important that existing sewerage infrastructure which crosses the site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

4.28 The northern corner of the site contains features that have the potential to support protected species and biodiversity. Further detailed investigation will be required to determine whether the site does support protected species and biodiversity, and proposals should include any mitigation necessary in order to minimise any impact upon nature conservation.

4.29 Part of the site is located adjacent to the railway line. It is likely due to the location of the flood plain, that only a limited number of properties will be located directly adjacent to the

railway line. However, the development proposals will need to demonstrate how they have been laid out and designed in order to minimise the impact from noise and vibration on the amenity of future residents of the development. A noise and vibration assessment will be required to be submitted in support of the planning application for the development.

4.30 The former Orchard Lane Landfill site is located on the northern boundary of the site, and there is evidence of soil contamination on parts of the site. Detailed proposals for development here will need to investigate this and ensure that any land contamination is appropriately dealt with prior to development taking place.

4.31 Kent County Council (KCC) is currently searching for a site for a 2FE primary school within the Willesborough and/or Kennington area in order to meet the need for primary school places. This site provides a suitable location for the provision of a primary school to meet this need. This development will be required to provide the land for the school, and make a proportionate S106 financial contribution towards primary school places to meet the needs for primary school places generated from this development.

4.32 Due to the current pressures with regard to primary school places it is envisaged that the primary school will be delivered in the initial stages of the development and this could be achieved prior to the completion of M20 Junction 10a. Liaison will be required with KCC to ensure the school can be delivered in a timely manner and to agree the details for doing this.

Policy S2 - Land north-east of Willesborough Road, Kennington

Land to the north-east of Willesborough Road, Kennington, is proposed for residential development for up to 700 dwellings. A serviced area of land shall be provided within the site for the development of a two form entry primary school. Development proposals for the site shall be designed and laid out to take account of the following:

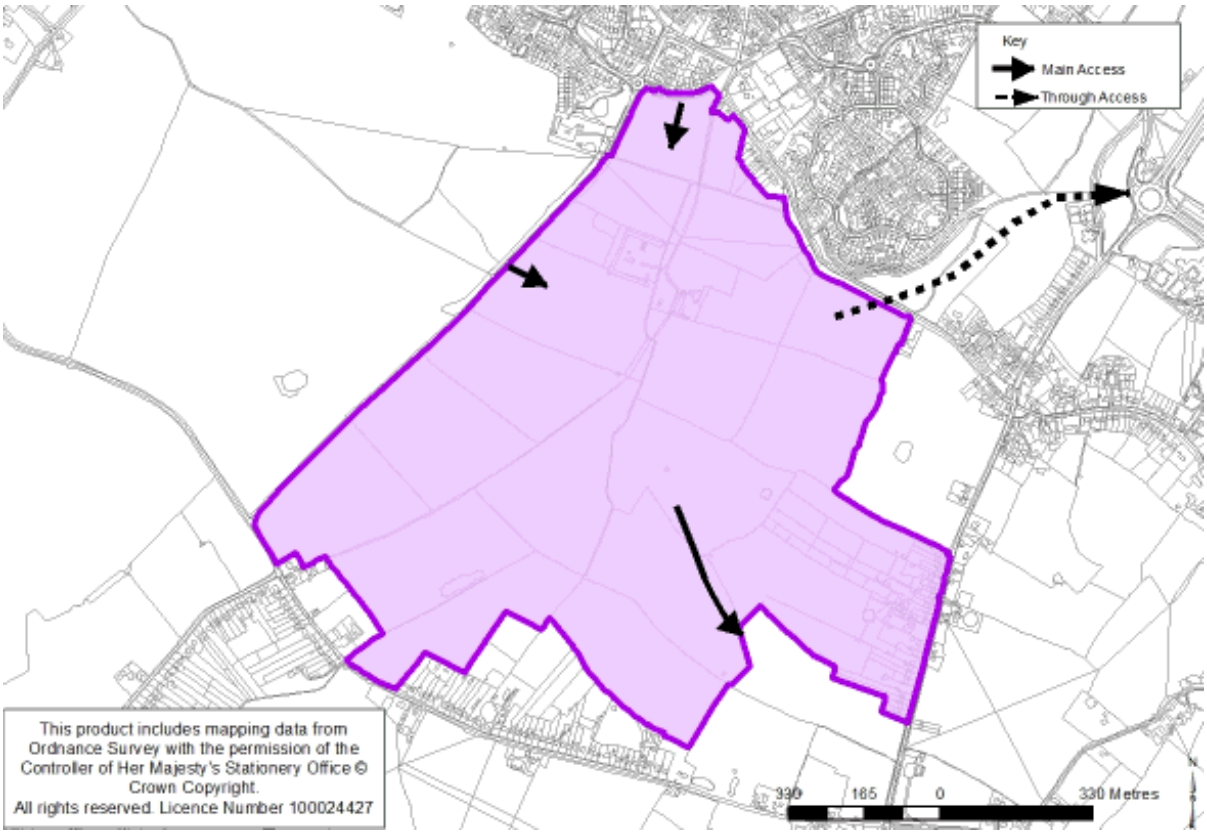
a. **The topography of the site and residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers of the site.**
b. **A full flood risk assessment that has been prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency.**
c. **Primary access to the site shall be provided from Willesborough Road, with the location of a secondary/emergency access to be determined following further investigation into the feasibility of access onto the Canterbury Road, in liaison with the Local Highways Authority.**
d. **New pedestrian and cycle routes are to be provided throughout the development with connections to existing routes. The PRoWs running through the site should be maintained and incorporated within the development, where possible. Proposals must investigate, and deliver, if feasible, a pedestrian and cycle bridge crossing over the railway line to maintain the PRoW and provide access into the country park.**
e. **The existing trees and hedgerows along the boundaries to Willesborough Road, the railway line, and the northern countryside shall be retained and enhanced, except to provide suitable access.**
f. **Proposals for ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are to be provided on the site informed by a habitat survey.**
g. **The location of the primary school site shall be determined following liaison with Kent County Council, and the site should be made available in the initial stage of developing the wider site.**
h. **Provision of an extension to the Green Corridor, allotments and areas of informal open space to meet the needs of the development.**
i. **The need to minimise the impact of noise and vibration from the railway line on the amenity of future occupiers of the development, informed by a noise and vibration assessment.**

In addition, the development shall:

i. **Make improvements to the local road network, where necessary and achievable, informed by a Transport Assessment carried out in liaison with KCC Highways and Transportation.**
ii. **Provide a proportionate financial contribution to the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new M20 Junction 10a.**
iii. **Provide a financial contribution to the extension of existing bus services in the area to serve the development.**
iv. **Provide a proportionate contribution towards primary education to contribute towards the delivery of the primary school on site.**
v. **Ensure that any land contamination issues are satisfactorily resolved or mitigated.**

No occupation of the residential element of the development shall take place until the proposed M20 Junction 10a is complete, in accordance with Policy TRA1.

Court Lodge



Please see Map 3 for detailed map

4.33 The site lies to the south of Pound Lane, east of Long Length and north of Magpie Hall Road. It is largely flat, arable and grazing land which lies partly within the floodplain of the Whitewater Dyke which passes through the site. It lies immediately to the south of the existing built-up extent of Ashford (Knights Park).

4.34 The site is proposed for up to 950 dwellings, although a final site capacity should be determined following a detailed and inclusive site masterplanning exercise that should inform any planning application for development on the site. In order to achieve a consolidated and sustainable form of development here, the built footprint should be on the northern half of the site to enable closer links to the existing development to the north. This will necessitate the remodelling of the Whitewater Dyke's floodplain to the southern part of the site which in turn should be set out to provide publically accessible open space and ecological mitigation areas, that will form an extension of the Discovery Park area proposed to be formed west of Long Length. A detailed Flood Risk Assessment will be required to support any planning application to ensure the latest flood modelling advice and information can be taken into account in the detailed layout for the site. As part of this remodelling, opportunities to improve channel flow in the Dyke should be taken to provide potential flood benefits on-site and downstream. The design of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) on the site will also need to ensure that drainage measures contribute to ensuring that existing properties near to the site are not adversely affected by the development.

4.35 The masterplan will also need to demonstrate how the remodelling of the floodplain and the delivery of SuDS form part of a wider landscape strategy for the site that seeks to utilise the higher ground to the eastern boundary as part of a broader buffer area to the properties that front Ashford Road as well as landscaping within the built up areas to create attractive public realm and natural shading.

4.36 To provide a focal point for the community, the development shall also include a 'local centre' for the provision of day to day retail services of up to 450 sq.m. This will also need to include land for the provision of a new 2FE primary school to serve the local area, which the developer will be expected to fund in part, and up to 350 sq.m. of serviced local employment (B1) space. A Community building should also be provided at the local centre which is designed so that its space may be used on a flexible basis by different community groups. The precise scale and specification of this building should be determined in association with the Borough and Parish Councils and other local stakeholder groups. The provision of the services and facilities at the local centre will need to be phased in accordance with the masterplan for the development of the site taking account of the availability and capacity of nearby facilities.

4.37 The Local Centre will also need to be sited at the confluence of the main vehicular links through the development. This will, initially, include a route from the north via Merino Way and a route from the west via Long Length. This latter route will also form part of a new 'strategic' route through the development to Pound Lane where it will meet a proposed new single-carriageway link road to the east of Knights Park linking with the A2070 junction at Park Farm (Forestall Meadow). It is expected that the development will help to fund the delivery of this new link road. In addition, the layout shall also provide for the delivery of a route to the south-east as far as the site boundary to deliver a connection to the proposed development allocation at north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road (see policy S4).

4.38 The route of the Roman Road that passes through the site should be utilised to create a strategic pedestrian route through the development area that also accesses the Local Centre directly. Further pedestrian links east to the site boundary should be provided to enable connectivity to Kingsnorth village and the green buffer planned to the south of Kingsnorth as part of a wider pedestrian route corridor from Discovery Park to the west.

4.39 Within the built footprint of the development, proposals should be brought forward for a variety of areas with different characters based on a varied set of design parameters and residential densities. Each character area should be defined by a legible street hierarchy that encourages connectivity and activity and takes account of its surroundings and context as well as its purpose in the wider development area. For example, it is expected that the area around the Local Centre would be characterised by relatively higher density development with a more 'urban' feel and include a mixture of apartments and houses. By contrast, the southern periphery of the built footprint overlooking the open space and parkland should have a lower residential density characterised by more detached properties in larger plots. A detailed design 'model' for each character area should be set out in the masterplan for the development and used to inform final dwelling capacities and layouts for specific phases. This should include mean and maximum net residential densities for each area.

4.40 This exercise will also need to show how the affordable housing elements of the scheme should be integrated and distributed across different phases of the development.

4.41 An equipped play space should be provided close to the local centre and opportunities for more informal play should be provided within the publically accessible open space in the southern half of the site. The development also provides an opportunity for new community allotments to be provided. These should be located in an accessible location with suitable parking facilities.

4.42 Given the scale of publically accessible space and ecological reserve areas to be created on the southern half of the site, it is important that there are suitable long term management arrangements in place. Development proposals for this site should include a management plan for these areas that will need to be funded for a period to be agreed with the Council.

4.43 The masterplan for the site will establish a minimum of 4 phases for the development. The initial phases shall include the delivery of the enabling works to the floodplain and the establishment of the ecological reserve areas to allow translocation of protected species.

Policy S3 - Court Lodge

Land at Court Lodge Farm is proposed for residential development for up 950 dwellings and a Local Centre, incorporating a new 2FE primary school, a set of local retail and employment space and a new community building. The development shall also provide a major new area of publically accessible open space that will form an extension to the planned strategic Discovery Park land that lies to the west of the site.

Development proposals for this site shall designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site. The masterplan shall include details of the following elements:-

a) **Flood mitigation - being informed by a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency, including levels and features to be introduced to manage flow along the Whitewater Dyke corridor.**

b) **Drainage - The layout and treatment of surface water through the use of SuDS should be provided as an integral part of the landscape design and open space strategy along with acceptable maintenance arrangements.**

c) **Ecology – full details of ecological mitigation measures to be provided on the site and proposals for their implementation and future maintenance.**

d) **Landscaping and public open space – details showing where strategic areas of landscaping and open space provision on the site, including any allotments, will be established.**

e) **The 'Local Centre' – a detailed block layout showing how residential and non-residential uses will relate to each other, including details of the arrangement of the public realm, equipped play space and any public parking facilities.**

f) **Design and Layout principles – a series of principles that set out the prevailing scale and form of the urban environment to be created in different parts or phases of the development. This will include the mean net residential densities and maximum storey heights in any phase as well as road hierarchies, streetscape treatments and building to street width ratios.**

g) **Vehicular, pedestrian and cycleway access both at the edge and within the site – in conjunction with the road hierarchies to be set out above, details of linkages and connections to be provided throughout the built and open parts of the site, including the utilisation of the route of the former Roman Road.**

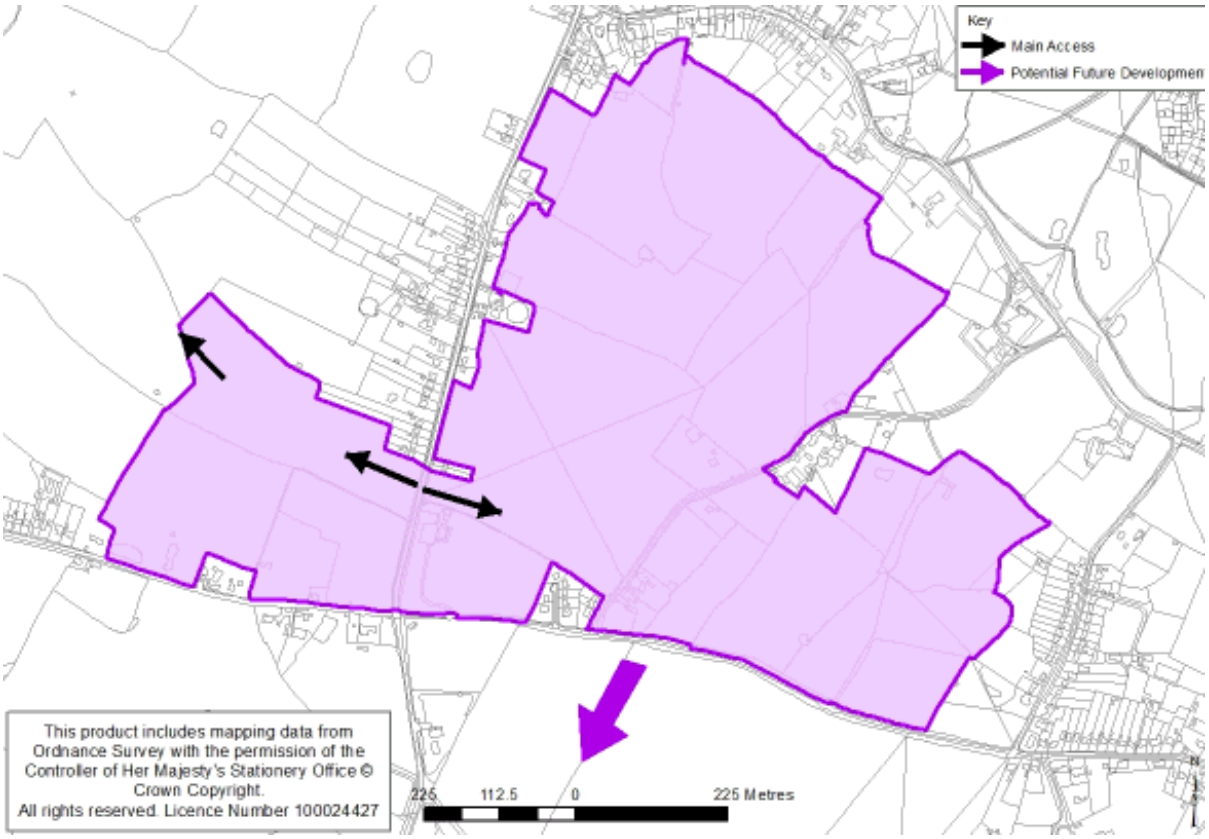
h) **Phasing – details of the proposed phasing of built development and infrastructure, including any necessary mitigation works either on or off site.**

In addition, the development shall also:-

i. **Provide primary vehicular access from Long Length to Pound Lane via the Local Centre to enable connection to the Pound Lane Link Road to the north. Vehicular access to the south –eastern boundary of the site shall also be provided as part of any proposals for the development of the site. Any other links to local roads will be determined as part of the masterplan to be agreed.**

ii. **Provide a proportionate financial contribution to the delivery of the Pound Lane Link Road and the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new M20 Junction 10a.**

Land north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road



Please see Map 4 for detailed map

4.44 This site lies to the north of the Steeds Lane/ Magpie Hall Road axis and either side of the Ashford Road. The site is in predominantly agricultural use with scattered homes and clusters of houses with a more linear pattern of development along Ashford Road adjoining the site. The predominant character is one of gently undulating farmland rising towards the north of the site to a small ridge from which there are good views of the surrounding countryside. To the north of the site there are more trees reflecting a stronger field pattern and sense of enclosure. This area is an important part of the wider setting of Kingsnorth village Conservation Area. To the south, the more formal landscape of the cricket field and the cluster of homes at the southern end of Bond Lane contrast with the mainly agricultural land around on both sides of the Ashford Road.

4.45 The main highway framework is the crossing of the north/ south Ashford Road and the east / west Steeds Lane/ Magpie Hall Road whilst towards the eastern side of the site, Bond Lane is a pleasant meandering rural lane.

4.46 This site is proposed for residential development of up to 320 units, although a final site capacity should be determined following a detailed and comprehensive site masterplanning exercise that should inform any planning permission for development on the site. There is potential for residential development in three distinct parts of the site. The land north of the cricket ground forms the principal area of new development but smaller, secondary areas west of Ashford Road and east of Bond Lane can also contribute to the creation of a new

settlement which has different and varied characters as part of it and which are part of a wider vision for how the area in general can be brought forward in a sustainable, high quality way.

4.47 The importance of avoiding coalescence in this area is emphasised elsewhere and so the northern extent of built development here needs to be carefully controlled. Development should sit below the ridge line that lies south of Kingsnorth village, with the ridge and the space between it and the village itself forming a strategic open buffer to protect the setting of Kingsnorth and create a sense of separation from the new development. The protection and enhancement of existing landscaping in this area is a key policy objective here and should be reflected in landscaping proposals for the development of the site.

4.48 In the area north of the cricket ground, the opportunity exists for a mix of residential densities but within an overall mean net density of around 20 dph. This should reflect a rural, village style character that would be appropriate in this location whilst allowing for some pockets of slightly higher density commensurate with many village layouts.

4.49 To the east of Bond Lane the setting is more rural and a significant and well defined gap of open countryside is needed between the area proposed for development and the community at Stumble Lane to avoid the areas coalescing. The Ancient Woodland at Isaac Wood forms a natural and visual boundary to the site and it will important that there is a significant landscaped and open buffer between the woodland and the built footprint here. Consequently, low density homes in large plots are appropriate in the range 10 – 12 net dph.

4.50 To the north of the properties in Magpie Hall Road, the land is ecologically sensitive and forms part of the drainage areas from the higher land to the north, so development potential here is more limited. This land also directly links to the areas proposed for ecological and drainage mitigation associated with the neighbouring Court Lodge Farm site and the wider extension of Discovery Park (policy S3). Therefore, development is proposed north of the watercourse that passes through this area, to be accessed from a new road that will eventually link through to the proposed Local Centre at Court Lodge. Development will help to animate this route and should wrap around the contours avoiding the higher ground to the north. Development here should also be at relatively low residential densities reflecting the characteristics of existing properties on Ashford Road and Magpie Hall Road i.e. at a mean net density of around 15dph.

4.51 Given the size and varying nature of different parts of the site and the need for great care in designing the relationship with neighbouring uses and countryside, the masterplan for the site needs to define the precise developable areas of the site and these will form the basis for setting actual net residential densities. Initially, masterplanning will need to establish a reasonable relationship between each area of new development and existing homes – for example, by sensitively designing and locating public open spaces and surface water drainage areas. More widely, the masterplanning will establish the detailed form of the place and the way its layout relates to the cricket ground at its heart. A comprehensive masterplan will help to build confidence for existing residents about those areas that will be developed and those that will be protected for the long term.

4.52 A landscape strategy will be needed as a key part of the masterplan. It will set out where public space and play areas will be provided; where landscape buffers are to be created, their scale and the planting proposals therein; the location of sustainable drainage features; areas of

protected habitat; footpath links to the wider area and a viable, long term management plan for all these areas.

4.53 There are several listed buildings close to the boundary of the site (two on Ashford Road, two on Magpie Hall Road and two on Bond Lane). Their settings need to be preserved. There may be also be archaeological constraints on the site and therefore, a historic landscape survey and assessment will be needed.

4.54 The primary vehicle accesses to the site should be from Ashford Road. Traffic management measures put in place as part of this development at points north and south of the development area to mark the entrance to this enlarged community to control speeds and improve the environment of the main thoroughfare should be considered. This will enable junctions onto the Ashford Road to be of a less intrusive scale and design. The highway access created to serve development to the north of Magpie Hall Road will need to be designed to serve as the start of a road linking to the adjoining proposed Court Lodge development area. Land will need to be reserved and funding made available to complete the construction of this road to the site boundary. This will help to improve the road network in the area and spread traffic movements around the south of the town.

4.55 Similarly a package of traffic management measures will be needed on the more minor roads – Magpie Hall Road; Steeds Lane and Bond Lane – to help manage and limit traffic flows to levels that are appropriate given their rural nature and lack of pavements/ lighting, etc. Within the development itself, a network of routes should be established to inform a less urban character commensurate with the generally lower density and village-style form of development.

4.56 Provision of sports and leisure facilities will be required to meet the community needs arising from the development. This could be met in part through improvements to the existing cricket club and its facilities.

4.57 Public rights of way cross the site linking to Kingsnorth village to the north and the wider countryside to the south-east and west. A network of footpaths and cycleways is needed within the site and linking to the wider area, including links in an east-west direction to the Court Lodge site.

4.58 The scale of development allocated here in this Plan will not support local shopping on its own but the passing trade along Ashford Road provides an opportunity for a local convenience shop to serve new and existing residents. The detailed location and access arrangements for a suitable site fronting the Ashford Road will be established at the masterplanning stage. Similarly, the present scale of development would not support the provision of a new primary school as part of this allocation but proportionate contributions will be required.

4.59 Given the location, number of units proposed and size of the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing, in accordance with Policy HOU1.

4.60 In allocating this site, it is acknowledged that a more sustainable form of development that would sustain its own services and facilities may be achieved by a greater scale and extent of development in the future. The land south of Steeds Lane presents an opportunity to extend this allocation in the future so that a new Local Centre to complement that to be created at

Court Lodge Farm may be formed and a more self-sufficient scale of development achieved with a more distinctive identity and character of place created. The masterplan for the site required by this policy should also acknowledge the potential future expansion of this area, particularly in establishing potential connectivity and the treatment of the boundary with Steeds Lane. The potential of the area south of Steeds Lane should be considered as part of the formal review of this Local Plan.

Policy S4 - Land north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road

Land north of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road is proposed for residential development, for up to 320 dwellings.

Development proposals for this site shall be in designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site. The masterplan shall include details of the following elements:-

a) **Design and layout principles – a series of models or codes that set out the prevailing scale and form of the urban environment to be created in each of the three separate areas of the site (north of the cricket ground; east of Bond Lane and west of Ashford Road).This will include the mean net residential densities to be created in each area as well as road hierarchies, streetscape treatments and building height to street width ratios.**

b) **Highway access proposals – details of junction arrangements on Ashford Road, Steeds Lane and Bond Lane.**

c) **Traffic management – details of any traffic / speed management measures proposed on any adopted highway within the site.**

d) **Ecology – details of ecological mitigation measures to be provided on the site and proposals for their implementation and future maintenance.**

e) **Landscaping and open space – details showing where strategic areas of landscaping and open space will be provided, including the retention of a significant open buffer area between the northern extent of the built part of the development and Kingsnorth village as shown on the policies map; and between the eastern extent of the built part of the development and the site boundary.**

f) **Drainage – the layout and treatment of surface water drainage through the use of SuDS should be provided as an integral part of the landscape design and open space strategy along with acceptable maintenance arrangements and, west of Ashford Road, be compatible with drainage proposals serving the proposed Court Lodge development.**

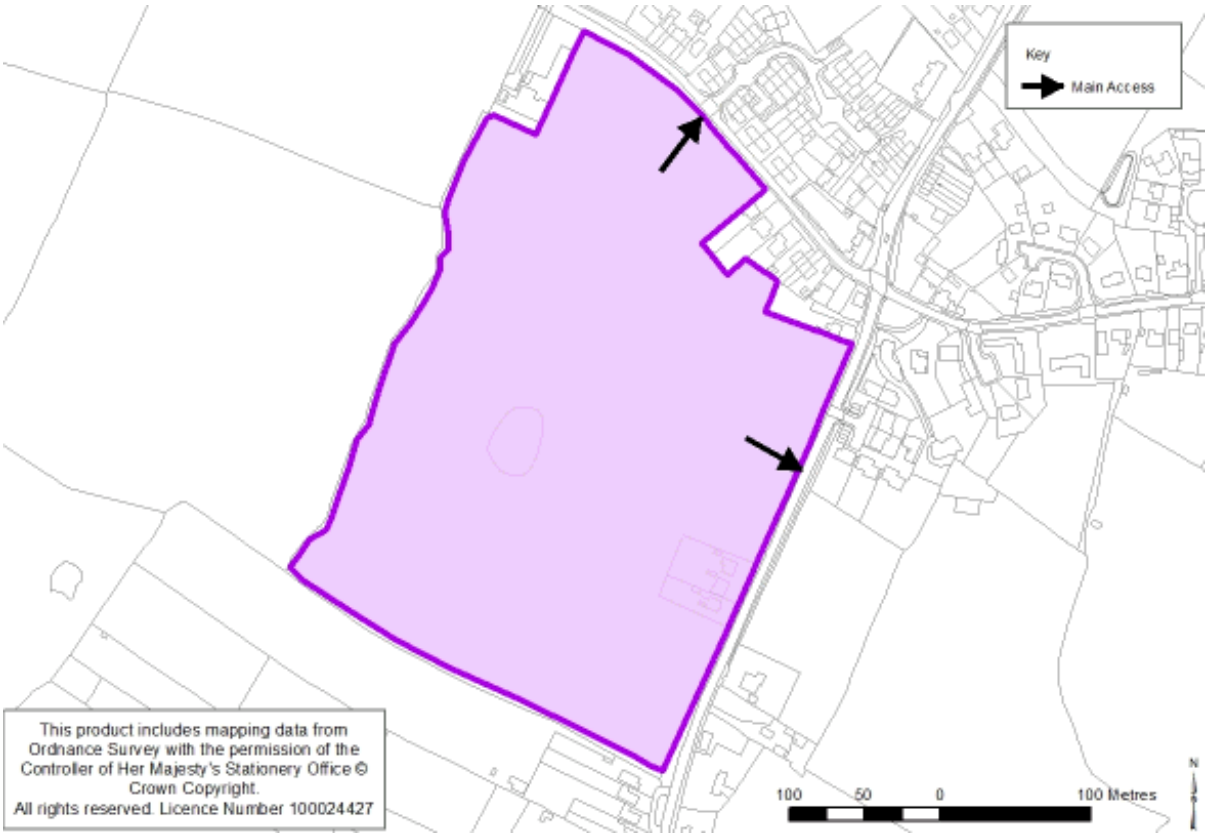
g) **Pedestrian / cycleway routes - provide a network of pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with connections to existing rural routes and public rights of way and to the new development at Court Lodge.**

h) **Community facilities – Public open space and suitably equipped play areas needed to serve the development, taking the opportunity to create a sense of the heart of the community being based around the cricket field at the main traffic corridor – Ashford Road. A local convenience store should be located here in a way that can take advantage of passing trade. A specific set of projects related to the scale of needs arising from the development will be identified in consultation with the local community and the cricket club.**

In addition, the development shall also:-

i. **Provide a proportionate financial contribution to the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new Junction 10a.**
ii. **Provide a link road from the Ashford Road to the boundary with the adjoining Court Lodge Farm development.**

Land South of Pound Lane



Please see Map 5 for detailed map

4.61 This site lies to the south of Pound Lane and west of Ashford Road. It is flat, arable land that provides part of the setting of the village of Kingsnorth, which lies to the north and east. The site also adjoins the proposed Court Lodge Farm site allocation to the west (see policy S3).

4.62 The land rises gradually from north to south towards a shallow ridge that runs west – east either side of Ashford Road. Development of the site will need to take account of the strategic context provided by the nearby Court Lodge Farm and Steeds Lane/Magpie Hall Road proposed allocations and, in particular, the key objective of avoiding coalescence of development areas. To this end, the southern part of the site should remain free from development so that it may form part of a broader swathe of open space that runs south of Kingsnorth (to the east) to the extension to the Discovery Park (to the west) and provides for the physical separation of Kingsnorth village from new developments to the south. This area should be publically accessible with pedestrian and cycleway links created across it that will form part of a wider pedestrian / cycleway network linking Discovery Park in the west to the land south of Kingsnorth village in the east. A landscaping strategy for the site should reflect this requirement and the need to provide some visual separation from the adjoining proposed development at Court Lodge Farm.

4.63 The principal access to the site should be gained from Ashford Road with a secondary access to Pound Lane. The potential for vehicular access directly west to the proposed Court Lodge site should not be prejudiced in any proposed layout on this site, and pedestrian and cycleway

links should be provided to the site boundary to achieve connectivity to the proposed Court Lodge Local Centre in due course. The potential for signalising the Pound Lane / Church Hill / Ashford Road crossroads and closing the western arm to vehicles should be investigated once the link from Ashford Road to Pound Lane has been delivered.

4.64 The Whitewater Dyke flows close to the northern boundary of the site and a full Flood Risk Assessment will need to be undertaken to inform a detailed layout for development on the site. Similarly, given the topography of the site, proposals for sustainable drainage systems will need to form part of the layout on the site to ensure that runoff conditions are at least no worse than in an undeveloped state.

4.65 It is important that the amenities of the residents of the handful of existing properties on the southern side of Pound Lane are protected in the layout and orientation of any new development. This should mean that there is adequate separation and screening provided as part of any development on this site.

4.66 The proximity of the site to Kingsnorth village, the Park Farm District Centre and the proposed Court Lodge Farm Local Centre means that it would not be necessary for this site to accommodate additional new local recreational, educational or community facilities. However, proportionate financial contributions to deliver, improve, extend or refurbish existing or planned facilities as appropriate will be sought to mitigate the additional demands generated by development here. Informal and publically accessible open space should be provided as part of the undeveloped land at the southern end of the site.

4.67 It will be important for development here to pay regard to the nature of nearby existing and planned housing in terms of establishing an appropriate scale and density. To the north of Pound Lane, Riverside Close accommodates a series of mainly terraced properties whilst the nature of the properties on Pound Lane itself and along Ashford Road tends to be mainly detached or semi-detached. Consequently, a mid-range net residential density of around 25dph is likely to be appropriate here which would generate a residential site capacity of around 100 dwellings. In accordance with policy HOU1, 30% of the dwellings on this site shall be provided as affordable housing and there should be a mix of dwelling types and sizes to reflect the nature of the surrounding area.

Policy S5 - Land South of Pound Lane

Land south of Pound Lane is proposed for residential development, for up to 100 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:-

a) **Retain the southern part of the site free from built development, with the creation of pedestrian and cycleway links across the land from Ashford Road to the western site boundary.**

b) **Provide primary vehicular access from Ashford Road and a secondary access to Pound Lane. Proposals shall also enable the ability to provide a vehicular connection to the boundary with the adjoining Court Lodge Farm development.**

c) **In addition to the pedestrian and cycleway connection in (b) above, provide a network of pedestrian and cycleway links through the built part of the site including a connection to the site boundary with the adjoining Court Lodge development.**

d) **Provide a landscaping plan for the site, to be agreed by the Borough Council, to create a significant visual break with the adjoin Court Lodge development and to screening to the houses and gardens of any adjoining residential properties.**

e) **Be subject to a full Flood Risk Assessment, to be agreed by the Environment Agency and the Borough Council. The layout and treatment of surface water drainage will need to ensure that there is no adverse flooding or drainage effects to any neighbouring properties.**

In addition the development shall also:

- **Provide a proportionate financial contribution to the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new Junction 10A**

Former Newtown Works



4.68 The former Newtown railway works site lies between Newtown Road and the main railway domestic and high speed railway lines. The site is one of the largest available areas of brownfield land in the Borough. The site contains six listed buildings which together form a very important heritage asset and a reminder of Ashford's historical importance as a centre of railway engineering. Part of the site has recently been developed for housing with over 100 new homes.

4.69 Suitable proposals for the site include residential, tourism uses, workshop and office employment space, and small scale specialist retail uses.

4.70 The listed railway sheds are the dominant feature in a very linear form along most of the length of the site – they provide some noise protection from the maintenance works and operational railway running along the north east boundary of the site but are a very important local heritage asset reflecting the town's railway heritage.

4.71 The site is closely linked to the adjoining former Klondyke Works (Policy S7) and together both sites have substantial undeveloped areas with the potential to accommodate suitable development that will both regenerate this area but also be an attractive place to visit for a much wider public. Given these opportunities, and the relationship between the site and the communities and other uses surrounding it, development should be planned comprehensively and proposals need to be based on an agreed masterplan for the whole site. This will also determine how the development is phased.

4.72 Vehicle access is available from either end of the Newtown Works site with the Listed clock tower and gatehouse providing much interest and character at the western access opposite the Klondyke site, whilst at the eastern end of the site, the new housing development helps to frame the entrance point. Detailed junction design will need to protect the settings of the listed gatehouse and clock tower, reduce related signage and safety barriers to the minimum and be able to handle the substantial pedestrian movements that are likely to arise in future.

4.73 Whilst the primary access will be from the western end of Newtown Road, additional traffic generated by the development will aggravate the situation on Crowbridge Road where there is a narrow, humped back bridge. The masterplan for the site will need to include proposals for signalisation here to tackle this.

4.74 A network of cycle and pedestrian routes is needed to show how the planned development on the site links to surrounding areas and helps to reverse the current, relatively isolated nature of the sites.

4.75 There is a strong opportunity to take advantage of the many visitors to the Designer Outlet Centre and the proximity of the domestic and international railway stations to attract people to this area to enjoy the railway heritage and help to make a mix of potential uses viable. In turn this will help to secure a long term future for the important listed buildings on the site which are a key part of Ashford's heritage.

4.76 The residential capacity of the site will be influenced by the eventual mix of uses and the type of homes built and so this policy only suggests an indicative capacity of about 450 homes to be provided on the site (including the 108 already constructed). Substantial employment floorspace is likely to be created within the existing listed buildings – especially the main locomotive shed. Convenience retailing to support the residential development on the site should be limited to no more than 450 sq.m. of any retail space created and any other retail units should be specialist and small scale in nature and demonstrated to not have a significant impact on the vitality and viability of the Town Centre.

4.77 The policy approach to the mix and combination of uses needs to be relatively flexible to help create the opportunity for a viable scheme to come forward that will fund the re-use and repair of the listed buildings and make good use of this substantial brownfield asset. There are, however, some key constraints that need to shape emerging schemes.

4.78 Before full development of the site can take place, off-site highway improvements are needed to provide additional capacity at the A2070 Orbital Park junction and a clear commitment to the delivery timetable for the new Junction 10a on the M20. The threshold set for the quantity of development that can be occupied on the site as a whole before these improvements are committed is based on the historic, 'fall back' position from previous uses on the Newtown and Klondyke sites. The relatively close proximity to the stations and town centre and the bus service through the area provide the opportunity to reduce the car based trip rate arising from the development of the area.

4.79 Residents in the area have long been concerned about pressures arising for on-street parking from visitors and those working in the area. A comprehensive approach is needed that links any major development proposals on these sites to the provision of appropriate parking controls (for example, through a controlled parking zone) and a package of traffic management measures.

4.80 A comprehensive development proposal for the area will need to bring together land use proposals with traffic planning and parking issues and deal with the re-use of the historic buildings. The layout of the development should derive from an historical analysis of the site and create fine quality public spaces as the setting for both the linear form of the main listed sheds, and more intimate spaces around the other smaller listed buildings and the western entrance to the site. This should also determine the best route for through-traffic in the area – whether along Newtown Road or through the site itself – and for public transport access.

4.81 The heritage of the area needs to be reflected strongly in emerging proposals and special care given to the sensitive restoration and re-use of the remaining listed buildings, including the huge main locomotive shed. There may be scope for innovative but high quality design interventions to help enable re-use – for example, within the main shed. The masterplan will need to show how phased development of the site will enable the restoration, conversion and reuse of the listed buildings and 'trigger points' will be set to link the delivery of new build development to this phased strategy for recovering the historic assets.

4.82 The scale of new buildings should be carefully related to the scale of the listed buildings – both the imposing main shed and the smaller ancillary buildings. A scale of 4-6 storeys will be appropriate over much of the site with key corners and landmark locations within the site having special prominence. Building frontages and uses along the busiest parts of the public realm should be 'active' to add interest and vitality.

4.83 The site was levelled for their former railway use resulting in a significant change in levels where the land rises to the Newtown Road boundary. This has the effect of reinforcing a sense of separation between the site and Newtown itself, the railway village that once supported its workers. Residential development on the Newtown Road frontage should face the street and be designed to help integrate it with the existing residential area at Newtown – including respecting the predominantly 2-3 storey scale.

4.84 Three dimensional modelling will be required so the impact of new building can be tested and the scheme designed to create views of the listed buildings. Given the important heritage assets in the area and the likely demand for high levels of public access, the design of the public realm is especially important - for example, development proposals should include details of the design of outdoor lighting and street furniture, signage, bus shelters, public art and landscaping. The site designs will need to incorporate good public transport facilities, cycleways and pedestrian routes that link to the train station, Designer Outlet Centre and the Town Centre and also clear plans to meet the car parking needs of residents and visitors.

4.85 The impact on trees and biodiversity must be assessed prior to any development. There are a number of mature trees on the southern boundary along Newtown Road. A clear strategy will need to be agreed for retention of important trees and replacement new planting where appropriate.

4.86 Details of a scheme to deal with contamination of land and/or groundwater must be submitted and approved for each phase of development and a programme of building recording to ensure that the historic buildings are properly examined and recorded. Archaeological field evaluation works must also be carried out on the site, along with any subsequent mitigation measures, before development commences. Capacity in the local sewerage system is insufficient to service the proposed development. It will be necessary to upgrade the existing local sewerage infrastructure before development can connect into it. It is also important that

existing sewerage infrastructure which crosses the site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

4.87 Affordable housing will need to be provided in line with policy HOU1, subject to the viability of the overall package of proposals, recognising the considerable investment required in providing long term protection for the listed buildings. Starter homes will be an important element of any affordable provision. The affordable homes already created on site as part of the completed phase of development can be counted towards the future requirement arising on the site.

Policy S6 - Former Newtown Works

The site of the former Newtown Railway Works is proposed for a mixed use neighbourhood based around the regeneration of the area through the restoration of the range of listed railway buildings to create an attractive new place to live and work and for visitors to enjoy.

Suitable proposals for the area include residential, tourism uses, workshop and office employment space, and specialist, small-scale retail uses of a type that would not seriously impact on the town centre.

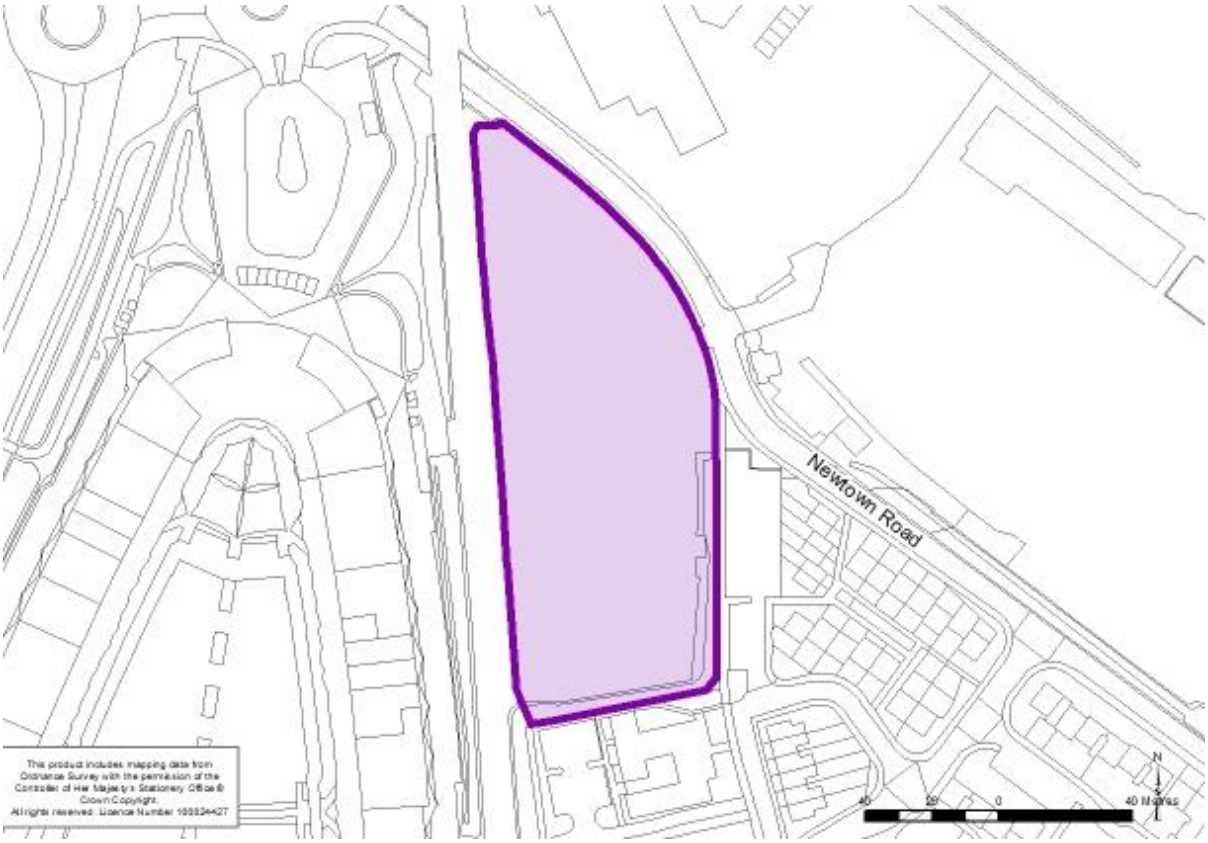
A comprehensive masterplan / development brief for the site and the adjoining Klondyke works should be prepared to inform the precise scale and mix of development here but it should include a new mixed use neighbourhood with at least 350 additional homes and a substantial area of commercial floorspace.

Development proposals for this site shall be in accordance with the agreed masterplan / development brief and:-

a) **ensure the restoration and re-use of the listed buildings on the site;**
b) **provide a sensitively design access to the site from Newtown Road taking account of the listed buildings affected;**
c) **be based on a parking strategy that provides adequate public and on-street parking to best meet the needs of residents and visitors;**
d) **fund the signalisation of the Crowbridge Road bridge, and traffic management works required as a result of the development;**
e) **accord with a detailed agreed phasing schedule that will include the timing of the redevelopment of the listed buildings on the site;**
f) **deliver excellent and comprehensively planned public realm as part of the development, including a detailed range of materials, proposals for outdoor lighting and street furniture, signage, bus shelters, public art and landscaping;**
g) **provide new pedestrian routes and cycleways throughout the development and convenient links to existing routes to areas around the site and local services and the town centre;**
h) **retain important trees and be based on a site-wide landscaping plan;**
i) **provide details that deal with contamination of land and/or groundwater, building recording and archaeology.**

Only development that would generate no more traffic than would have been generated by the equivalent of the previous lawful uses of the site, shall be built and occupied in advance of the granting of a Development Consent order for the construction of the proposed M20 Junction 10a and until additional capacity has been provided at the Orbital Park A2070 junction.

Former Klondyke Works



4.88 This former railway works site is located on Newtown Road close to the residential area of Newtown and the McArthur Glen Designer Outlet Centre lies on the other side of the Ashford to Hastings railway line to the west.

4.89 The site is closely linked to the adjoining former Newtown Works and together both sites have substantial undeveloped areas with the potential to accommodate suitable development that will both regenerate this area but also be an attractive place to visit for a much wider public. Given these opportunities, and the relationship between the site and the communities and other uses surrounding it, development should be planned comprehensively and proposals need to be based on an agreed masterplan for both sites. This will also determine how the development is phased.

4.90 There is a strong opportunity to take advantage of the many visitors to the Designer Outlet Centre and the proximity of the domestic and international railway station to attract people to this area to enjoy the railway heritage and help to make a mix of potential uses viable.

4.91 Planning permission has been granted for the Ashford International Model Railway Centre and associated parking on the site, which will be a significant visitor attraction for the Borough. If circumstances in the future were to change then an appropriate alternative use could be for a suitable residential development on the site.

4.92 In terms of the possible residential development of the site, the location of the site makes it suitable for a relatively high density development. A building scale of 3-4 storeys is

appropriate but both the scale and positioning of buildings at the southern end of the site will need to respect the domestic nature of the surrounding houses and converted school.

4.93 Whilst the primary access will be from the western end of Newtown Road, additional traffic generated by the development will aggravate the situation on Crowbridge Road where there is a narrow, humped back bridge. The masterplan for the site will need to include proposals for signalisation here to tackle this.

4.94 On the site there is a marked level change to the south which adds to the strength of containment of the site from the residential area to the south. The site borders the Hastings railway line and beyond that the Designer Outlet Centre which has planning permission for a significant extension up to Newtown Road.

4.95 Before full development of the site can take place, off-site highway improvements are needed to provide additional capacity at the A2070 Orbital Park junction and a clear commitment to the delivery timetable for the new Junction 10a on the M20. The threshold set for the quantity of development that can be occupied on the site as a whole before these improvements are committed is based on the historic, 'fall back' position from previous uses on the Newtown and Klondyke sites. The relatively close proximity to the stations and town centre and the bus service through the area provide the opportunity to reduce the car based trip rate arising from the development of the area.

4.96 Residents in the area have long been concerned about pressures arising for on-street parking from visitors and those working in the area. A comprehensive approach is needed that links any major development proposals on the sites to the provision of appropriate parking controls and a package of traffic management measures.

4.97 Given the important heritage assets in the area and the likely demand for high levels of public access, the design of the public realm is especially important - for example, development proposals should include details of the design of outdoor lighting and street furniture, signage, bus shelters, public art and landscaping. The site designs will need to incorporate good public transport facilities, cycleways and pedestrian routes that link to the train station, Designer Outlet Centre and the Town Centre and also clear plans to meet the car parking needs of residents and visitors.

4.98 The impact on trees and biodiversity must be assessed prior to any development. There are a number of mature trees on the southern edges of the site and a clear strategy will need to be agreed for retention of important trees and replacement new planting where appropriate.

4.99 Details of a scheme to deal with contamination of land and/or groundwater must be submitted and approved for each phase of development and a programme of building recording to ensure that the historic buildings are properly examined and recorded. Archaeological field evaluation works must also be carried out on the site, along with any subsequent mitigation measures, before development commences. Capacity in the local sewerage system is insufficient to service the proposed development. It will be necessary to upgrade the existing local sewerage infrastructure before development can connect into it. It is also important that existing sewerage infrastructure which crosses the site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

Policy S7 - Former Klondyke Works

The site of the former Klondyke Railway Works is proposed for a tourism/visitor attraction use such as the Ashford International Model Railway Centre. A suitable alternative use would be for residential development.

A comprehensive masterplan / development brief for the site and the adjoining Newtown Works site should be prepared.

Development proposals for this site shall be in accordance with the agreed masterplan / development brief and:-

a) **provide a sensitively design access to the sites from Newtown Road;**

b) **be based on a parking strategy that provides adequate public and on-street parking to best meet the needs of residents and visitors;**

c) **fund the signalisation of the Crowbridge Road bridge, and traffic management works required as a result of the development;**

d) **deliver excellent and comprehensively planned public realm as part of the development, including a detailed range of materials, proposals for outdoor lighting and street furniture, signage, bus shelters, public art and landscaping;**

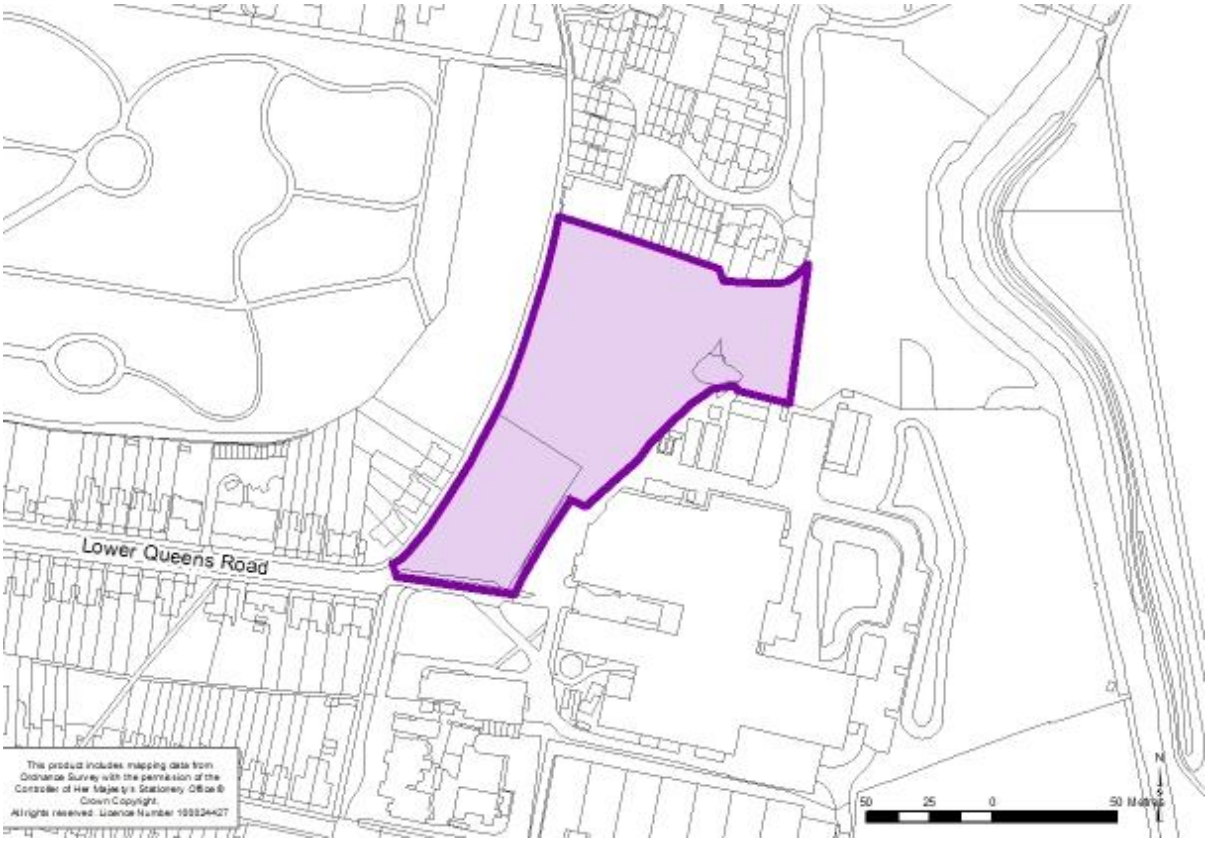
e) **provide new pedestrian routes and cycleways and convenient links to existing routes to areas around the site and local services and the town centre;**

f) **retain important trees and be based on a site-wide landscaping plan;**

g) **provide details that deal with contamination of land and/or groundwater, building recording and archaeology.**

Only development that would generate no more traffic than would have been generated by the equivalent of the previous lawful uses of the site, shall be built and occupied in advance of the granting of a Development Consent order for the construction of the proposed M20 Junction 10a and until additional capacity has been provided at the Orbital Park A2070 junction.

Lower Queen's Road



4.100 The site is at the eastern end of Lower Queens Road and adjacent to the Invicta Press works to the south. Existing residential development lies to the north and the site adjoins the green corridor to the east. The northern half of the site is currently unmanaged woodland, with the southern part currently forming the Invicta Press car park.

4.101 Residential development will be acceptable on this site for up to 40 dwellings. Alternatively, this site could form the first phase of a wider redevelopment scheme with the potential to create an attractive residential riverside environment close to the town centre in tandem with the redevelopment of the adjacent Mace lane industrial estate to the south. A redevelopment of the wider area, in excess of the 40 units, will require the provision of a primary access onto Mace Lane

4.102 The primary access to this site should be from Lower Queens Road but if there is a wider redevelopment of the wider area, in excess of the 40 units, there will be a requirement for the provision of a primary access onto Mace Lane and at this point the potential to restrict access into the whole site from Lower Queens Road, including full closure, should be thoroughly investigated.

4.103 The area has an attractive setting next to the green corridor but any development will need to demonstrate how it would make a positive contribution to the setting and appearance of the green corridor through innovative design and layout. Development must be of an appropriate scale and reflect existing development in the area ranging between 2 – 3 storeys in height.

4.104 Given the location, size and number of units envisaged for the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU1.

4.105 An existing sewer runs beneath the site and any layout of development will need to ensure that the existing sewerage infrastructure on site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

4.106 Access to open space and recreational facilities will need to be improved by linking development on the site to the wider network of existing pedestrian/cycle paths surrounding the site. New pedestrian/cycleway routes that improve accessibility into and through the Green corridor to the east shall be provided.

Policy S8 - Lower Queens Road

Land at the end of Lower Queens Road is proposed for residential use (up to 40 units)

Development proposals for the site shall:

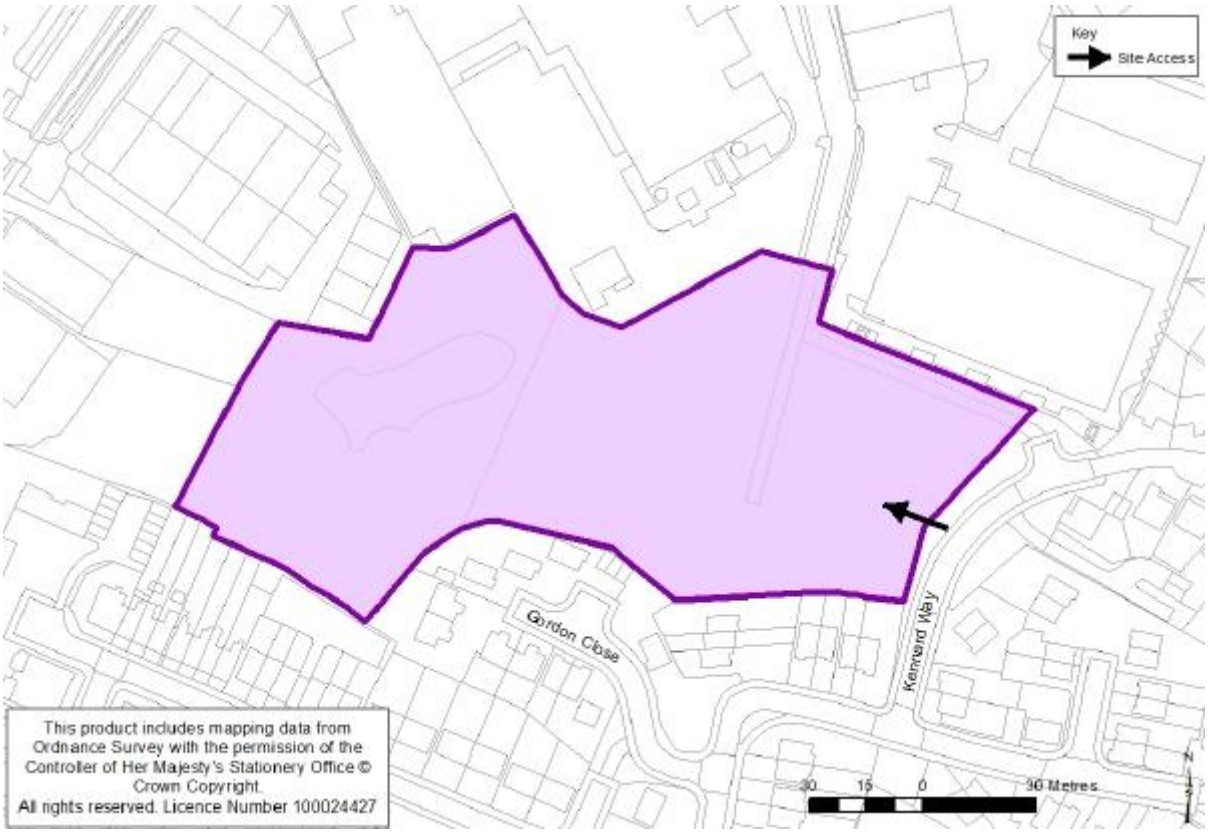
a) **Provide the primary vehicular access to the site from Lower Queens Road**

b) **Ensure the built form and layout respects the setting of the green corridor**

c) **Ensure the development is of an appropriate scale ranging between 2-3 storeys in height**

d) **Provide links to existing pedestrian/cycle paths surrounding the site, including improving accessibility into and through the green corridor to the east of the site.**

Kennard Way, Henwood



4.107 This site is located on the north eastern edge of Ashford Town Centre, off Hythe Road. It is situated between a residential area to the south and east and the Henwood Industrial estate to the north and west. It has previously been designated as part of a wider Henwood employment allocation in the Local Plan 2000 and Urban Sites DPD 2012 and obtained outline permission in 2008 for employment use (now expired) which was not completed. For these reasons, the site is now considered suitable for residential development, due to its close proximity to the recently developed residential areas in Gordon Close and Kennard Way.

4.108 The site is currently comprises rough scrubland, with a pond and some mature vegetation in the western part. The adjacent Industrial estate comprises of a mix of warehouses, office blocks and open storage areas. The residential areas to the south and east are mainly two-storey terraced and semi-detached houses. The site currently contains two access points, one from the Industrial Estate in the north and one from Kennard Way, which is a private road, unadopted by the Highways Authority. The site has good access to local services due to the edge of town location.

4.109 Residential development is suitable on the eastern side of the site which provides a developable residential area of approximately 0.45ha. This could accommodate around 25 dwellings depending on house size, layout and design. To be in keeping with the existing residential areas, dwellings should be 2 storey, terraced or semi-detached properties, which front the road where possible, with the potential for higher stories in northern parts of the site, where it adjoins the Industrial buildings. The design and layout, particularly the relationship between the industrial and residential areas requires careful planning, to ensure no detrimental impacts on the residents.

4.110 Given the location, size and number of units assumed on the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing in accordance with policy HOU1.

4.111 The development should preferably be accessed from a new junction mid way along the boundary with Kennard Way, if land ownership issues here can be resolved. The existing vehicle access between the site and Henwood should be retained for emergency access purposes only, and could be redirected through the new access point. Cycle links and pedestrian footpaths should be created that link in with the existing network.

4.112 The site is constrained in the west due to the pond, and lies within flood zone 2 here. Therefore this area should be landscaped and kept free from development, to be used as an ecological area and/or informal open green space and/or SUDS. This will also create a green buffer area between the residential areas of Wallis Road and Gordon Close and the existing employment buildings in Henwood, and the boundaries should be enhanced with additional landscaping. A full flood risk assessment, in consultation with the environment agency should be undertaken prior to any development taking place.

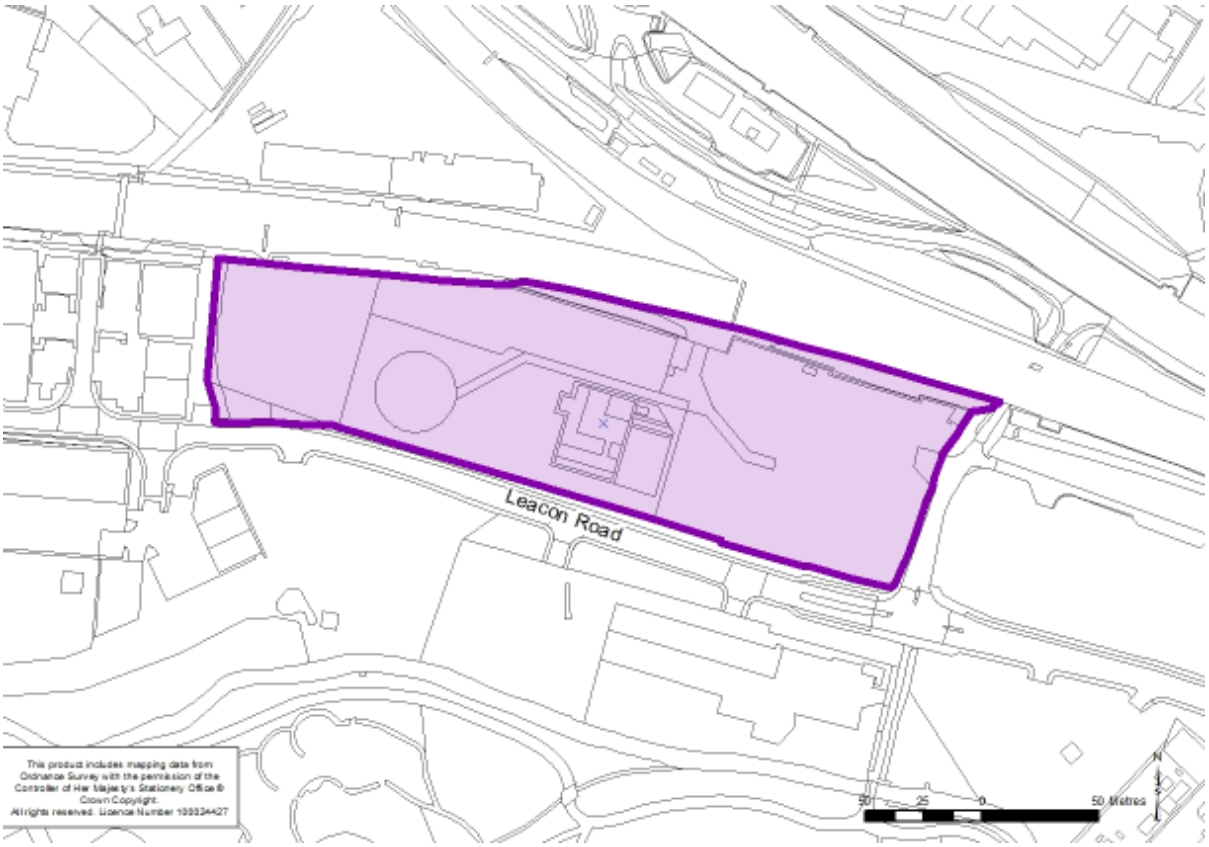
4.113 The site falls within an area of archaeological potential, and also has the potential to contain contamination due to the neighbouring uses. Appropriate surveys should be undertaken in consultation with the relevant bodies prior to planning application stage.

Policy S9 - Kennard Way, Henwood

Land at Kennard Way, Henwood is proposed for residential development for up to 25 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out to take account of residential amenity. Particular attention needs to be given to the relationship between the residential and industrial areas around the site;**
b. **Provide primary vehicle access on Kennard Way, preferably in the centre of the site. An emergency access point should be retained between the site and Henwood Industrial Estate;**
c. **Ensure residential parking provision is provided in accordance with policy TRA3(a) and fund implementation of suitable on-street parking restrictions for non-residents;**
d. **provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with connections to existing routes and local services;**
e. **Retain and extend the tree boundary between the site and Henwood, to screen the industrial buildings from the new residential development and provide new landscaped boundary along the southern edge of the site to lessen the visual impact of the development, particularly from Gordon Close;**
f. **Protect and enhance ecological areas in the western part of the site, including the existing pond;**
g. **Include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency and provide SUDS in accordance with ENV9**

Gasworks Lane



4.114 This site is adjacent to the Town Centre and located between the railway and Leacon Road. The site was used for the storage and distribution of gas, and as a depot for Southern Gas Networks. However the site is now clear and the gas holder that was on part of the site has been decommissioned and demolished. The site is an opportunity to deliver sustainable development on a brownfield site next to the Town Centre.

4.115 Given the size of this site and its relationship to adjacent sites, development should be planned comprehensively and proposals will need to be consistent with a wider agreed approach based on a masterplan for the redevelopment of the whole site. This will also determine if phasing is required and how this will be achieved.

4.116 Residential development should be the principal use on this site and should be in the form of mainly flatted accommodation, however townhouses are also acceptable. They should be designed in a way that provides a strong street frontage to Leacon Road and generally range from 3 to 4 storeys in height. A gradual transition in scale to the lower height employment buildings to the west will be required. The northern elevations along the railway frontage should create a positive edge to the development and include dual frontages.

4.117 Towards the western end of the site, where it adjoins the existing Leacon Road Industrial estate, some employment development could be appropriate in order to provide a transition from an industrial to a more residential character. This could be in the form of some mixed use buildings or smaller scale buildings suitable for light industrial or office uses. Employment development and site layout issues may warrant an additional access to the approved access to Gasworks Lane.

4.118 In addition, there may also be scope to include complementary small scale retail or office uses at the ground floor. With this in mind, residential development provided at ground floor level facing Leacon Road shall have internal heights that are a minimum of 4 metres, to provide greater flexibility for uses at ground floor level.

4.119 Proposals for developing the site will need to be accompanied by an assessment of any contamination arising from the existing or previous uses and proposals will need to demonstrate how any remaining contamination issues can be resolved.

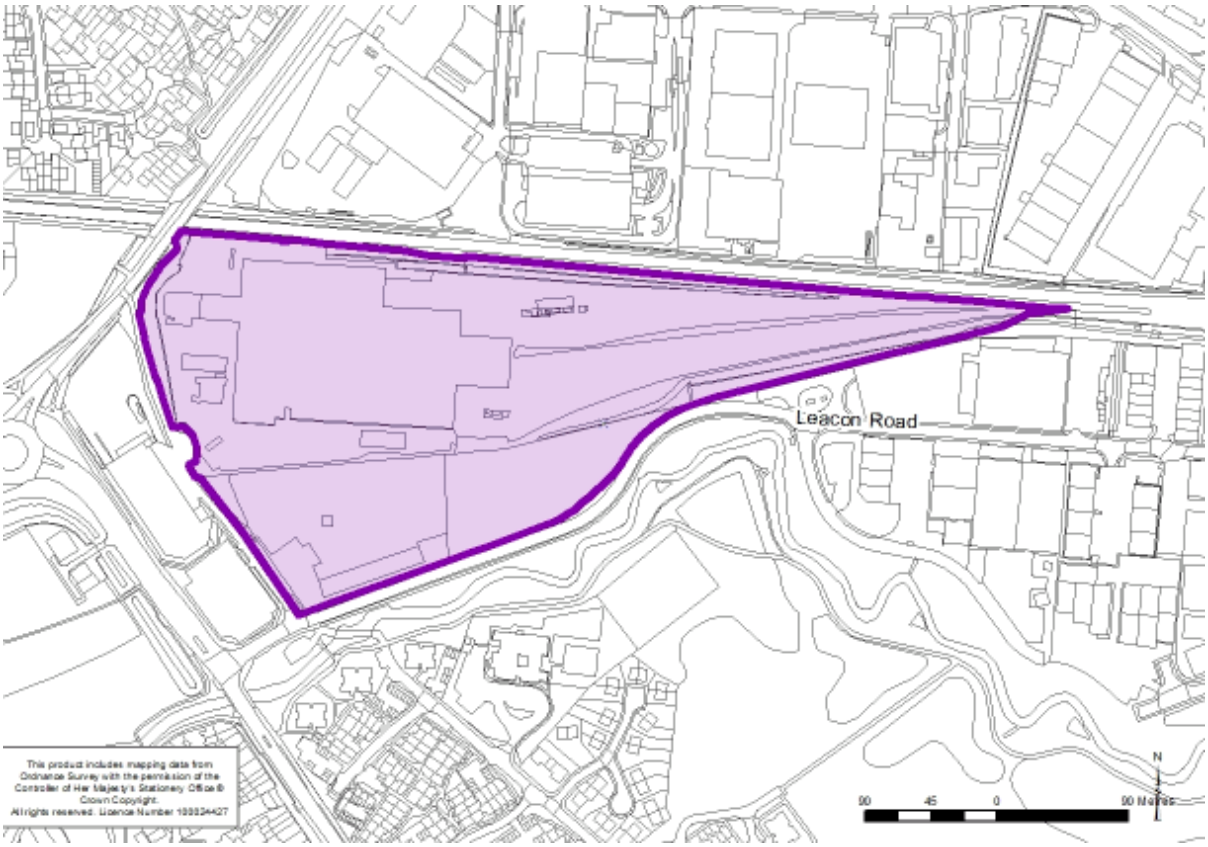
4.120 Sustainable drainage should be provided inline with policy ENV9 and early liaison is required with Southern Water regarding connections to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity and future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

Policy S10 - Gasworks Lane

This site is proposed for residential development (up to 150 units) and should be of a general scale of between 3-4 storeys in height. A masterplan for the whole site will need to be agreed prior to the granting of planning permission.
Schemes should provide a range of different types and sizes of housing accommodation in the form of flats and potentially townhouses. Some limited employment use towards the western end of the site and retail / office uses at ground floor level is also encouraged.
Development proposals shall:-

a. **Ensure residential parking provision is provided in accordance with policy TRA3 (a) and fund implementation of suitable on-street parking restrictions for non-residents;**
b. **Provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with connections to existing routes and local services;**
c. **Include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency.**

Leacon Road



4.121 This site lies to the south of the Ashford – Tonbridge railway line and to the immediate east of the Matalan retail building and car park. Along the southern edge, the site directly fronts onto Leacon Road and the route into the industrial area to the east that links through to the Domestic and International Stations.

4.122 The whole site is considered suitable for a mix of residential and commercial B1-B8 uses and should be developed in accordance with an approved masterplan. The connection of Leacon Road and Victoria Road has transformed the potential of this area, creating a high quality urban street with good public transport connections into the town centre, as well as providing an efficient through-road for traffic wanting to by-pass the town centre. It has a prominent position along Leacon Road with the eastern and south west corners of the site being highly visible in the streetscape. As such, residential development would be suitable on part of this brownfield site.

4.123 The scale of any residential development should relate well to the surrounding area. Residential development along the Leacon Road frontage should be primarily 3 storeys in height reflecting a narrower corridor along this part of the route reducing in scale from development allocated in the town centre to the east. However, the prominent eastern and south western corners could accommodate an additional one or two storeys to create some variety and interest in the streetscape. Development should have a strong built form with well designed frontages to reflect the high quality urban route and a positive built return frontage should also be created along Beaver Lane.

4.124 Part of the site lies within flood zone 3. It is critical that development follows sustainable design principles to mitigate any risk of flooding either on the site or elsewhere. A detailed flood risk assessment, prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency, will be required to support any planning application for development here.

4.125 The area to the rear directly adjoins the Ashford – Tonbridge railway line and there is an existing railway siding that links into the site that used to be part of the former Bombardier Works site that is now vacant. This part of the site should accommodate primarily B1- B8 uses. The opportunity to potentially use an existing connection to the railway line is an important one and the development of a masterplan for the site should fully investigate the possibility of retaining and using that link if possible.

4.126 The relationship between uses on the site is crucial and the masterplan will need to ensure appropriate and adequate separation of uses that delivers a high quality environment for any future residents on the site.

4.127 Given the location, size and numbers of housing units envisaged on the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing in accordance with policy HOU1.

4.128 There could be access points directly into the proposed residential scheme from Leacon Road but access to any commercial development at the rear of the site should via the existing Beaver Lane access or potentially from the eastern edge of the site. A small strip of land along the southern boundary of the site will be required to fully create the parameters for the Leacon Road / Victoria Road route and this land should not be developed.

4.129 The site lies opposite the Stour river corridor which lies within the identified green corridor area and in accordance with policy ENV2 proposals on this site should make a positive contribution to the setting, role, biodiversity, accessibility and amenity value of adjacent green corridor area. In relation to this, the national cycle network runs through the green corridor opposite the site, connecting Victoria Park and Singleton Lake which are important areas of open space within this urban setting. Development must be designed so that it is well connected to the existing footpath and a cycle network and provides an attractive and safe route for pedestrians and cyclist to the town centre.

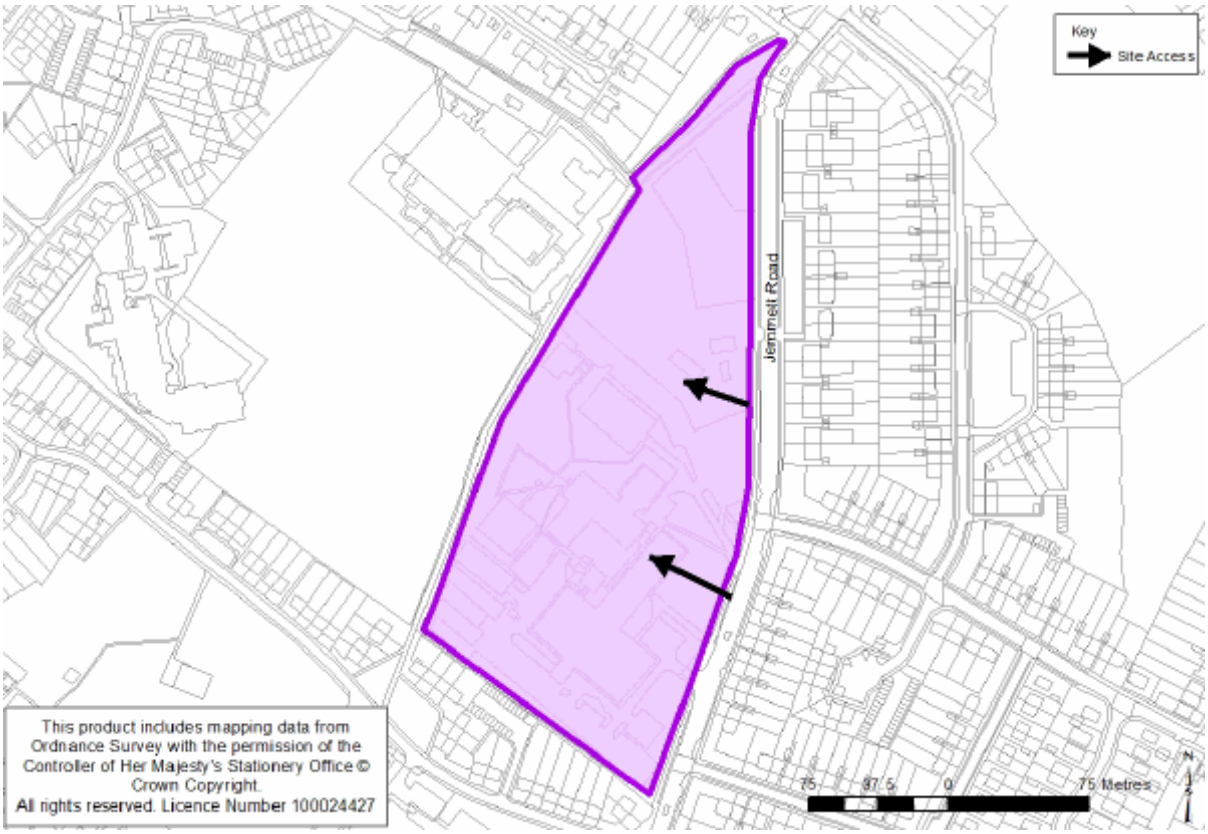
Policy S11 - Leacon Road

This site is allocated for a mix of residential development (up to 100 dwellings) and commercial (B1 - B8 uses)

Development proposals shall come forward in accordance with a detailed masterplan for the site that should be based on the following principles:

a) **Provide residential development along the Leacon Road frontage;**
b) **Provide commercial development adjoining the railway line and fully investigate the potential to utilise the existing railway sidings as part of any commercial scheme;**
c) **Provide a high-quality development with built frontages to Leacon Road and Beaver Lane;**
d) **Ensure appropriate and adequate separation of uses within the site;**
e) **Create new access points to the site from Leacon Road and improve access to the development via Beaver Lane and retain a small strip of land along the southern frontage for the creation of the full extent of the highway;**
f) **Connect to the existing network of footpath and cycleway routes;**
g) **Include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency;**
h) **Make a positive contribution to the setting, role, biodiversity, accessibility and amenity value of the adjoining green corridor area**

Former K College, Jemmett Road



4.130 This site is currently a further education college campus located on Jemmett Road within walking distance of the town centre, railway station and Victoria Park. The site is currently in use as an important educational facility for the borough but the College will shortly re-locate to a site within the town centre which is under construction and hence there is the potential to redevelop this site once the relocation has taken place.

4.131 Most of the southern half of the site accommodates the college buildings and a significant amount of hard standing and car parking. The northern half of the site tapers into the former Ashford South Primary School access road and is largely overgrown scrub with a number of trees, although it was once occupied by buildings in educational use. The disused nature of this part of the site means that it has a degree of ecological value.

4.132 The principle of redevelopment to residential uses has been established on this site linked with the redevelopment of the adjoining Former Ashford South Primary School (Policy S13) . Residential redevelopment of the site was previously granted outline planning permission by the Council under reference 07/00117/AS.

4.133 Immediately abutting the western boundary of much of the site is the public right of way, Jemmett Path, that is also part of the 'Learning Link' which is a major north-south enhanced pedestrian / cycleway route from the town centre to Stanhope. Development proposals for the site must not detrimentally impact on the retention or use of Jemmett Path and must widen and make enhancements and improvements to it in order to increase its attractiveness to users.

4.134 Development of this site must facilitate the ability to bring forward development on the adjacent former primary school site and must be designed to be cohesive with the design approach taken on the adjacent site. As part of the development, two all-movement access points from Jemmett Road shall be provided through to the site boundary adjoining the learning link for vehicular access to site S13 to be created – these are shown on the Policies Map.

4.135 The design and scale of development here will need to take account of the character of the surrounding residential areas of Noakes Meadow and Jemmett Road and any scheme proposed on the adjoining former school site. The design should ensure that the residential amenity of existing neighbouring occupiers is protected. Any development proposals would need to provide a frontage to Jemmett Path and public open space to ensure that safety through natural surveillance of this community area is achieved.

4.136 The site is within close proximity (150 metres) of Victoria Park, a strategic recreation facility providing play equipment for different age groups, areas of open space for informal play and more formal areas of planting. Therefore, a contribution towards enhancement of these facilities at the park may be more suitable than the requirement for development of play facilities on-site. However, the site does provide the opportunity to provide more local areas of public open space, which should form part of the overall site design.

4.137 The northern part of the site contains a number of mature trees within the site curtilage, some of which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. These should be considered for retention to help provide wildlife havens, habitat links and visual softening of the development.

Policy S12 - Former K College Site

Subject to the relocation of the K College campus to the Town Centre Site, the site in Jemmett Road is proposed for residential development. Development proposals for the site shall:

a) provide two vehicular routes through the site from Jemmett Road to the site boundary adjoining Jemmett Path and (Policy S13)

b) enhance and improve the Jemmett Path/Learning Link pedestrian and cycle route and cease existing vehicular use of the Learning Link once one of the routes required under a) has been provided;

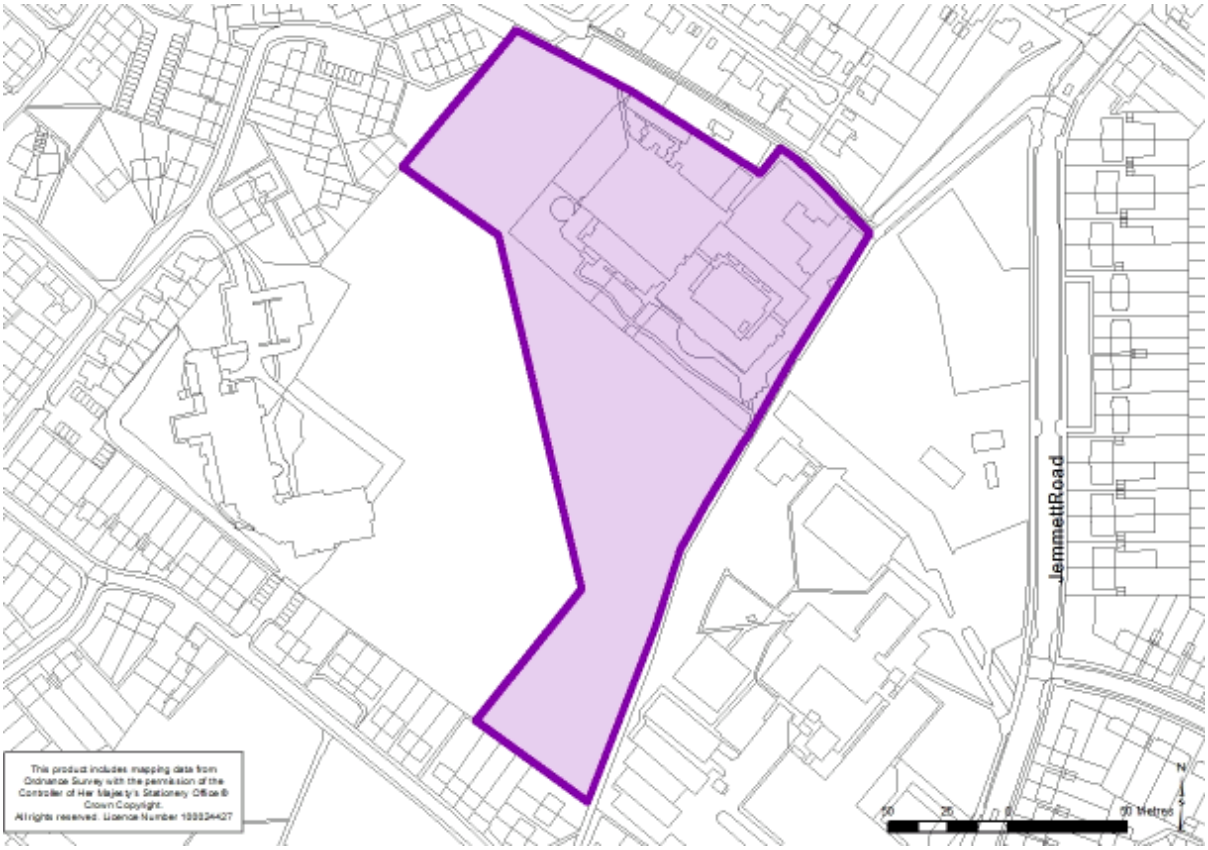
c) ensure that the scale, design and character of the development takes account of the character of the surrounding area and any scheme proposed on site S13;

d) ensure that there is no significant impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers;

e) provide contributions towards the provision, enhancement and maintenance of Victoria Park; and

g) retain the protected trees within the site and provide appropriate additional planting.

Former Ashford South School, Jemmett Road



4.138 This former primary school is principally vacant with a small number of the buildings being let on a short-term basis for community uses and clubs. It is located off Jemmett Road and provides a rare opportunity to develop a partly brownfield site within walking distance of the town centre, railway station and the existing strategic Victoria Park. However, there are current plans to re-use the school buildings for a period of time of no more than 8 years, as a temporary school to meet the education needs of development in the urban area, currently under construction, until new provision is provided in that specific location.

4.139 The site is land-locked, located to the west of the existing K College site (Policy S12) and north of the Ashford Oak Tree Primary School. However, with the college pursuing a scheme to re-locate to the town centre and a redevelopment scheme proposed for the Jemmett Road K College site redevelopment of this former primary school site becomes deliverable with access to the site being provided through the adjoining college site.

4.140 The concept of redevelopment to residential uses has long been established on this site and on the adjoining K College sites. The Council has previously resolved to grant planning permission (07/01789/AS) for up to 158 units and the site is currently allocated in the adopted Urban Sites and Infrastructure Development Plan Document.

4.141 Immediately abutting the eastern boundary of the site is the public right of way, Jemmett Path,that is also known as the 'Learning Link' which is a major north-south pedestrian / cycleway route identified in the Core Strategy. This strategic routeway is termed the 'Learning Link' due to its close proximity to several schools and colleges and extends from

the town centre to Stanhope. Development proposals for the site should not detrimentally impact on the retention of the 'Learning Link'.

4.142 Development of this site should be cohesive with the adjacent K College re-development proposals but it is important that the development of this site is able to function as a self contained development in its own right. Consequently, the design and scale of development of the scheme would need to take account of the character of the surrounding area and the scheme proposed on the adjoining K College site and ensure that the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers is protected and not over-burdened, this is particularly the case on the northern boundary. Any development proposals would need to provide a frontage facing the Learning Link to ensure that natural surveillance of this community area is achieved.

4.143 The site lies adjacent to the Ashford Oak Tree Primary School and the opportunity should be taken to provide an additional pedestrian and cycle access to the school via this development site.

4.144 The site is within close proximity (150 metres) of Victoria Park, a strategic community facility providing play equipment for a number of age groups, areas of open space for informal play and more formal areas of planting. Therefore a contribution towards this facility may be more suitable than the requirement for an onsite play facility. However, the site does provide the opportunity to provide more local areas of open space, which could form part of the overall site design and aesthetics.

4.145 The closure of the school has led to loss of a playing field that was used by the wider community and arrangements will have to be made to secure the use of an appropriate alternative playing field in the locality.

4.146 The western boundary of the site contains a number of mature trees which would need to be retained as part of any new proposal, this will not only provide a natural boundary to the site but help smooth the transition between the surrounding housing and new development. The existing mature trees within the site curtilage, some of which have a TPO should also be retained to add design features to the new development and to provide wildlife havens and habitat links.

Policy S13 - Former Ashford South School, Jemmett Road

The former Ashford South Primary School site is proposed for residential development (up to 110 units) Development proposals for the site shall:

a) be accessed via the adjoining K College (S12) site;

b) enhance and improve the 'learning link' pedestrian and cycle route way;

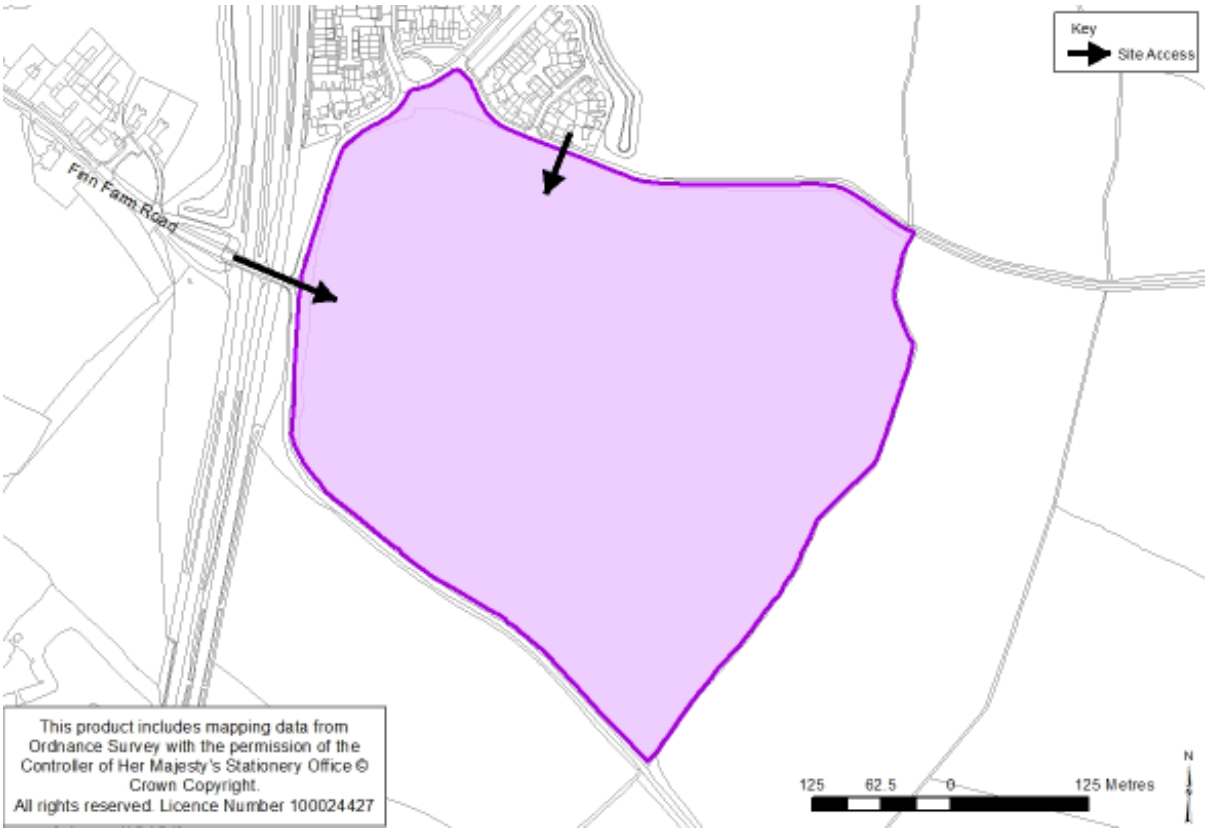
c) ensure that the scale, design and character of the development takes account of the character of the surrounding area and the scheme proposed on the adjoining K College site;

d) ensure that there is no significant impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers;

e) provide an additional pedestrian and cycle access through the site to the adjacent Ashford Oak Tree Primary school; and

h) retain the mature trees on the site.

Park Farm South East



4.147 The site is located adjacent to the new residential development known as Bridgefield. The site is currently in agricultural use. Finn Farm Road forms the western and southern boundary of the site and it also adjoins the Ashford to Hastings railway line. Directly to the west is a bridge that crosses the railway line and the A2070 meeting at a three-way traffic light junction joining Finn Farm Road, Brockman's Lane and Cheeseman's Green Lane. The north and north western boundary of the site is formed by Cheesmans Green Lane which directly adjoins the existing development at Bridgefield. Once built, the Park Farm Southern Link Road (anticipated to be delivered in 2016) will link this area to new extensive residential development being constructed at Finberry to the east of the site. The site rises to a ridgeline in the southern western corner of the site and the eastern part of the site lies within flood zones 2 and 3.

4.148 The overall context of this site has recently changed as it now adjoins the new development at Bridgefield and, with the extent of other development that has taken place in this part of Ashford since the adoption of the Core Strategy (2008) and that is currently underway, it is considered that the site can now form part of an integrated network of development and supporting infrastructure that could be well connected to adjoining development and services and therefore the principle of development in this location is now considered to be sustainable. The existing developments in the area are well served by public transport via local bus services and there is a proposal for a rail station along the adjacent Ashford - Hastings railway line. Development of this site should make provision for local bus services and contribute towards the provision of the Ashford-Hastings rail station if required.

4.149 The gross site area is approximately 11 hectares which includes a much smaller developable area which is not affected by flooding constraints. This smaller area has potential for up to 250 dwellings depending on size and layout considerations and could achieve net residential densities to reflect the adjoining development at Bridgefield.

4.150 Given the location, size and number of housing units envisaged on the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing in accordance with policy HOU1.

4.151 Given the character and appearance of the adjacent development, a scheme of 2-3 storey buildings would be most appropriate here. A mix of dwelling sizes and types will be required. The design and layout must take account of residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Due to the ridgeline in the south of the site, particular attention is needs to be paid to the site's topography and it is crucial that the higher, more prominent parts along the ridgeline within the site are kept free from development.There should be a generous soft landscaped edge provided along the southern boundary to provide a transition into the wider landscape and to minimise the visual impact of new development in this location. Existing trees and hedgerows which define the other boundaries should be retained where possible.

4.152 In terms of vehicular access to the site, the primary vehicular access point to the site is shown on the Policies Map and is located in the western edge of the site and would adjoin to the existing controlled junction at Finn Farm Road. The existing arrangement at this junction is unsatisfactory with a three way signalised junction and the opportunity must be taken to improve the junction arrangements if possible by providing an access point into this site. There is also a proposed vehicular access point into the site from Cheesmans Green Lane indicated on the Policies Map. Cycle and pedestrian links will need to be provided throughout the site to help integrate the development with existing development at Bridgefield.

4.153 The eastern part of the site lies within flood zone 2 and 3 which is unsuitable for development but may provide an area for sustainable drainage, the conveyance of water, open space including an extension to the existing green corridor that runs adjacent to the eastern boundary of Park Farm East.

4.154 Development of this site presents an opportunity to incorporate sustainable drainage that will contribute to managing surface water for the benefit of flood risk, water quality, biodiversity and amenity. The Sustainable Drainage SPD should be adhered to in establishing suitable options for surface water disposal.

4.155 The developable area outside of the flood constraints will need to be supported by a full flood risk assessment which should be carried out in consultation with the Environment Agency.

4.156 It will be necessary to upgrade the existing local sewerage infrastructure before development can connect to it. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

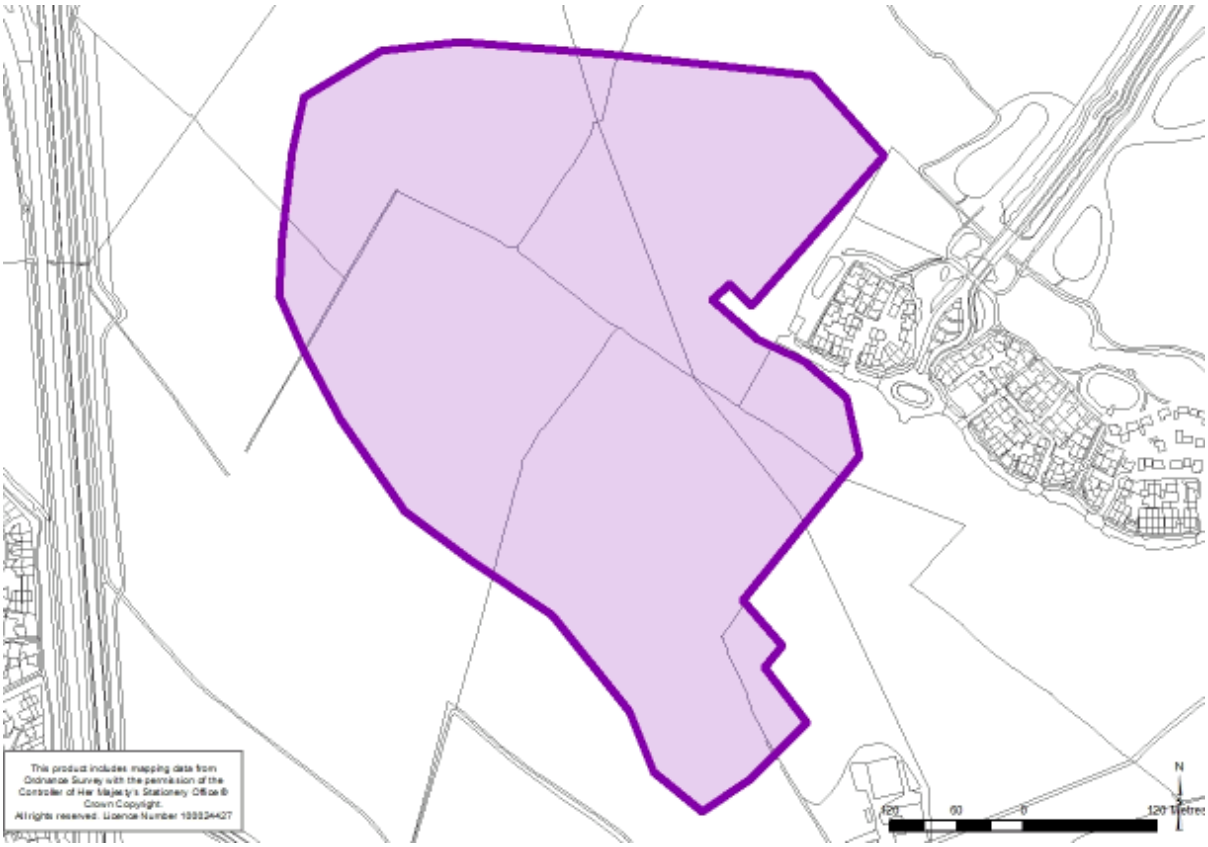
Policy S14 - Park Farm South East

The site south east of Bridgefield is proposed for residential development for up to 250 dwellings.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance of open areas. The development should be no more than 2-3 storeys in height.**
b. **Investigate the potential to provide a primary vehicle access from the traffic controlled junction at Finn Farm Road to improve the overall junction arrangements, as shown on the policies map.**
c. **Make provision for links to the public transport network including contributions to the rail station along the Ashford-Hastings railway line if required;**
d. **Ensure parking provision is provided in accordance with SPD/fund implementation of suitable on-street parking restrictions for non-residents.**
e. **Provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with linkages into the wider network and adjoin developments.**
f. **Provide generous soft landscaping along the southern edge to lessen the visual impact of the development and retail existing trees and hedging where possible.**
g. **Extend the existing green corridor along the eastern part of the site.**
h. **Include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency; and Provide SUDS in accordance with the SPD.**

Finberry North West



4.157 The site lies to the south of the A2070 and west of the Ashford - Hastings railway line. It represents an opportunity to integrate additional residential development with a currently under construction and award winning high quality residential led development called 'Finberry' on the edge of Ashford. The current development is being delivered pursuant to outline planning approval (02/00278) for a total of up to 1,100 residential units (including 110 live work units) and 70,000 sqm of business floorspace, together with mixed use community facilities, landscaping and public open space.

4.158 The land covered by this policy was to be the location of 70,000 sqm of business floorspace, live work units and residential uses approved in the outline permission. It was envisaged to come forward in large scale employment buildings and relatively high density residential accommodation, although the outline permission for this part of the development has now expired.

4.159 The Council and landowners have been in dialogue regarding this land parcel for some time, as it has been clear that the significant scale and form of the employment space permitted was unlikely to be delivered. This position is reinforced by employment evidence that supports this Local Plan which identifies the area as a secondary location for employment use. Significant levels of employment growth should instead be focused towards the 'primary' employment areas (Commercial Quarter, Eureka Park, Waterbrook and Sevington).

4.160 The Local Plan therefore provides the opportunity to re-examine what role this land should now play in achieving a sustainable and deliverable planning solution – one which meets the wider objectives of this Local Plan and is consistent with the NPPF. With this in mind, this

site is proposed to deliver up to 300 residential units and 8,500 sqm of employment space, alongside additional community uses to cater for the increase in local population.

4.161 Given the complexities associated with the site in terms of its integration with what is being delivered and the wider schemes now more residential focus, a masterplan shall be prepared and agreed prior to planning permission being granted. The masterplan will need to consider the following.

4.162 New development coming forward at this site will be delivered in a way that complements the existing and planned development at Finberry, in terms of its scale, density, design and materials used. It will be consistent with the established design principles in that it achieves the 'sustainable village' principles which are embedded within the current scheme, including the creation of a distinct identity and architectural style, the promotion of a range of dwellings types and sizes and the promotion of an active and vibrant central area that is a defining feature of the scheme and includes a range of complementary uses.

4.163 This central area will be expanded (to that currently planned) to include 8,500 sqm of employment floorspace to maximise its accessibility, promote activity and movement and complement the other non-residential uses that will be delivered here which combined will give the central area much of its vibrancy and sense of place. This scale of employment floorspace will cater for small and medium employment uses in line with evidence that supports the Local Plan that identifies a need for such space in accessible locations – such as those which enjoy easy access to the strategic road network.

4.164 In addition, the masterplan shall explore how the delivery of not less than 10 live/work units around the central area can be achieved as a means of providing flexible space at ground floor level to cater for start-up businesses or very small scale operations. This approach will complement similar units which are being implemented through the current scheme, help to enhance the central area and allow for flexibility to cater for changing employment demands over time.

4.165 Where residential development is proposed adjacent to the central area it will be designed in a way that provides an appropriate sense of enclosure with strong building lines to promote clear legibility throughout the development. Higher density development will be sought in this location. Elsewhere, residential development will be delivered in a way that provides a gradation of housing density across the site from medium densities in the middle part of the site to lower densities on the periphery, to mark a suitable and soft transition into the countryside.

4.166 In line with policy HOU1 of this Local Plan suitable affordable housing provision will be delivered on-site, including starter home provision. Its suitable integration with the general market housing offer will be explored through the masterplan process.

4.167 A green spine consisting of open space and a cycle route will form a key design feature for development on this site. It will connect with the green spine that is currently being implemented and provide clear desire lines and direct access to the countryside and beyond. A local children's play space area will be delivered along this green spine to provide accessible play for the new residents of this area.

4.168 The masterplan shall be supported by a landscape strategy and a detailed ecological and flood mitigation strategy that will need to ensure that the impact of the whole development is suitably mitigated and any provisions are consistent, where applicable, with what is currently being implemented.

4.169 As reflected in the housing trajectory that supports this Local Plan (appendix 5) – and as reflected through the current outline permission – housing development is limited to 700 dwellings at Finberry until M20 Junction 10a is completed. However, should planning permission be granted before this date then the dwellings on this site can come forward provided the overall total figure for the wider site does not exceed the current capacity constraints. This position will need to be agreed with the Council and the Highways Authorities.

Policy S15 - Finberry North West

Finberry north-west is allocated for up to 300 residential dwellings and 8,500sqm of B1-8 employment floor space. Development proposals for this site will be implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan that will set out how:

a) Residential development is delivered in a way that provides:

- **A continuation of the current scheme in terms of the design, scale, layout, materials used and style of build.**
- **A gradation of average densities across the site with high density development framing the central area through to lower density development where the scheme will mark a soft transition to the countryside.**
- **Affordable housing in line with Policy HOU1 of this Local Plan in a way that is suitably integrated with the general market housing offer.**

b) Employment space is delivered to cater for a mix of small and medium sized uses that provides an extension to the currently planned central area. The masterplan will also establish how not less than 10 live/work units are provided with flexible ground floor space, adjacent to the central area.

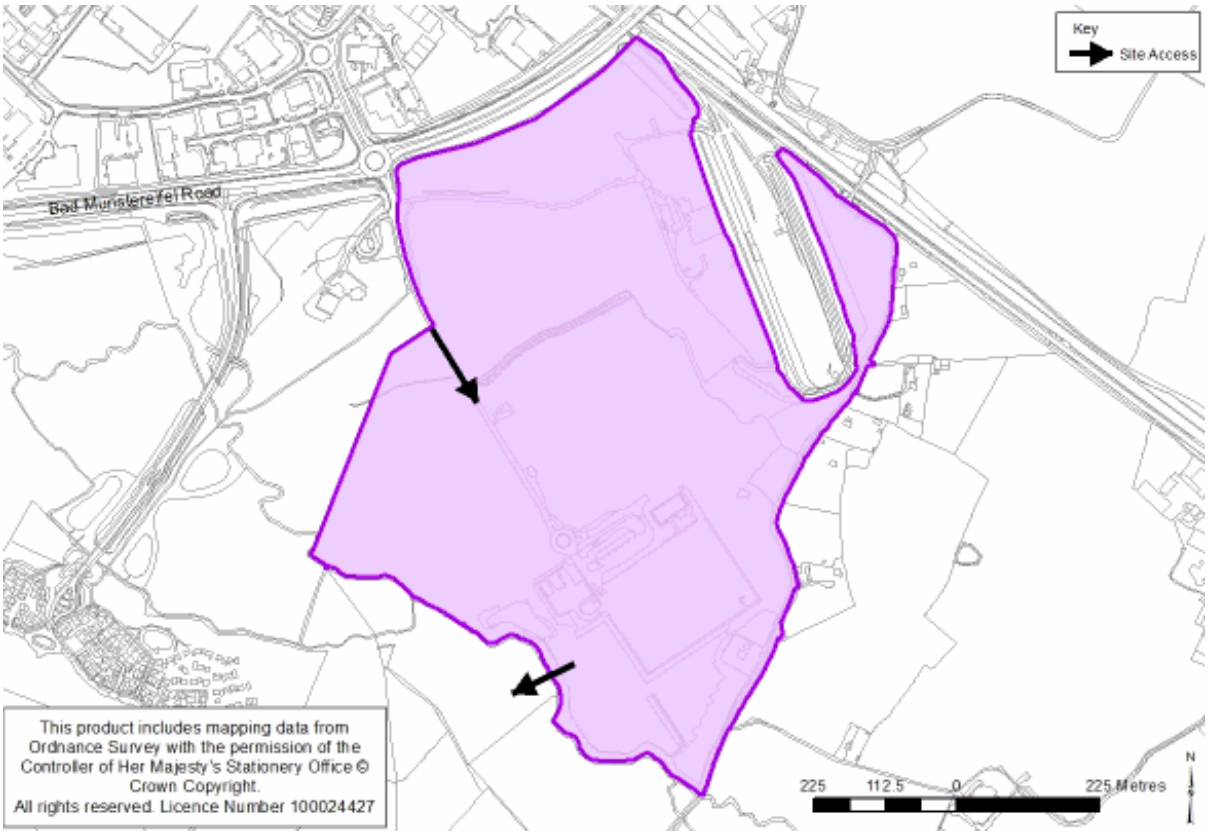
c) Landscaping and open space shall be provided in a way that:

- **Provides connectivity and legibility with what is currently being planned.**
- **Delivers a 'green spine' – a strategic corridor and cycle route through the site that is complemented by a local children's play space.**
- **Provides a suitable buffer for the development where it adjoins the countryside**

d) Suitable ecological and flood alleviation measures are delivered.

Development on this site shall also provide appropriate financial contributions towards the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new M20 Junction 10a.

Waterbrook



4.170 The site is a key development opportunity located on the south eastern edge of the built up part of the Ashford urban area and lies adjacent to the Orbital Park commercial area. It is bounded to the north by the A2070 / Southern Orbital Road, to the north- east by the Ashford – Folkestone railway line and Cheeseman's Green Lane to the east. The south western boundary of the site adjoins the East Stour river corridor with the Finberry development on the opposite side of the river.

4.171 The Waterbrook site has been allocated since 2000 and, most recently, in the Core Strategy 2008 as part of the wider Cheeseman's Green/Waterbrook area for mixed use development. Under this policy the wider Cheeseman's Green / Waterbrook area was proposed to provide around 4,300 homes and at least 1475 jobs by 2021 with further development thereafter.

4.172 Planning permission currently exists for mineral and waste operations on land adjoining the site. Permission has been granted for the permanent retention and use of sidings for the importation and distribution of construction aggregates. There is also permission for aggregate storage, construction and demolition waste recycling, hot tarmacadam storage, concrete crushing and screening, concrete batching, and provision for a domestic, commercial and industrial waste transfer station. This area falls outside the draft policy site area.

4.173 Planning permission also exists for a vehicle testing facility – this is a facility operated by VOSA (the Vehicle Operating Standards Authority) which is currently under construction – vehicle and plant storage and maintenance facility, B1, B2 and B8 units, and associated highway and earth works on part of the site. Otherwise, the site is currently undeveloped except for the area in use as a commercial lorry park on the eastern edge of the site.

4.174 The site is proposed for a mix of residential and commercial uses. Proposals will be required to be in accordance with a masterplan that will determine the detailed quantities of development and the overall layout of the site.

4.175 The masterplan shall include the provision of an additional 300 commercial lorry parking spaces on the site as part of a relocated and enlarged truck stop facility that will be designed to cater for currently unmet overnight lorry parking needs. This currently results in lorries parking in unauthorised locations around the area. The most suitable location for this facility is in the northern part of the site adjacent to the railhead – accessed via the proposed commercial area which would minimise impact upon the proposed residential development. There are residential properties on the adjoining Cheeseman's Green Lane that will be relatively close to the re-located lorry park and the noise, artificial lighting and visual impact will need to be carefully mitigated, including with noise attenuation and substantial landscaping and planting.

4.176 Elsewhere on the site, the principal uses should be commercial development (B1, B2 or B8) and residential development. Some 'sui generis' uses, such as those found at Orbital Park (e.g. car showrooms) will also be acceptable in principle here. The masterplan shall make provision for a minimum of 20 hectares of commercial development (excluding the truck stop).

4.177 Residential development can also be accommodated on the site for up to 300 dwellings, depending on detailed layout, dwelling size and mix. It is critical that any residential scheme is physically separated from the commercial development and the extended lorry park. The most suitable locations for residential development are on the south western edge of the site, which lies across the river corridor from Finberry; on the site of the existing truck stop at the south of the site, and on the eastern side of Waterbook Avenue.

4.178 The location of the residential development and its relationship to adjoining commercial uses will be a key consideration. It is critical that there is a high quality and imaginative landscape framework with significant scale and density of landscaping and screening included as part of the open spaces that separate land uses and link to the river and countryside to the west. Proposals for the mitigation of noise from lorry movements and any associated commercial operations will need to be specifically addressed as part of the masterplan.

4.179 Given the location, size and number of residential units envisaged on the site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing in accordance with Policy HOU1.

4.180 The primary access to the site is from the A2070 Southern Orbital Road junction. There is currently an access road in place through to the existing lorry park and another access road within the site being constructed that gives access to the VOSA facility that is under construction and will provide access to other commercial buildings, railhead site and the proposed replacement lorry parking facility.

4.181 The junction with the A2070 has recently been improved to accommodate the initial development stages of the Finberry site and further improvements are planned to improve access to both Waterbrook and Finberry in due course.

4.182 A secondary link to the site shall need to be provided to the Finberry development where the majority of new local services that will support the residential development at Waterbrook

will be sited. This should become an ‘all-movements’ link to accommodate public transport services, a cycle and pedestrian route as well as car traffic. The masterplan should also consider opportunities for more cycleway and footpath links to the wider network of rights of way towards the Ashford urban area and the surrounding countryside. All development on this site should be served from either of these two access points with no vehicular access from Cheeseman’s Green Lane.

4.183 Development of the Waterbrook site is also dependent on the delivery of the additional motorway junction capacity proposed in the M20 Junction 10a scheme. Whilst an initial stage of development (which has planning permission) may come forward in advance of the new junction, occupation of new development on the remainder of the site will need to be restricted until Junction 10a is completed.

4.184 The south western edge of the site adjoins the East Stour river corridor and falls within flood zone 3, it also is part of Ashford’s green corridor network and is a Local wildlife site. Acceptable proposals for this site will need to show how the opportunity has been taken to enhance this significant landscape corridor to help set the development of this site in the wider landscape and at the same time improve the green corridor environment and ecology.

Policy S16 - Waterbrook

Land at Waterbrook is proposed for a mix of residential and commercial development together with a re-located and extended commercial lorry parking facility.

Detailed proposals for this site shall be developed in accordance with an approved masterplan that:-

a) **provides a re-located 600 space lorry park on the eastern part of the site, adjacent to the aggregates facility;**

b) **provides up to 300 dwellings on the western and southern parts of the site;**

c) **provides a minimum of 20 hectares of commercial development;**

d) **ensures the proper segregation of uses within the site through the provision of substantial landscaping and screening based on a strong landscape framework for the site;**

e) **provides suitable mitigation to deal with noise, visual impact and artificial lighting to restrict the impact of the new development on the new residential properties to be developed on the site and the existing properties along Cheeseman's Green Lane;**

f) **provides vehicle access from the A2070 and to the Finberry development with no access from the Waterbrook site to Cheeseman's Green Lane;**

g) **provides new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development and connections to existing urban and rural routes;**

h) **protects and enhances the East Stour river corridor local wildlife site;**

i) **contributes to the improvement of the green corridor that runs through the site;**

j) **includes a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency;**

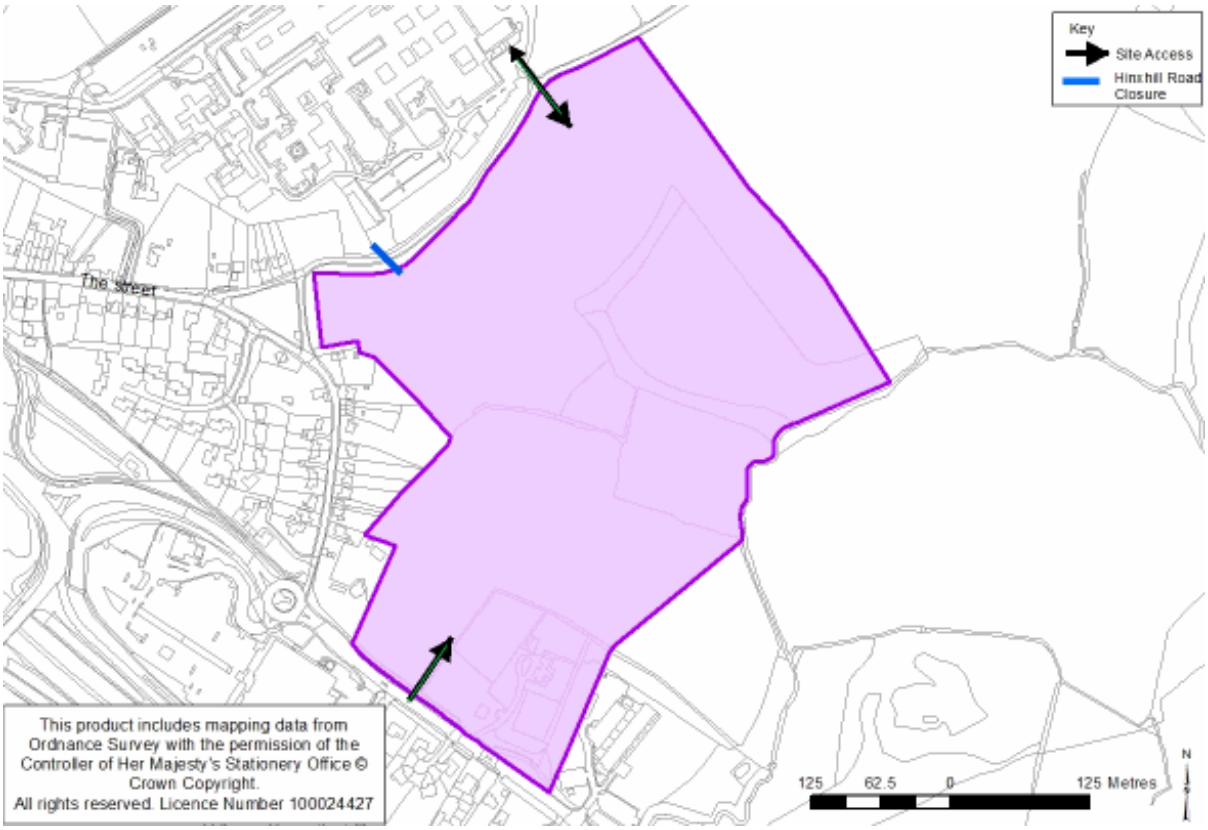
k) **ensures that any land contamination issues are satisfactorily resolved or mitigated;**

l) **provides a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes;**

m) **provides a proportionate financial contribution towards the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new M20 Junction 10a.**

No residential development or any commercial development (beyond that with an extant planning permission) shall be occupied until the proposed scheme for M20 Junction 10a is complete, in accordance with policy TRA1.

Land at Willesborough Lees



4.185 The site to the south east of the William Harvey Hospital was identified in the 2008 Core Strategy and Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD 2012 as suitable for development which also enables a secondary access point for the Hospital to accommodate its growing sub-regional role.

4.186 The site directly adjoins the built up urban area of Ashford and links in to attractive open countryside on the eastern edge of the town. At its western edge, the site directly adjoins the Conservation Area at The Street. Hinxhill Lane forms the northern edge that slopes up to the small settlement of Hinxhill and at the southern edge is the A20. The site is characterised by rolling countryside with some substantial areas of woodland.

4.187 The built footprint of development on this site needs to be carefully planned. It should avoid any of the existing areas of woodland that provide both natural screening and habitat whilst also including a distinct gap and soft green buffer along part of the western boundary to help mitigate the impact on the adjacent residential occupiers and on the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

4.188 This area is residential in character consisting mainly of large detached properties, some of which are listed and so, the scale and density of new development in this part of the site should also be low. In the central area of the site, particularly along the new link road to the hospital, slightly higher densities can be achieved but overall, the site is suitable only for lower net residential densities (i.e. below an average net 30 dph).

4.189 The opportunity exists, by detailed design, layout and landscape planning, to create a distinct neighbourhood to help create a real sense of place in this attractive location. Street frontages

should be 'active' to add interest, life and vitality to the public realm. This can be achieved by minimising blank walls and making all primary entrances overlook the street. The layout of the site should be designed to allow views, and pedestrian links where possible, through to the countryside and woodland to the north and east of the site.

4.190 Cycle and pedestrian links are critical. They should provide easy access to bus stops and serve all areas of the site. A pedestrian crossing on the A20 to the supermarket is essential, to connect with the improved walking/cycling environment around M20 Junction 10, and to link with the existing pathways and enable access towards the Town Centre. Links to existing rural footpaths should also be provided.

4.191 The main access point to the site is shown on the Policies Map and is located on the A20 to the west of the Highmead House/Warren Lodge land. To accommodate the whole of the development and the link to the hospital, this junction must be signal-controlled due to the amount of traffic that will be entering the area and to enable the smooth flow of traffic on the A20. However, up to 100 dwellings could be accessed from a more simple priority junction prior to completing the link road to the hospital and the resulting closure of Hinxhill Lane (see below).

4.192 The access route through the site to the hospital should be delivered by an appropriate layout of the 200 dwellings allocated in this policy. The phasing of the opening of the access route should be agreed with the Council, the local highway authority and the Highways Agency and should follow highway works to the existing secondary access point to the hospital, which would increase capacity and pedestrian and vehicle safety at this new junction.

4.193 As a consequence of the above, Hinxhill Lane should be closed south of the hospital access in order to avoid traffic using this narrow road to access the Hospital and having a detrimental impact on the existing residential area, although a gated access should remain for emergency vehicles. The proposed closure of Hinxhill Lane should benefit the existing residents of The Street as it will mean that the road will no longer be used as a through route to and from Wye and the villages north-east of Ashford. However, the Council will endeavour to monitor this change to the road layout once the link road is opened and should it be identifiedthat there are increased traffic movements on The Street as an alternative route is sought to the A20 by road users, then the Council will look at potential schemes for closing The Street and creating two separate two-way cul-de-sacs.

4.194 The site lies close to M20 Junction 10. Development of the site will generate additional peak hour traffic movements around the existing motorway junction. Although a full Transport Assessment will be required to support a planning application for development here, an initial assessment indicates there is sufficient capacity at the existing motorway junction to cater for a 200 dwelling scheme on this site to be brought forward within the DPD period, based on the likely trip generation from the site set out in the Jacobs 2010 Study which indicates a peak hour generation of 250 two-way movements.

4.195 The eastern edge of the site is mainly open countryside and long established woodland (Breeches Wood). This woodland spreads into the centre of the site and the landscape and topography of the north eastern edge would act as a boundary and screening for any development. Development should not occur in the area east of the woodland as this would be greatly visible in this location. Additional screening should be placed on the north eastern

boundary of the site, from the woodland edge to the Hospital, to reduce the visibility of the development from the north.

4.196 The site also includes Highmead House and Warren Lodge on the A20, west of the Pilgrims Hospice. This part of the site contains some large trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders, so lower densities in this part of the site would also be appropriate. This section of the site could be redeveloped as a separate scheme, although it must be accessed through the new A20 junction as the existing residential access would not be suitable. In either circumstance, development shall not prejudice the delivery of the main site access and the associated development.

4.197 The connection of the link road through the site to the hospital should be provided prior to the completion of development. A phasing programme will need to be agreed with the Council and the Highways Authorities to ensure that the opening to hospital-bound traffic would not have an adverse effect on the operation of the surrounding highway network identified in the Transport Assessment. In order to ensure that hospital staff and visitors are not encouraged to park on the residential streets of the new development, appropriate on-street parking restrictions within the new development would need to be provided as an extension of the existing arrangements in the area and funded as part of any Section 106 agreement.

4.198 The land to the north of this site, adjacent to the existing secondary access of the hospital is a Local Wildlife Site - Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood (AS44). The site is formed of wet woodland and bog habitats and both badger setts and rare plants have been recorded here.

4.199 Careful consideration will need to be given to the impact of the proposed development on the adjacent LWS and this could include the development of an appropriate management strategy.

4.200 Due to the wet woodland and bog habitats present within the LWS there is a need to ensure no change in the hydrology within the site as the health of the woodland and bog is likely to be dependant, at least in part, on water from the U14 site. Therefore a hydrological survey may be required at the planning application stage to ensure water feed to the LWS is not impacted. The possibility of producing this strategy in partnership with the developers of site U5 would be seen as an acceptable approach.

4.201 The south eastern edge of the site (behind the Pilgrims Hospice into the woodland) falls within Flood Zone 2 and is close to Flood Zone 3. Therefore, a full flood risk assessment must be provided, in consultation with the Environment Agency. In addition, the depth of groundwater is limited and thus the use of soakaways may not be permissible due to the risks of direct discharge to groundwater. The Sustainable Drainage SPD should be adhered to in establishing suitable options for surface water disposal.

4.202 There is evidence of soil contamination on parts of the site and detailed proposals will be needed to deal with this prior to development taking place. In addition, capacity in the local sewerage system is insufficient to service the proposed development. It will be necessary to upgrade the existing local sewerage infrastructure before development can connect into it. It is also important that existing sewerage infrastructure which crosses the site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

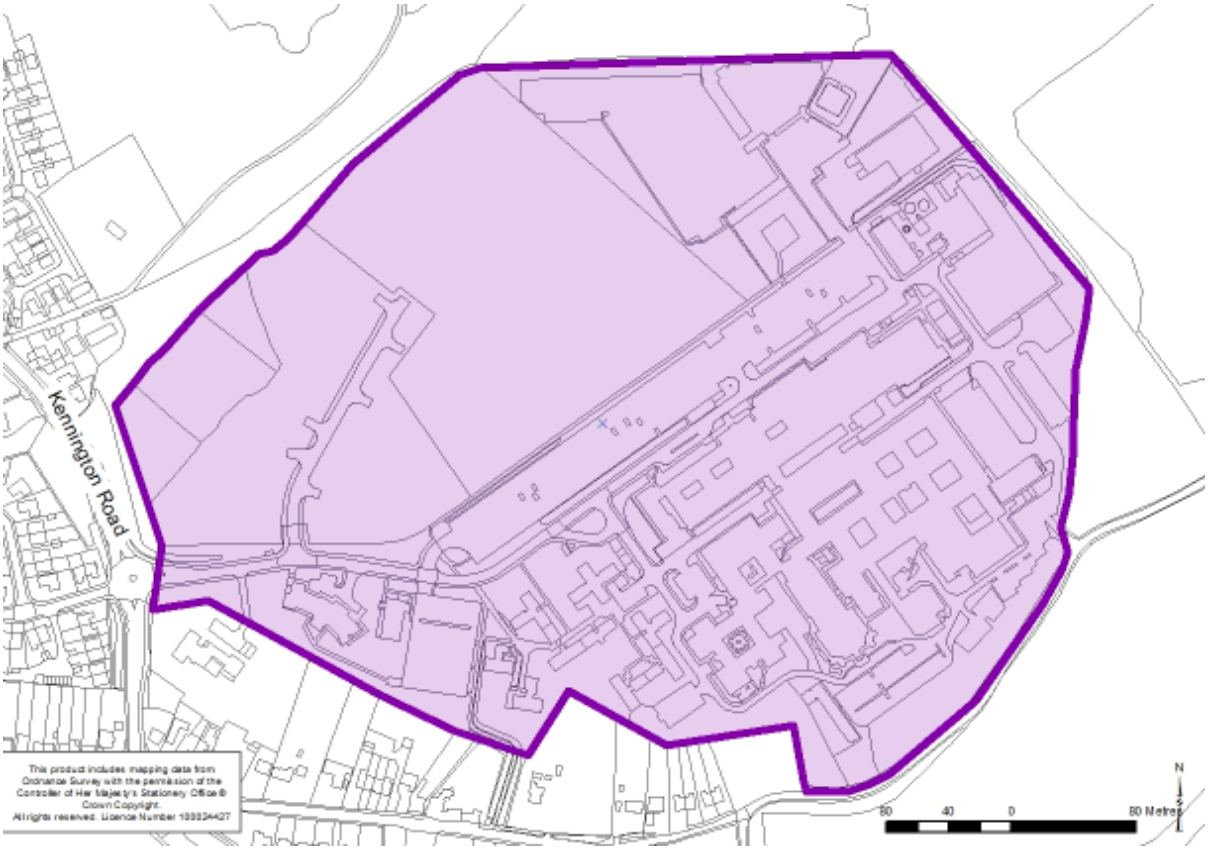
Policy S17 - Land at Willesborough Lees

The site to the south east of the William Harvey Hospital is proposed for residential development for up to 200 dwellings.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **provide a new signal-controlled junction, including a pedestrian crossing on the A20 at the point shown on the Policies Map;**
b. **provide a road through the site to act as a secondary link to the hospital at the point shown on the Policies Map;**
c. **make improvements to the existing emergency access to the Hospital, and Hinxhill Lane, to accommodate a new link road and junction, and close Hinxhill Lane to traffic south of the hospital access. A restricted access shall remain on Hinxhill Lane for emergency vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists only;**
d. **include a phasing programme to be agreed with the Borough Council, local Highway Authority and Highways Agency that will include the construction and opening of the access road from the A20 to the hospital and the closure of Hinxhill Lane;**
e. **provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development and connections to existing urban and rural routes and local services;**
f. **Fund the implementation of suitable on-street parking restrictions via a new traffic order, restricting non-residents parking on the roads of the new development;**
g. **be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the character and setting of the adjoining Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings;**
h. **retain the woodland (Breeches Wood) in the north east of the site and extend the tree boundary between the woodland and the hospital, to screen the development of the site from the north;**
i. **include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency;**
j. **ensure that any land contamination issues are satisfactorily resolved or mitigated;**
k. **contribute towards the monitoring of the traffic situation on The Street to enable an assessment to be made of the need to secure amendments to the existing access arrangements and to deliver those amendments if required; and,**
l. **provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

William Harvey Hospital



4.203 The Council recognises the importance of the William Harvey Hospital and the range of services it provides for the community for Ashford Borough and the wider area. The Council is working closely with the relevant health providers in order to understand the requirements for the future of the hospital site. The continued improvement, expansion, reconfiguration and consolidation of the hospital is therefore supported in principle.

4.204 The main area of land available lies to the north-west of the existing hospital car park. There has been a recently completed development on the site, that of a private hospital, but there still remains land available for development. This is a prominent site and given the scale and nature of many hospital buildings, careful attention will be needed to create an attractive layout of buildings with strong, structural planting to limit the impact of buildings here. Planting at the boundaries of the site will need to be carefully designed to screen any long views into the site.

4.205 As this complex of buildings grows, the need for good pedestrian and cycle routes increases for both visitors and staff. These should be designed as an integral part of future expansion. Equally there may be a need for bus access to new facilities and this should be designed to be convenient for bus users and operators.

4.206 There will also be an impact of any development on the wider transport network, and a transport assessment should be submitted in support of applications for development, to identify the impact and provide for mitigation measures. A Travel Plan should also be produced in line with Policy TRA8.

4.207 The Council is concerned that adequate car parking exists to serve health facilities at the William Harvey Hospital and a survey of existing demand for spaces will be required before additional facilities are built. New parking will be needed in line with at least the adopted parking standards.

POLICY S18 - William Harvey Hospital

The Council will supports proposals to improve, expand, reconfigure and consolidate the range of medical facilities at the William Harvey Hospital, subject to the following:

a. Design, scale and layout should take account of the prominent site and site typography

b. Landscaping should be provided to limit the impact of built development and protect long views into the site

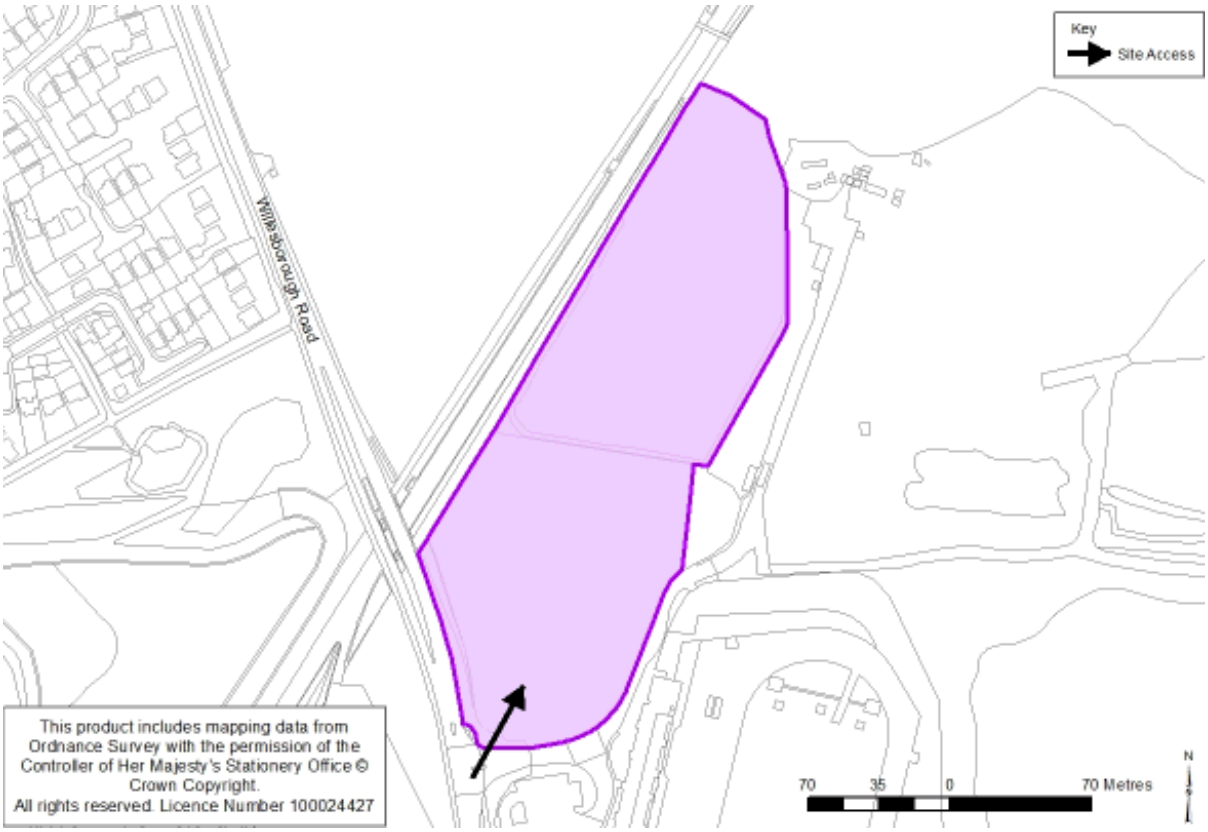
c. Suitable provision of pedestrian and cycle routes

d. Car parking to be provided in accordance with adopted standards as a minimum, informed by a car parking survey of existing demand.

e. A Transport Assessment and Travel Plan should be produced in accordance with Policy TRA8 and measures proposed to mitigate any impact of development on the wider transport network.

f. Provide a financial contribution to the extension of existing bus services in the area to serve the development

Conningbrook Residential Phase 2



4.208 Conningbrook Lake and the land surrounding have long been outlined as a location for a strategic park and water sports facility following a long period of mineral extraction. The site was originally outlined for this purpose in the Core Strategy and more recently allocated in policy U22 'Conningbrook Strategic Park' in the Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD (2012) which set out a clear vision for the park and lake, both of which could be delivered through an 'enabling' residential development of 300 dwellings.

4.209 A masterplanning exercise was undertaken to plan for the park and a planning application for the Conningbrook Park and Lake, plus enabling residential development was granted planning permission in October 2014. The first phase of the country park opened in September 2015, which included access tracks and public rights of way, watersport facilities and ecological conservation areas. Further phases of the country park scheme are due for completion following the end of mineral workings and extraction. It is likely that building of the first phase of dwellings will begin in 2016.

4.210 Conningbrook Residential Phase 2 is on the area of land that has planning consent for a mineral produce packing, storage and distribution facility and is located at the western extent of the original Conningbrook policy area and therefore forms part of the wider vision for recreational open space and enabling development for the area.

4.211 It is crucial that any development on this site accords with the wider aspirations for the Conningbrook Country Park area, including the Julie Rose stadium, the lake and the permitted residential development.

4.212 This site is bounded to the north by the railway and to the west by the A2070 Kennington Road, lying opposite the Premier Foods and Givaudan manufacturing facilities. The Julie Rose athletics stadium and the permitted residential scheme are located to the east of the site. There is an existing access road between the Phase 2 site and the existing Julie Rose Stadium - this road link will extend into the first phase of residential development when it is completed.

4.213 The site is considered suitable for redevelopment for residential use for up to 120 units. Any proposed scheme should be in accordance with the current Conningbrook Masterplan and be designed to complement the existing and proposed buildings and facilities. In accordance with Policy HOU1 of this Local Plan a minimum proportion of 30% affordable housing will be delivered on site.

4.214 The site is located in a visually prominent part of the Conningbrook site. An opportunity exists to provide an attractively designed frontage onto the A2070, whilst providing a key entrance to the site. Given the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, including the commercial buildings on the opposite side of the A2070 and the permitted housing development, 2-3 storey buildings would be most appropriate on the site. The design and layout of Phase 2 must take account of the permitted layout of Phase 1 and the relationship of adjoining properties, with particular attention being given to the topography of the site.

4.215 The primary vehicular access should continue to be provided from the A2070 at the main Julie Rose Stadium entrance, with an additional throughway access to Phase 1 at the north of the site. The site is currently utilised as an overflow carpark for the Julie Rose Stadium that is utilised during major events at the stadium. Any proposals coming forward should set out how excess parking during events should be managed and this would need to be agreed with the Borough Council before any development is approved. Proposals will need to include a solution to prevent visitor parking on residential roads on event days.

4.216 The woodland area in the northern section of the site will need to be cleared, and options should be explored to retain the trees along the north-western edge to provide for natural screening and a buffer between the new development and the railway line. If this buffer cannot be provided, other screening options should be explored and provided.

4.217 Due to the loss of woodland on this site, the impact on biodiversity must be assessed at the early stages of any planning application. Where species are identified, plans for their relocation should be undertaken and delivered prior to any development being started. Utilising a wider approach to biodiversity surveying and management across the whole masterplan area would be seen as a suitable approach.

4.218 Sustainable drainage should be provided inline with policy ENV9 and early liaison is required with Southern Water regarding connections to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity and future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

4.219 A new two-form entry primary school is proposed on the adjoining site (Land north of Willesborough Road – policy S2). It is anticipated that this school will cater for the primary educational needs generated by this development and so a proportionate contribution to the delivery of this school will be required as part of any planning permission here.

4.220 It is not expected that this site will come forward in advance of the permitted 300- dwelling scheme in Phase 1 as that scheme will enable the delivery of the full country park and its facilities. In any event, the occupation of this site should be dependent on the delivery of the proposed M20 Junction 10a scheme as this provides the additional off-site junction capacity necessary to mitigate the additional traffic generated by the development.

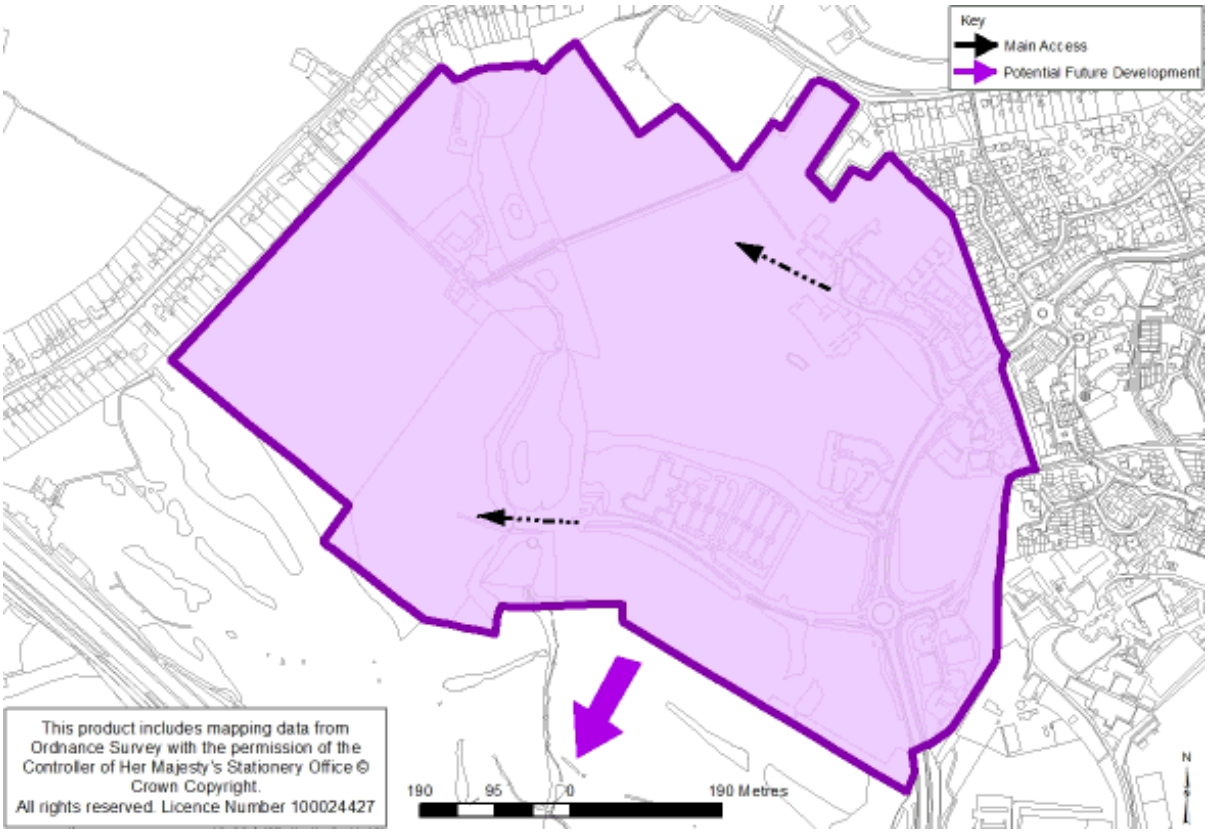
Policy S19 - Conningbrook Residential Phase 2

The Conningbrook Phase 2 site is proposed for residential development for up to 120 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a) **Be designed and laid out to take account of the proposals set out in any agreed masterplan for the wider Conningbrook development area;**
b) **Provide a designed active frontage of the site onto the A2070 Kennington Road;**
c) **Be designed and laid out to take account of the adjoining residential development at Conningbrook Residential Phase 1, including providing a link between the two schemes;**
d) **Minimise the impact of noise and vibration from the railway line on the amenity of future occupiers of the development, informed by a noise and vibration assessment.**
e) **Provide a substantial landscaped screening between the development and the railway line;**
f) **Proposals for ecological mitigation and enhancement measures are to be provided on the site informed by a habitat survey;**
g) **Ensure that any land contamination issues are satisfactorily resolved or mitigated;**
h) **Provide a proportionate contribution towards primary education to contribute towards the delivery of the primary school on the adjoining site (policy S2).**
i) **Provide a proportionate contribution to be used towards delivering the vision of the Conningbrook Country Park masterplan;**
j) **Provide and agree proposals for managing overflow parking from large events at the Julie Rose Stadium;**
k) **Provide a proportionate financial contribution to the delivery of Highway England's scheme for a new M20 Junction 10a.**

Development on this site shall not be occupied until the proposed scheme for M20 Junction 10a is complete, in accordance with Policy TRA1.

Eureka Park



4.221 The site is located in the north western part of the Ashford urban area and is bounded by Sandyhurst Lane to the north which is characterised by ribbon residential development that directly abuts the Eureka site. To the south and south west, the site adjoins the Ashford golf course whilst to the east is the existing residential development of Goat Lees. The A251 Trinity Road runs through the eastern part of the site linking to the M20 junction 9.

4.222 The Eureka Park area was identified in the Ashford Local Plan (2000), the Core Strategy (2008) and the Ashford Urban Sites and Infrastructure DPD (2012) as a key strategic employment area. The Urban Sites & infrastructure DPD makes it clear that the Eureka site plays an important role as the principal 'higher –order' business park for the town. It is emphasised that it is essential to be able attract headquarter buildings and 'blue-chip' companies to an attractive parkland-style business environment with the aim to broaden the economic base of Ashford and provide a wider set of employment opportunities. The area provides a different type of offer to the other business locations in the town and it is important that this type of provision continues to be accommodated.

4.223 There are established B1 uses along both sides of Trinity Road and along Nicholas Road (Brake Bothers). The areas known as Northdown 1 and 2 which lie between Nicholas Road and Upper Pemberton are now constructed and fully occupied. Eureka Place is a local centre that provides a range of shops and services for both residents and employees.

4.224 The proposed policy area extends beyond the area identified in previous Local Plans to include the area to the north and north-west extending to the boundary with the properties that border Sandyhurst Lane.

4.225 The Local Plan provides the opportunity to review the overall approach to this area. It is critical that the site remains a strategic location for higher-order employment development recognising the importance of the area to the overall business offer of the town but there is the opportunity to re-consider the potential for some high quality residential development on part of the extended site that could fit in with the overall development concept on the site and improve the overall development offer. A high quality mix of employment and residential development in an attractive landscaped setting could deliver wider benefits to improve the business attraction of the site in particular as well as the town as a whole.

4.226 It is proposed that detailed site proposals should be determined following a detailed and inclusive masterplanning exercise that should inform any planning application for development on the site. The site is proposed for up to 300 dwellings and 20 hectares of commercial development.

4.227 In terms of the employment development, the Eureka Park site will not be appropriate for all types of employment uses. For instance, it is unlikely that primarily B2 or B8 uses will be acceptable here. However, it is possible to broaden the scope of potential uses here beyond just B1 office developments. For example, health care facilities or similar high quality services that complement the wider B1 office elements of the site may be acceptable where these generate new jobs for the area. Beyond the existing local centre, retail or leisure uses will not be acceptable as these should be located in, or closer to, the town centre.

4.228 The character of the site and its wider strategic role dictates that new commercial development must be of a particularly high quality in respect of its design, layout and materials. In general, B1 commercial building footprints should be limited to not more than 20% of the total area of the Business Park and generous planting and landscaping should be provided to ensure the proper "parkland" character of the area is maintained. The topography of the site varies significantly, generally rising from the south to the north towards the adjoining residential areas. Innovative designs that complement this topography should be considered with the potential for taller buildings (up to four storeys) on the lower-lying parts of the site nearest the golf course being an option. Conversely, on those parts of the site closest to the Goat Lees housing estate, proposals must ensure that buildings are orientated to generally face away from nearby dwellings and should be designed and laid out to minimise the potential impact on residential amenity from noise and disturbance from vehicle movements and intrusive lighting.

4.229 Residential development shall be located primarily west of the lake that lies in the middle of the site but would also be suitable on land to the south of Grosvenor bungalow on the higher part of the site and, on a more limited basis, south of Nicholas Road opposite the Brake Brothers office. In locations which adjoin employment areas, the masterplan should determine the precise nature and orientation of the residential development to take account of future residential amenities and the likely operational requirements of the employment sites.

4.230 At the western boundary of the site, there should be a generous landscaped buffer provided to reduce the impact and provide some visual separation to the properties on Sandyhurst Lane. In general, residential development here should be of a lower average density to reflect the wider parkland setting of the whole site with average residential densities for individual parcels determined through the masterplan.

4.231 Given the location, size and number of housing units envisaged on this site, 30% of the dwellings shall be provided as affordable housing, in accordance with policy HOU1.

4.232 Vehicular access to the site shall only be from Trinity Road. The current access points at Nicholas Road and Upper Pemberton should form the principal access points to the site, with the former providing the main entrance to the residential development west of the lake and the latter forming a loop to serve the employment development west of Trinity Road and a secondary access to the residential areas. There should be no vehicular access from Sandyhurst Lane other than for emergencies, although pedestrian and cycleway connections from the development to Sandyhurst Lane should be provided.

4.233 Parking provision for the site shall be in accordance with the standards proposed for residential and employment developments in policies TRA3 (a) and TRA3 (b) of this Plan but proposals for development of the area shall also need to include arrangements for parking and traffic management to minimise the risk of staff parking in nearby residential streets (e.g. a controlled parking zone). Alongside this, development proposals shall contribute financially towards the operation of a regular and frequent bus service to the town centre. This service should directly serve both the employment and residential areas of the site.

4.234 Outside the site, strategic highway access is provided by the recently improved M20 Junction 9 and the Drovers Roundabout. It is expected that development here will make a proportionate contribution to the repayment of the forward funding of the junction improvements by the HCA.

4.235 Proposals for the site will need to be based around a comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy that incorporates attractive pedestrian routes through the site. The lake that lies in the centre of the development area should provide the focal point for the strategy with landscaped routes feeding out through the site from this location, including the existing wooded area to the north. An east-west route from the Eureka Place local centre to Sandyhurst Lane should also form part of the strategy. This strategy should also include provision of SuDS to serve the surface water drainage requirements for the site.

4.236 The proximity of the local centre means that the development is not expected to provide similar facilities as part of the residential area on the site but financial contributions to the delivery of off-site facilities for education, play facilities and sport will be required to meet the demand generated by the development. Informal public open space should be planned into the layout of the development as part of the landscaping and open space strategy.

4.237 The site adjoins the Ashford Golf Club land to the south. The Club has indicated a desire to improve their facilities which may best be achieved by moving to a new location around the town. At the time of preparing this Plan, no firm proposals for relocation have come forward but it is reasonable to anticipate that this may occur during the Plan period. If a suitable site for relocation of the Club can be identified and the Club decide to vacate their current site, this land would form, in principle, a natural extension to the Eureka Park site. As vehicular access to the Golf Club land is from Sandyhurst Lane and thus heavily constrained, proposals for Eureka Park must ensure access to the golf club land is available via the development and where necessary access roads should be constructed to the site boundary.

Policy S20 - Eureka Park

The site at Eureka Park is proposed for a mix of commercial (around 20ha) and residential development (up to 300 dwellings).

Development proposals for this site shall be designed and implemented in accordance with an agreed masterplan for the general layout and delivery of development and related infrastructure on the site.

Development proposals for the site shall include the following elements:-

a) **A comprehensive landscaping and open space strategy, incorporating a linear park based around the existing lake and proposals for the future management and maintenance of the areas of shared open space and SuDS;**

b) **A generous landscaped buffer to residential properties along Sandyhurst Lane;**

c) **A drainage strategy that includes proposals to provide SuDS in accordance with Policy ENV9;**

d) **New pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development with connections to Sandyhurst Lane and existing routes. The Public Rights of Way running through the site should be maintained and incorporated within the development;**

e) **Vehicular access to the site shall be provided from Trinity Road only;**

f) **Ecological mitigation and enhancement measures informed by a habitat survey;**

g) **The provision of vehicular connections to the southern boundary of the site;**

h) **Parking provision on-site to meet at least the minimum parking standards for residential and commercial development set out in policies TRA3 (a) and TRA3 (b);**

i) **A proportionate financial contribution towards the repayments of the forward funding that delivered the M20 Junction 9 & Drovers roundabout improvements;**

j) **A proportionate financial contribution to the extension of local bus services to serve the development;**

k) **Laid out and orientated so that the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers is preserved;**

l) **A connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

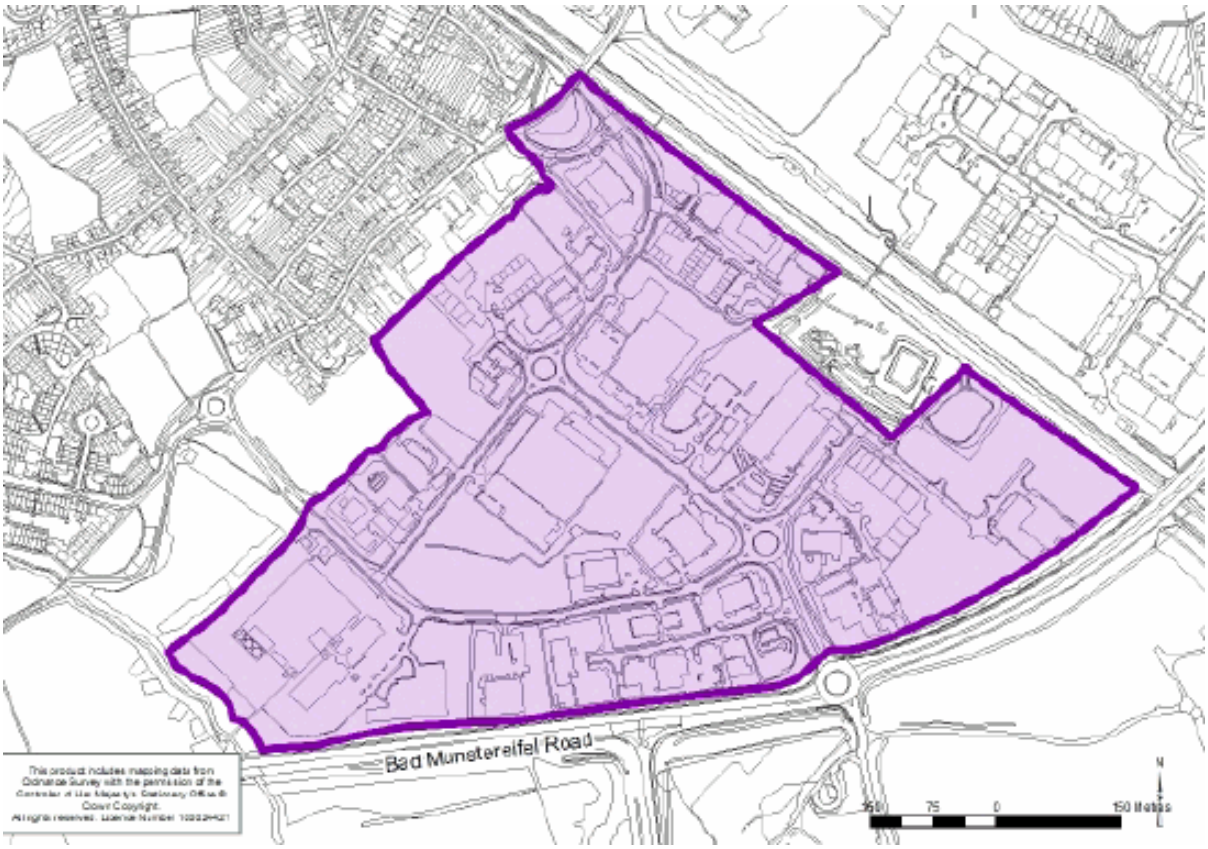
In addition, for commercial proposals on the site, the following will also be required:-

a) **Individual commercial buildings shall be imaginative in their architectural style and designed to sit comfortably in a parkland setting, with car parks and service areas located discreetly, and additional landscaping used where necessary to help reinforce the parkland setting;**
b) **The plot ratio for each commercial development parcel should not exceed 0.4:1;**
c) **The footprints of B1 buildings are limited to no more than 20% of the total area of the Business park and that each development parcel achieves a minimum of 50% of "soft" landscaping**

For residential proposals on the site, the following will also be required:-

a) **A residential design strategy setting out the key design criteria and average net residential densities on different plots and, where appropriate, how residential development will juxtapose with adjacent employment uses.**
b) **The provision of proportionate financial contributions towards off-site primary and secondary education facilities, children's play equipment and sports facilities.**

Orbital Park



4.238 Orbital Park is located on the south eastern edge of the urban area adjacent to the A2070 Southern Orbital Road. The site has been identified as a strategic employment site in previously adopted Plans and has been extremely successful in delivering employment floorspace. The site comprises various employment uses spread over a large site area. Although the majority of the site has now been developed, there are still plots where new development could take place.

4.239 Traditionally, Orbital Park has seen a range of different employment –generating uses take place from more general B1 and B8 uses to car showrooms, restaurants, a hotel and the relocation of the cattle market from the town centre. Orbital Park is therefore an important employment location within the urban area. With the proposed development to the south and east of the site at Cheesemans Green/Finberry and Waterbrook this site will play a key role in delivering a variety of local job opportunities.

4.240 Given its current important role in delivering employment floorspace, it is more important now that the remaining plots at orbital Park are retained for more traditional B-class employment uses. Alternative provision within the town centre has been made for retail (including restaurants) and hotel uses and further proposals for these uses will not be acceptable at Orbital Park. Other, sui-generis uses may be acceptable where they are significant employment generators, for example motor dealerships that contain a repairs/servicing element.

4.241 In common with the Council's previous policies for development at Orbital Park, it remains appropriate to ensure that the remaining areas (and any redevelopment proposals) deliver a

suitable form and density of development. Higher density office proposals are not suitable for this location and therefore a maximum plot ratio figure of 0.4:1 should apply to all B1 office uses here, so that a 1ha plot should accommodate no more than 4,000m2 of B1 office space.

4.242 The site is very prominent when viewed from the A2070 Southern Orbital Road and abuts residential development on part of its northern/north-western boundary. New buildings should be designed and oriented to avoid any significant impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Consideration will need to be made regarding the layout and topography of the site. The site slopes down towards the East Stour River and the trees and hedgerows in the area are important features. Detailed proposals should aim to protect these and incorporate them in the overall design of the site.

4.243 The site also contains the Boys Hall scheduled Ancient Monument (the remains of a moated house). This requires protection, including an open buffer between it and any development. The effect of any proposal development on the monument will be an important issue, including the proposal's impact on the level of the water table in the area.

4.244 Landscaping of developments here should also comply with the approach taken in previous development plans to ensure a consistent approach to the remainder of the development land. At least 20% of each development plot area should be available for "soft landscaping" such as planting or water features with opportunities to enhance existing features such as groups of trees, or hedges, being taken where possible.

4.245 As a result of previous planning permissions, developing the majority of the remaining undeveloped plots at Orbital Park is not constrained by the need to deliver any off-site highway improvements, either at junction 10 of the M20 or at the A2070 junction that provides the main access into the site. The remaining vacant plots in the "central island" of the site (enclosed by The Boulevard, Monument way and the long barrow) would be constrained in this way and as such, may also be brought forward for development when it can be demonstrated through a robust Transport Assessment, that sufficient capacity is available at both the motorway junction and the A2070 junction to accommodate the form of development proposed.

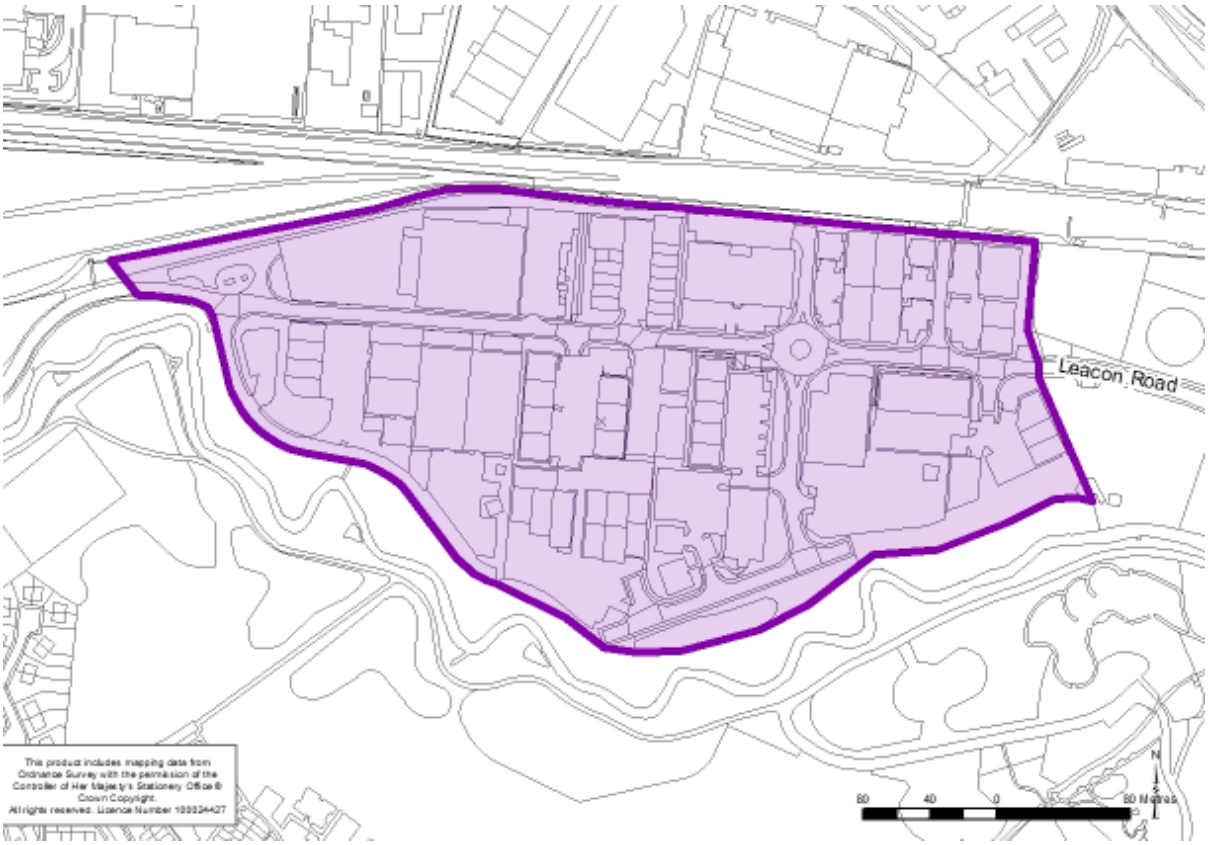
Policy S21 - Orbital Park

Land at Orbital Park is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses. Other sui-generis uses that generate a significant employment output may also be acceptable.

Development proposals for this land shall

a) **Be designed to avoid any significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring residential occupiers on the site's northern boundary;**
b) **Protect existing important habitats (especially alongside the East Stour river and within the South Willesborough Dykes Local Wildlife Site) wherever practical and design the site layout to provide new habitat links – such as planted areas, hedgerows and ditches – linking habitats and providing routes for wildlife and provide for the long term habitat management of these areas;**
c) **Ensure that the plot ratio for the development of B1 office plots does not exceed 0.4:1;**
d) **Protect the setting of the Boys Hall scheduled ancient monument.**

Chart Industrial Estate



4.246 The Chart Industrial Estate is a well established employment site in the western part of Ashford, approximately 2km from Junction 9 of the M20 and accessed via Leacon Road and Victoria Way. The site is self contained, bounded to the north by railway lines and to the south by the river corridor, with parts of the area lying in Flood Zone 3. The site has a mix of B1, B2 and B8 uses with a variety of premises from high quality modern industrial space to older premises.

4.247 The site lies relatively close to the town centre and adjacent to town centre redevelopment areas making it an important area for locating jobs. The area has been identified as one with redevelopment potential which could accommodate a higher density form of development and the construction of Victoria Way, creating a through route to Leacon Road, has opened up this area improving access to the town centre.

4.248 This change in the accessibility of the area means that it becomes suitable for a wider range of uses and potentially a denser form of development, particularly along Victoria Way itself. Redevelopment proposals could be for alternative employment uses within use classes B1-8 as well as other employment generating uses such as tourism, healthcare and education.

4.249 The area contains a number of existing employers, and as it is not the Council's policy to encourage redevelopment of their facilities for other uses until alternative land or premises within the town are available, there is likely to be limited potential for redevelopment prior to new employment areas requiring new infrastructure coming forward.

4.250 This location is an important transitional area between the higher density mixed use developments envisaged to the east in the town centre and the more suburban character of western Ashford leading out to Singleton and beyond. The existing, relatively low density, warehousing and storage character of the area would provide a sudden and jarring change to the urban environment envisaged to the east, the vision for the area is for it to gradually evolve to accommodate a greater mix of different, primarily employment generating uses with potential for some residential development in the longer term.

4.251 Proposals will need to contribute to this overall vision for the area with Victoria Way being a major determining factor in a scheme's design and layout. The public realm and design of buildings fronting Victoria Way will be particularly important. Currently, buildings in this area tend to present blank facades to Leacon Road but redevelopment proposals should re-orientate buildings to present the main facade to this main thoroughfare, with the aim of creating more active streetscene through this area which will complement the high quality public transport linkage that has been created. It is important that schemes here relate well to the site's location adjoining the town centre.

4.252 A large area south of Victoria Way lies within Flood Zone 3. This area has the attraction of a riverside setting next to the Green Corridor but any proposal for development will need to adhere to policy ENV2. Proposals will need to demonstrate that adequate mitigation measures against flooding will be in place as well as providing a protective buffer from the building line to the river bank. A flood risk assessment should be produced in consultation with the Environment Agency.

4.253 An existing sewer runs beneath the site and any layout of development will need to ensure that the existing sewerage infrastructure on site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with the relevant infrastructure company at the time is recommended.

4.254 The location of the site along the riverside Green Corridor is important. At present the existing development does not relate well to the riverside area so any new development should improve the relationship of the site to the riverside and have regard to nature conservation interests. There is extensive open space within the Green Corridor at Victoria Park and Watercress Fields on the southern side of the river and accessibility should be improved by providing a new pedestrian/cycleway bridge link.

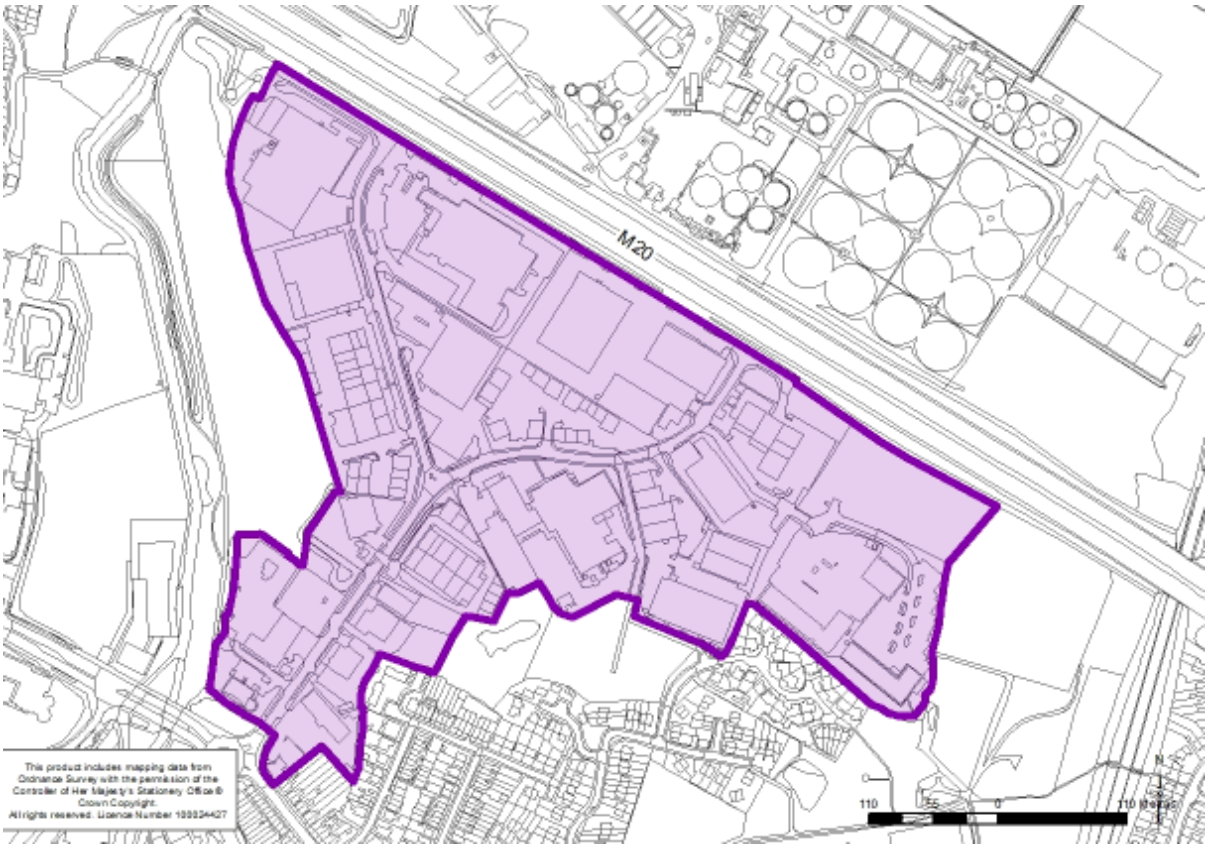
Policy S22 - Chart Industrial Estate

Land at the Chart Industrial Estate is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses and has the potential to be redeveloped more intensively than its current layout. Proposals for bulky goods retail warehousing and other employment generating uses would also be acceptable in principle provided that existing employment uses can be relocated within Ashford and Policy EMP2 is complied with.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **create a built form with a scale, design and layout which respects the long term vision for this part of Victoria Way;**
b. **ensure that future development has regard to the riverside setting of the site, nature conservation interests and the need to take account of the wider riverside corridor area;**
c. **include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency. Where necessary, innovative design solutions should be employed to achieve appropriate mitigation measures;**
d. **provide a pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Great Stour to link with the greenspaces to the south of the river; and,**
e. **ensure future access to the existing sewerage infrastructure for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

Henwood Industrial Estate



4.255 Henwood Industrial Estate accommodates a range of B1, B2 and B8 uses. It is an important strategic employment location within the town and has been allocated for primarily employment uses in previous Local Plans. It lies to the north east of the town centre close to local services. The site is reasonably self-contained, bounded to the west by the river and green corridor, to the north by the M20 and to the south east by existing residential development.

4.256 The potential for expansion of the area is limited to one relatively small piece of land located north of the recently developed KCC highways depot. This is bounded to the north by the M20 and has the potential for a wide range of B class uses.

4.257 Henwood is an older estate where redevelopment of poorer buildings could upgrade the stock and add more employment floorspace, while refurbishment or subdivision of units would also be appropriate. An example of this is the Javelin Enterprise Park which is a conversion of an older factory to small industrial units. In principle, this approach is encouraged where this would generate new jobs and investment but this will need to be considered against the range of premises available across the town to ensure that a suitable range of types and sizes remain.

4.258 Proximity to existing residential properties - therefore need to demonstrate that they would not have any adverse impact on residential amenity.

4.259 Minimum rather than maximum parking standards will be applied to ensure new development does not compound existing inappropriate parking in residential streets. Where development necessitates highway and transport improvements, these will need to be agreed by KCC as part of the planning application process and may need to be wholly or partially funded by the developer.

4.260 A part of the site to the west falls within flood zone 2 and 3.Any development proposals for this area of the site will require a flood risk assessment, which includes the vulnerability of the area to surface water flooding, in consultation with the Environment Agency

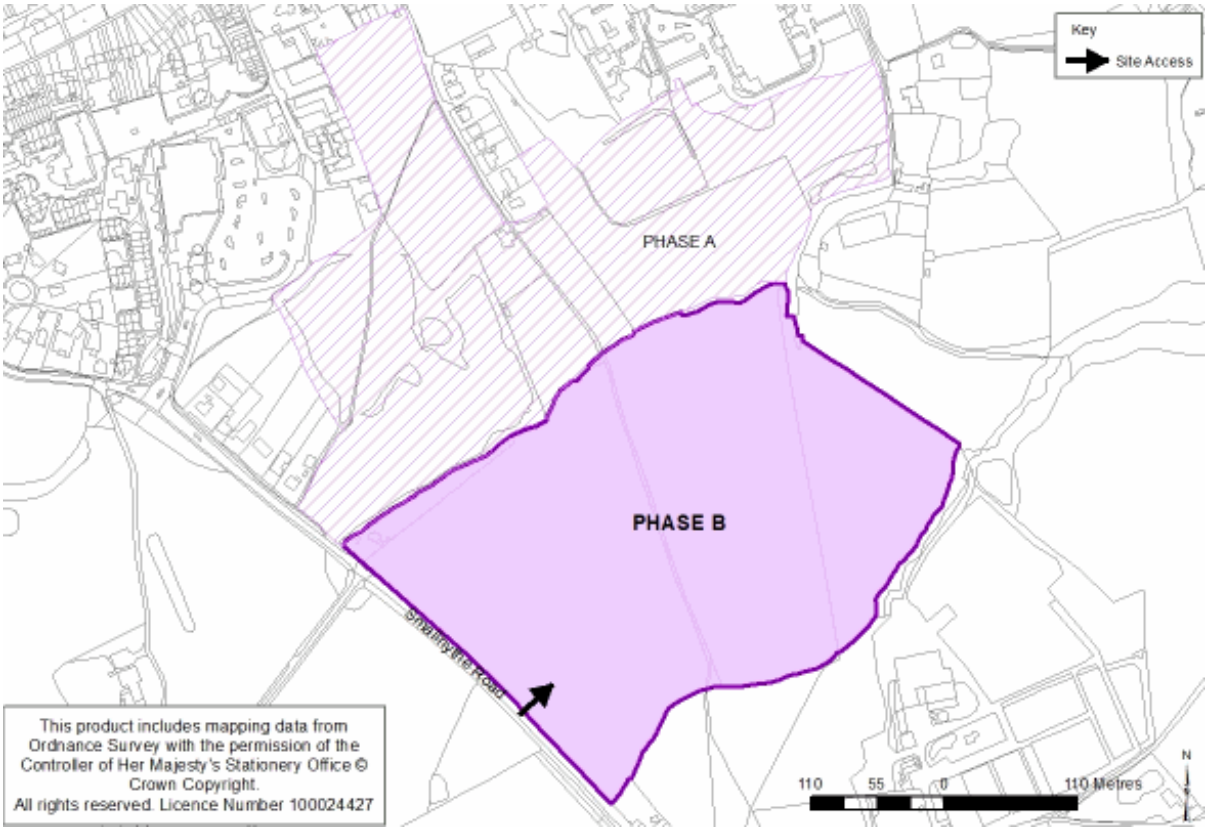
Policy S23 - Henwood Industrial Estate

The Henwood industrial estate is proposed for B1, B2 and B8 uses. This industrial estate has potential for gradual upgrading and replacement of older premises. Detailed proposals for any new development on vacant plots or redevelopment will need to ensure:

a. **that future redevelopment or intensification of existing developments will not result in a shortage of available premises of a particular size or type in Ashford;**
b. **proposed uses would not have a significant adverse impact on the amenity of local residents: and,**
c. **include a full flood risk assessment prepared in consultation with the Environment Agency**

Tenterden

Tenterden Southern Extension Phase B



4.261 The whole area to the south of the Tenterden town centre site was identified for development in the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD adopted in 2010 (policy TENT1) and was subdivided into the two phases - A and B. The whole site is a unique opportunity to create a small urban extension to Tenterden that lies outside any designated landscape areas.The 2010 DPD identified the site principally for housing but there was also a recognised need for additional public car parking to serve the town centre. It was also indicated that the site may be suitable for small scale employment and local services.

4.262 Following a detailed masterplanning exercise and extensive local consultation phase A was granted planning permission for 250 dwellings.. This site policy refers to the remaining phase B of the TENT1 allocation.

4.263 The site forms part of the wider southern edge of the built-up area of Tenterden town centre. To the north lies the proposed TENT 1A development site, the main commercial core of the town centre and the major services and facilities, including the town's leisure centre and main public recreation ground, whilst to the south lies open countryside and the boundary of the High Weald AONB. The whole site lies entirely within an easy walking distance of the heart of the town and has the potential to be developed as a relatively sustainable extension and bolster Tenterden's successful and vibrant economy without damaging the essential character that makes it such an attractive location to live and visit.

4.264 The Phase B land lies to the south of the stream that crosses the site from near Heronden in the west towards the east and the character of the land here is more open and agricultural at present. The land is less constrained by topography and other natural features and so, within this part of the site a new landscape framework should be produced by the development, framing views of the church, producing recognisable neighbourhoods, providing a clear frontage to the linear green space complementary to that created in Phase A and respecting existing water features.

4.265 The Phase B land will, in future, form the southern edge of Tenterden and it is important that this new urban edge is properly integrated into its landscape setting as the existing form of Tenterden is a product of geology, landform, and therefore landscape. The High Weald AONB wraps around the site to the south-east and south-west, and the southern boundary is marked by an identifiable landscape feature, in the form of the stream running eastwards from near Morghew. For these reasons the southern boundary to the site should be marked by a substantial woodland (incorporating wetland) belt, joining the existing woodland to the east and effectively reinforcing the connection between the two parts of the AONB into one integrated whole. the precise depth and arrangement of this strategic planting / wetland belt should be determined in the masterplanning of the site but it should be at least 20 metres in order to:

- act as landscape containment of the edge of the town,
- act as a biodiversity (woodland and wetland) resource,
- act as a habitat corridor,
- provide for water retention in the in the event of the heavier rainfall conditions expected as a result of climate change and the run-off from the development itself; and,
- augment the footpath system, providing access to the countryside for the wider population

4.266 As this planted / wetland area should lie within the site boundary, and given the transition towards the open countryside beyond, the Phase B land should produce an average residential density of around 30 dwellings per hectare. The precise quantum of development that could be achieved in Phase B should be determined by a detailed masterplanning exercise but the overall capacity of the Phase B site is likely to be in the region of 175 units.

4.267 Phase B needs to be seen and planned as an evolution of the Phase A development, in line with an overall masterplan that creates a clear and coherent framework for this significant extension to the town. The Phase B land should not be occupied before Phase A as this would produce a separate settlement which would not strengthen the town centre and would leave a fragmented open area between the Phase B land and the existing town centre without clear purpose or structure. Furthermore, the Phase B land could not successfully be linked to the town centre by high quality routes through the Phase A development if these had not been provided and / or Phase A was still under construction.

4.268 The masterplan / development brief should investigate the matters referred to above including the extent to which built development should extend southwards in Phase B, the precise scale and location of the strategic woodland / wetland belt, key pedestrian and vehicular routes within and through the development site.

4.269 The masterplan / development brief should also address requirements for on site community infrastructure such as public open space, play facilities, recreational facilities and the maintenance of these as well as more strategic infrastructure requirements, such as the provision of education , health and social care facilities that may be provided on or off-site. The location of potential local community facilities / services and any employment land within the site, and their phasing and delivery will also form part of the masterplan for the site.

Policy S24 - Tenterden Southern Extension Phase B

Land to the south of the TENT 1A development is proposed for residential development and the site (known as Phase B) is suitable for an additional 175 dwellings. The Phase B site shall not be occupied until the TENT1A development has been completed.

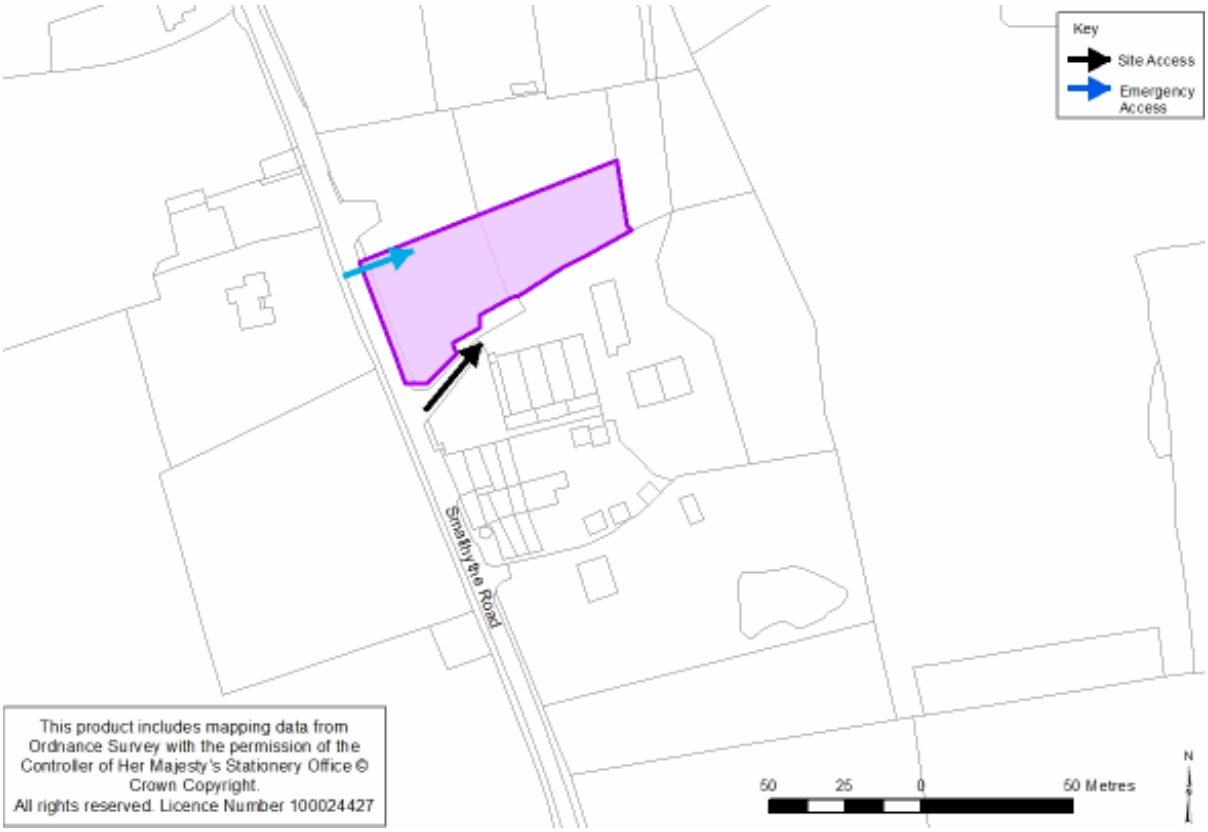
Development of this site shall be in accordance a masterplan / development brief that has been submitted to and approved by the Borough Council. The masterplan / development brief shall identify the timing of the planting of a substantial woodland (incorporating wetland) belt to the south of the built development area within this site and define the extent, location and phasing of community infrastructure and employment land to be delivered both on and off- site.

The site shall be accessed from Smallhythe Road with links to the TENT 1A development.

Acceptable forms of development on this site shall also achieve the following:

a) **The retention and enhancement of existing hedges and natural watercourses and ponds on the site;**
b) **The creation of pedestrian and cycleway routes through the site to link with the TENT 1A development, the town centre and existing public rights of way both on and off-site**
c) **A layout that enables views of St Mildred's Church tower to be achieved through the site from both within and beyond it**
d) **Provision of off-site highway improvements identified as being necessary through the masterplanning process**
e) **The creation of public open space that falls within this site's boundary as part of the linear public open space through the centre of both phases of the development that follows the line of the existing stream**

Pickhill Business Village, Tenterden



4.270 Pickhill Business Centre is located on Smallhythe Road a short distance from the town of Tenterden. It is an established business site having been originally converted from agricultural buildings to employment uses in 1997. The existing premises host a number of small and medium sized B1-B8 businesses, utilising 16 units. This policy promotes an extension to the north of the existing site through the allocation of a 0.35ha parcel of land.

4.271 The site is currently divided into two characteristic areas, the eastern end of the site is a small orchard and the western end of the site is a grazing area, enclosed by wooden post and rail fencing and a large landscaped hedge which is directly adjacent the Small Hythe Road. The two sites are bounded on the northern boundary by a large hedgerow, which extends along a large proportion of its length. This hedgerow provides existing screening to the development from views from the north. To the east of the site, outside of the site boundary is an area of hardstanding currently utilised as an informal parking area. The site in contained wholly within the High Weald AONB.

4.272 The site is considered suitable for development for business uses within the use classes B1-B8. Given the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, a scheme of no more than two stories would be most appropriate here. This will ensure the development settles nicely into its surroundings and will not be visually intrusive for residential properties in the surrounding area and the wider AONB.

4.273 A landscaped buffer exists on the frontage of the site, directly adjoining the Small Hythe Road, this should be retained as part of any scheme, as should the hedge on the northern boundary which should be retained and extended to ensure the site has minimal visual intrusion when viewed from the north

4.274 The primary vehicular access should continue to be provided through the main entrance to the Pickhill Business Village, with an additional emergency access only route provided through the existing field entrance opposite Pick Hill House. This will ensure that the residents of Pick Hill House are not affected by vehicles entering and leaving the site.

4.275 Parking for the new business units should be providing in accordance with the Parking Standards Policy TRA3 (b). Any existing parking which is lost due to the new development will also need to be re-provided in order to ensure the existing tenants of the business units are not unduly affected. There is a large area of hardstanding to the north east of the site, which is currently utilised as an informal parking area, with suitable landscaping and design, making this parking area a more formal arrangement could be seen as an acceptable approach and should be explored further at planning application stage.

4.276 The depth to groundwater is limited at this site and thus the use of soakaways may not be permissible due to the risks of direct discharge to groundwater. The Sustainable Drainage Policy should be referred to in establishing suitable options for surface water disposal.

4.277 It will be necessary to upgrade the existing local sewerage infrastructure before development can connect into it. It is also important that existing sewerage infrastructure which crosses the site is protected and future access secured for the purposes of maintenance and upsizing. Liaison with Southern Water at the time is recommended.

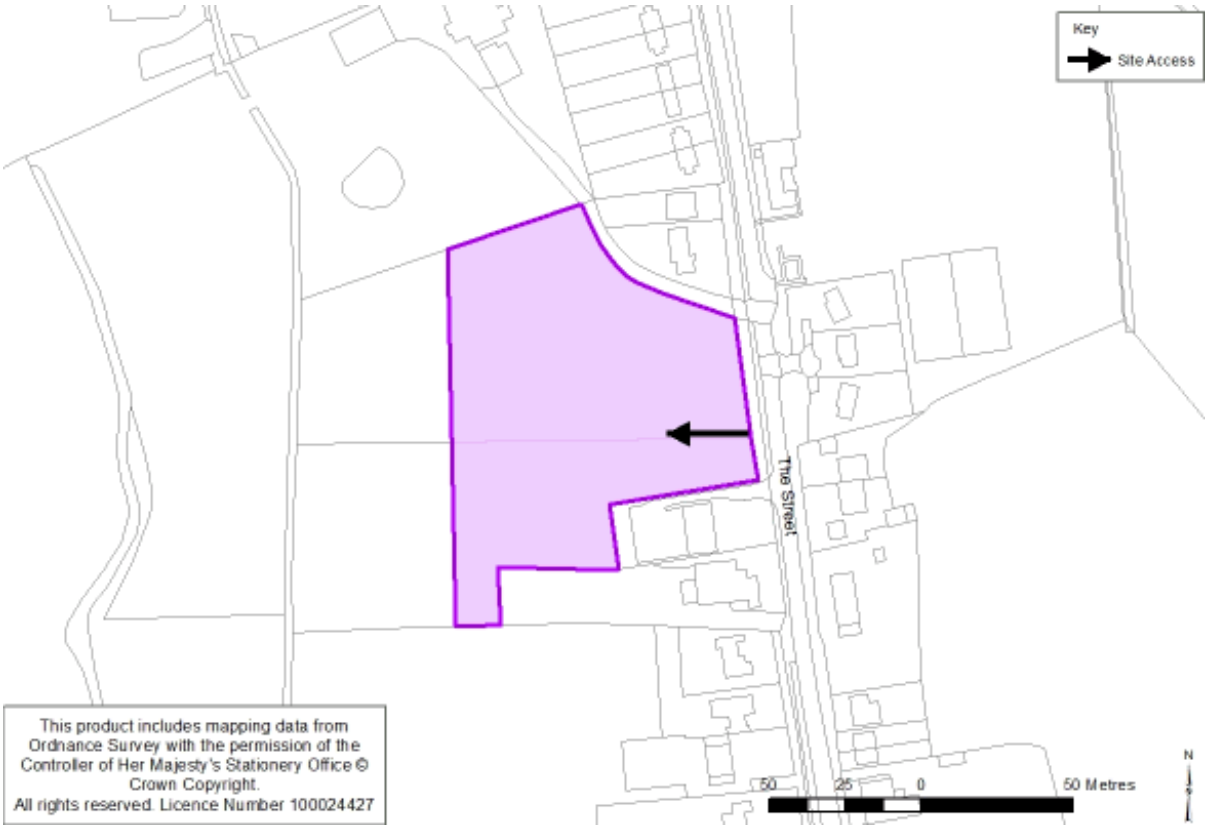
Policy S25 - Pickhill Business Village, Tenterden

The land adjoining the Pickhill Business Centre is proposed for rural employment development within the use classes B1-B8

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Provide primary vehicle access via the existing main entrance to the Pickhill Business Centre and an emergency access via the existing field entrance opposite Pick Hill House;**
b. **Be no taller than two-storeys in height;**
c. **Provide parking to serve the new business units in accordance with parking policy TRA3 (b).**
d. **Reprovide any existing parking for the Business Centre which has been lost to the new development;**
e. **Extend the hedgerow to cover the entire length of the northern boundary and retain the hedgerow and landscaping on the frontage of the site with Small Hythe Road to ensure the development is well screened;**

Appledore - The Street



4.278 This site is located on The Street, the main route through village, situated adjacent to the side and rear of the former GP Surgery and Village Hall. It is currently two fields in agricultural use, bounded by hedgerows and trees. The site is a gap in the linear form of built development along this road and is located centrally in the village confines and in walking distance of the services and community facilities available.

4.279 To the north of the site is a row of 2-storey housing along the road frontage, with Magpie Farm and its associated outbuildings to the North West. There are properties adjacent to and opposite the site along The Street, in linear form, mainly detached or semi-detached 2-storey properties. To the north east, on the opposite side of the road is the recreation field and play area. To the west, open countryside and an area that dips towards a stream and falls within floodzones 2 & 3.

4.280 At 1ha in size, the site is considered suitable for around 15 units, dependant on a suitable layout and design. It also offers an opportunity to provide an area to extend the village hall and its car park. There is also an opportunity to redevelop the former GP Surgery as part of this development, and community and/or business uses would be acceptable. The residential area of the development should be provided in a cul-de-sac arrangement, in the northern section of the site.

4.281 The site lies within the Appledore Conservation Area (CA) and is also within an area of Archaeological Importance (Viking Encampment). However, the site is located away from the historic core and main area of the CA, which is situated to the south of the site. Development of this site is therefore proposed at a low density (20dph) to be in keeping with the CA setting, open landscape, and the low density of the surrounding linear development. Archaeological investigation work should be undertaken to prior to construction work commencing.

4.282 The hedgerows and trees must be retained around the boundary of the site and new planting should be placed around the western edge of the new development to provide screening between the site and the countryside. The hedgerows that currently divide the site should be retained where possible. It should be shown in the design proposals that care has been taken to limit the visibility of the new development from the main road to minimise the impact on neighbouring residents.

4.283 The Proposed Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site will lie immediately to the north east of the village along the Royal Military Canal. All applications for the development of this site should therefore include an Environmental Impact Assessment study demonstrating how the proposals will effect upon the integrity of the biodiversity of this designated wildlife area. Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the proposed Ramsar site will not be permitted.

4.284 Opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks in this area and to mitigate against any potential increase in recreational pressure that may arise from the development of this site. There is an opportunity at the rear of the site to enhance the biodiversity and ecology of the area, and potentially create an informal nature reserve. A pedestrian access point should therefore be retained at the rear of the village hall to access this part of the site.

4.285 The main vehicular access will be provided on The Street, as shown on the policy map. There is a Public Right Of Way (PROW) that runs through the site from Magpie Farm in the north, to the front of the former GP surgery. This pathway should be retained/re-routed and enhanced through the new development proposals.

4.286 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground offer will be sought.

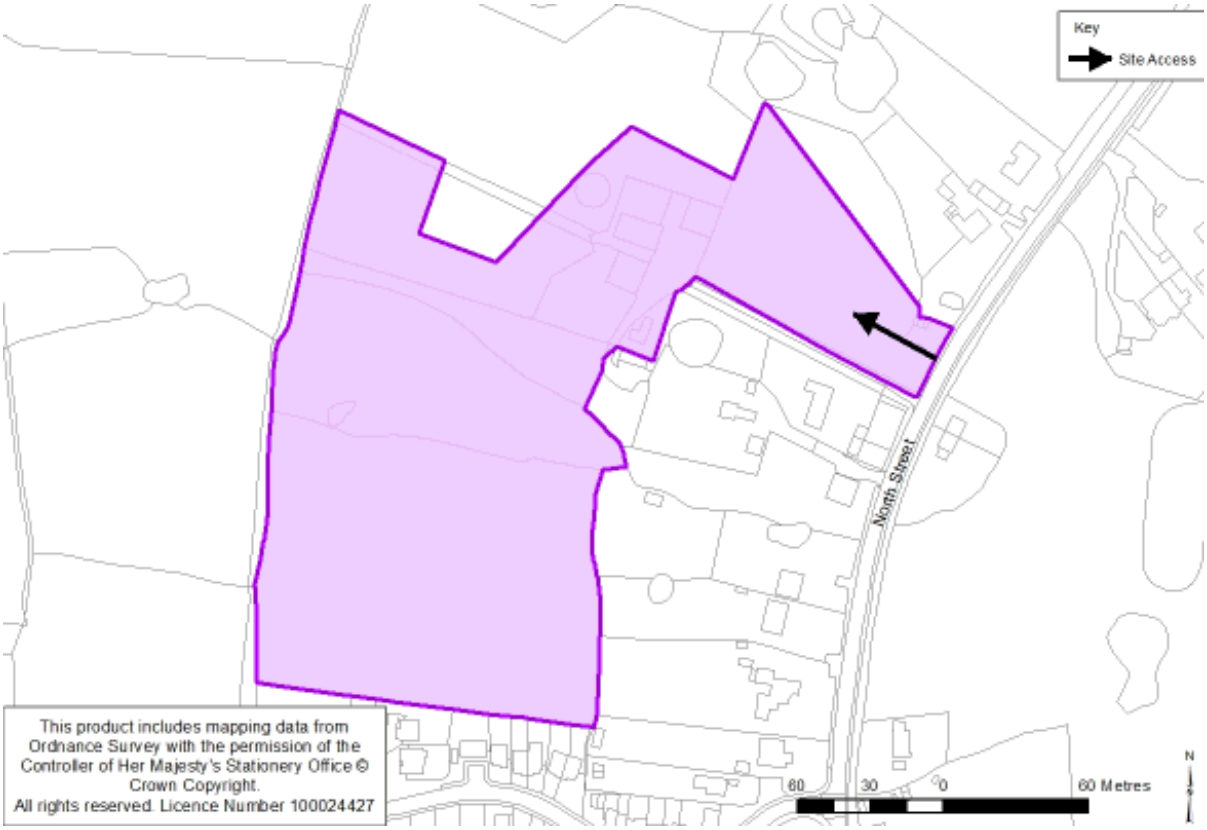
Policy S26 - Appledore - The Street

The site in The Street, Appledore is proposed for residential development for up to 15 dwellings and an extension to the village hall and its car park. There is potential for redevelopment of the former GP surgery to community and/or business uses.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the character and setting of the Conservation Area. Particular attention needs to be given to the visibility of new development from the road;**
b. **Retain the existing hedge and tree boundary around the site to screen the development from the open countryside and create soft landscaping. Retain as much as possible of the hedgerow that divides the site in the new development;**
c. **Retain and enhance the PROW that crosses the site;**
d. **Provide an Environmental Impact Assessment study;**
e. **Undertake biodiversity surveys and explore potential of providing an informal nature reserve, connecting to wider networks.**

Biddenden - North Street



4.287 This site is located on North Street (A274), the main road through the village of Biddenden which connects to St.Michaels and Tenterden to the south and Headcorn (Maidstone) to the north. The site lies to the rear of existing detached properties in linear form along the western side of North Street and to the north of Mansion House Close, a cul-de-sac development of mainly 2 storey, mixed size properties. The site is currently a field in mixed agricultural and equestrian use, with woodland to west and open countryside to the north.

4.288 The site is considered suitable for residential development of up to 45 units, which should be located on the southern half of the site. This part of the site is approximately 2.3ha and therefore development will be less than 20 dwellings per hectare. This reflects the density of adjoining properties and is suitable for a setting adjoining the countryside in this location.

4.289 The vehicular access will be provided on North Street as shown on the policy map. As this site is located on the edge of the village, the new development must be designed in a way that integrates it, visually and functionally, as much as possible to the existing settlement. There is pedestrian access to the village centre through a well used PRoW, which runs alongside the western boundary of the site and joins Mansion House Close, the Meadows and the recreation field. However, this route into the centre of the village is unlikely to be suitable for all users, particularly when wet, and a pedestrian crossing and traffic calming measures must be provided on the A274, from the site entrance, to the footpath on the opposite side of North Street.

4.290 The village of Biddenden offers a range of services and community facilities, however, at present there is an identified need in the Biddenden Community Led Plan 2014 for a new

community facility that could be used to provide improved healthcare facilities such as a GP surgery/branch (branch currently operating out of a small room in the village hall) and other village activities. Development of this site provides an opportunity to provide a mixed use community building that could meet these needs. Liaison with the Parish Council, local healthcare providers, the Village Hall Committee and other local stakeholders is essential to ensure that the community building meets reasonable local requirements and is built to appropriate building specifications for the range of uses it could be used for.

4.291 Careful consideration must be given to the overall site layout to ensure the community facility is accessible to all, without impacting on the residential amenity of the new homes in ways such as parking and overlooking. This can be achieved by locating the community building on the northern part of the site, close to the site entrance on North Street, and providing sufficient car parking for the facility to ensure that on-street parking of its users does not adversely affect residents.The design and layout of the development should reflect the local surroundings and must take into account design guidance in the adopted Biddenden Parish Design Statement.

4.292 The site is currently visually well screened by mature trees and hedgerows. This screening and landscaping should be retained and enhanced to minimise the visual impact of the new development on the existing residents to the east and south of the site and on the character and setting of the nearby Conservation Area and listed buildings.

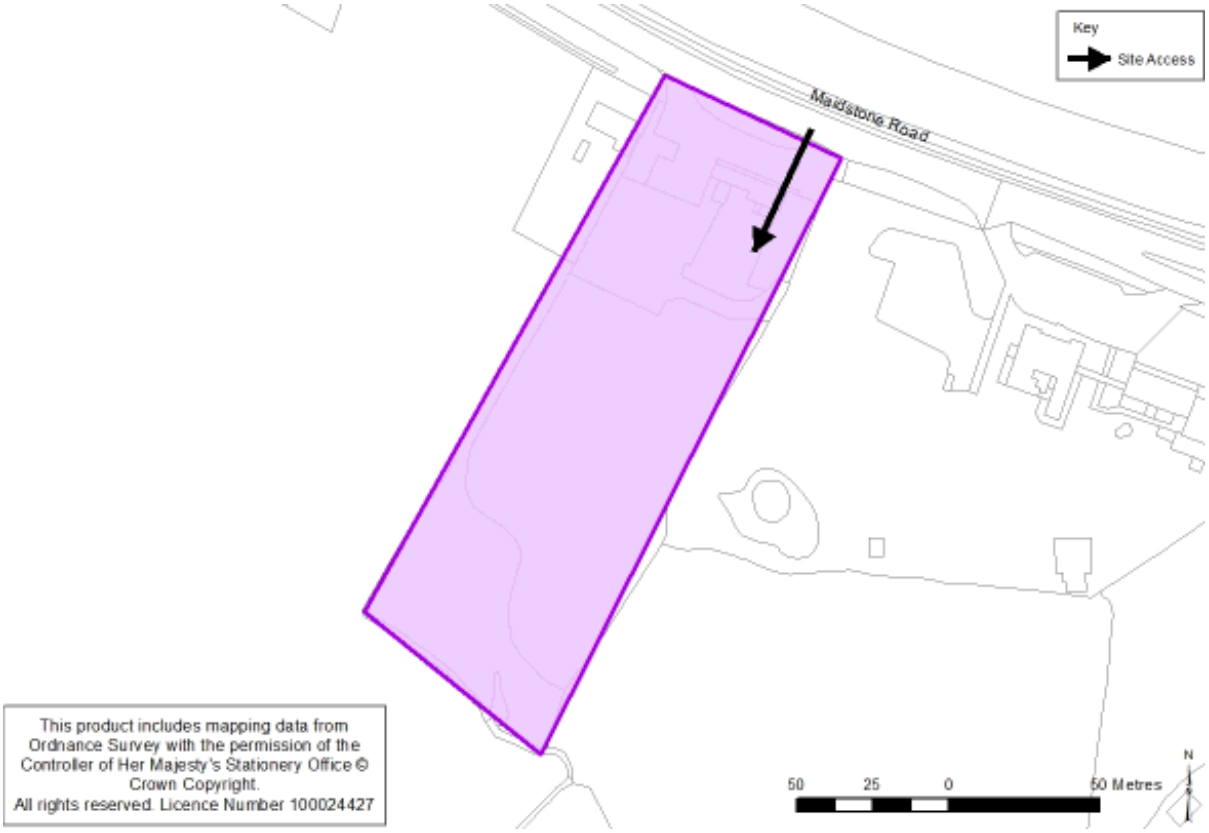
4.293 Informal public open space must be provided on-site, but due to the proximity of the village recreation ground, on-site provision of formal public open space will not be expected, but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground provision will be sought.

Policy S27 - Biddenden - North Street

The site is proposed for residential use for up to 45 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Provide a community facility building on-site to accommodate local services and functions, designed in consultation with appropriate stakeholders;**
b. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to integrate the development into the existing settlement, taking into account design guidance in the Biddenden Parish Design Statement;**
c. **Create a pedestrian crossing and appropriate traffic calming measures on North Street and ensure pedestrian access to the existing Public Right of Way on the western edge of the site that leads to the village centre;**
d. **Ensure appropriate bespoke on-site parking is provided for the community facility building;**
e. **Retain and enhance current hedge and tree boundaries around the site to create a soft landscape buffer between new development and neighbouring properties;**
f. **Create informal open space on-site and provide contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of formal open space and play equipment located on the village recreation ground.**

Charing - Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road



4.294 This site is located within the village of Charing, on southern side of the A20 and is currently in operation as a Service Station and associated retail shop. The frontage of the site is the drive-in forecourt area with fuel pumps with parking and a grassed verge buffer along the roadside. The service station buildings, are located just beyond the forecourt area. The original building is a 2-storey dwelling, which has single storey extensions containing the shop and storage rooms. To the west of the service station is a recently built steel framed car workshop, operated by Charing Motors. This larger structure extends further into the rear of the site and which is an area of hardstanding for vehicle storage/parking. The remainder of the site to the south is a field with mature tree and hedge boundaries.

4.295 To the east of the site on the frontage is a single residential dwelling with a large curtilage, and beyond this open countryside. To the west of the site is a restaurant, The Swan Hotel. The restaurant has a large rear garden directly adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site. However, both properties are well screened from the site with high hedges and mature tree boundaries.

4.296 Charing is a large settlement with a variety of services, including a primary school, train station and small high street. The site is in close proximity to these services and following recent developments in the village to the south east, this site is considered suitable for a residential allocation. The layout of development should be designed to allow for vehicular and pedestrian connections to the land adjoining the site to the rear of the Swan Hotel. The current employment use of the service station, and associated retail development should be retained on as much of the existing area as possible, whilst allowing for a new access road to be provided from the A20 as shown on the Policies Map.

4.297 The area of the site considered appropriate for built development (excluding the current garage/workshop area) is around 0.8 hectares and therefore is considered suitable for up to 20 units which is equivalent of around 25 dwellings per hectare. Consideration must be given to the Charing Parish Design Statement when planning the style and layout of development. There is a pond/spring on the southern edge of the site which must be considered.

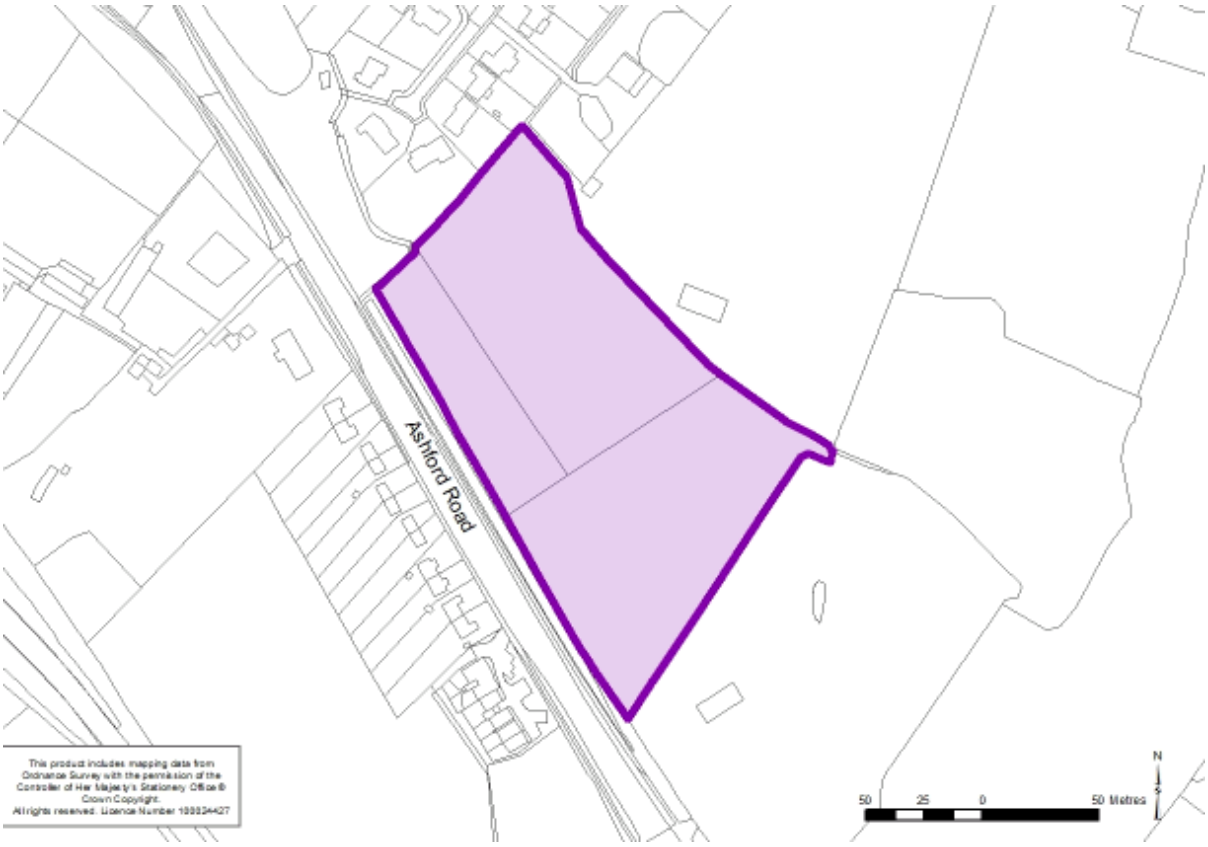
4.298 Given the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside area and proximity to the AONB to the north, larger properties in generous plots should be generally located in the most sensitive locations on the rural edge. Consideration must be given to the Charing Parish Design Statement when designing the style and layout of development.

Policy S28 - Charing - Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road

Land at Northdown Service Station is proposed for residential development for up to 20 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the character and setting of the countryside. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and advice in the Charing Parish Design Statement;**
b. **Provide vehicle access onto the A20 Maidstone Road, as shown on the policies map;**
c. **Retain the existing employment uses on the frontage where possible;**
d. **Retain and enhance the hedge and tree boundaries around and within the site, particularly where there is adjoining countryside.**

Charing - Land south of the Arthur Baker Playing Field



4.299 The site is located at the eastern entrance to the village along the A20. The site adjoins existing built development at The Moat but adjoins open countryside to the southeast which includes the 'Alderbeds', an area with local biodiversity value. The woodland and meadow which comprise the adjoining Alderbeds Local Wildlife Site are dependent upon the site remaining characteristically wet and relatively undisturbed. It is therefore important that development of the CHAR1 site is carried out in compliance with policy ENV1(Biodiversity). Compliance with ENV1 is likely to require both hydrological and ecological surveys to be carried out as well as the submission of a scheme showing how any necessary mitigation measures will be carried out and maintained. The extensive Arthur Baker playing field is located to the north. A ribbon of residential properties lies opposite on the southern side of the A20.

4.300 The prominence of the site at this key entrance point makes it essential that careful attention is paid to design and layout issues. The creation of a built-up frontage with dwellings facing the A20 to mirror the form of development on the opposite side of the A20 would be appropriate. Equally, the position of the site adjoining open countryside makes it essential that the extent of any built development on the site is carefully considered. The framing of the site by the adjacent playing fields (which themselves are bounded by development to the west and north) provides the limit to the eastern extent of built development footprint here. This enables the opportunity to be taken to create a definitive edge to this part of the village through a significant landscaped strip along the south eastern edge of the site. This should include the planting of mature trees to provide an appropriate natural screening for development here.

4.301 The layout of development on this site should also ensure that an attractive built frontage to the playing fields is achieved. Dwellings should be designed with their primary aspect overlooking the playing fields. In addition, proposals should also reflect the 'design guidelines' set out in the Charing Parish Design Statement (2002).

4.302 Vehicular access to the site shall be from the A20. The levels between the highway and the site mean that this should be towards the eastern end of the site in order to minimise the difference in levels. Frontage properties may need to be set back from the highway boundary in order to achieve good design and amenity for residents.

4.303 The playing fields to the north of the site are a well used and popular local facility. Existing access to the playing fields is unsatisfactory being via the adjoining residential development at The Moat. The layout of this site should enable a separate access to be created for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to the playing fields from the A20. Similarly, the pavilion and changing facilities are poor which undermines the ability of the playing fields to cater for the additional demand that will occur from the proposed significant increase in development in Charing. Development of this site should make a financial contribution towards the the provision of a new or upgraded pavilion. The scale of such a contribution will be negotiated with the Borough Council (in consultation with the Parish Council).

4.304 Due to the proximity of the playing fields, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but a financial contribution towards the provision of play equipment on the playing field will be required in accordance with policy COM2.

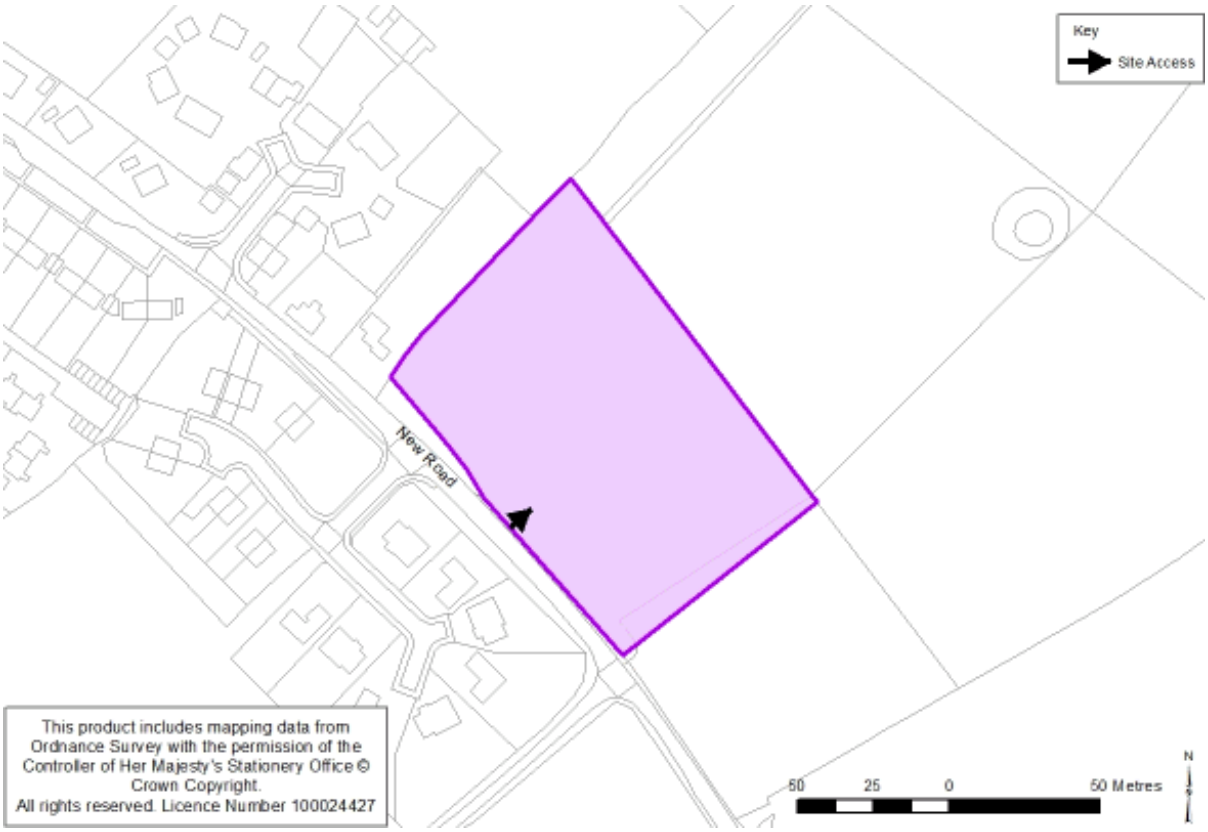
Policy S29 - Charing - Land South of the Arthur Baker Playing Field

The land south of the Arthur Baker playing fields is proposed for residential development, up to 35 units.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **provide a vehicular, pedestrian and cycle link from the A20 through the site to the adjoining Arthur Baker playing fields;**
b. **provide footpath and cycleway links to the playing fields;**
c. **be designed to include a built-up frontage to the A20 (and provide footpath and cycle links along the frontage);**
d. **provide a landscaped edge to the development along the south eastern edge of the site;**
e. **provide play equipment on the adjacent playing field in accordance with policy COM2; and,**
f. **provide a financial contribution towards the provision of a new or upgraded pavilion at the Arthur Baker playing field.**

Egerton - Land on New Road



4.305 This site is located in the south eastern edge of Egerton village on New Road, opposite Harmers Way, a modern housing estate. The site is in agricultural use and is currently used for grazing. The site is bounded by hedgerows and a limited number of trees creating a natural buffer to the countryside to the east and south. There is an existing PRoW footpath along the south eastern boundary.

4.306 This site provides the opportunity to create a natural extension to the village as it lies within walking distance of the village centre and the wide range of services provided there. At 1ha the site is considered suitable for residential development of around 15 dwellings (at 15dph).

4.307 The prominence of the sites location at the entrance of the village makes it essential that detailed consideration is given to design and layout issues. This site has a rural aspect and its development will impact on views of the village church when approached from the south, a scheme of no more than 2 storeys would be most appropriate here. The site should mirror the building line on the opposite side of the road. The Egerton Parish Design Statement should be taken into account to achieve a suitably designed development that reflects local character and that makes a positive contribution to the built environment.

4.308 With the exception of creating a suitable point of access at the point shown on the policies map, existing hedgerows should be retained to provide a natural buffer between the new development and the countryside. New planting is needed to soften the southern edge of built development to minimise visual impact and to make an attractive entrance to the village.

4.309 Pedestrian access with a safe road crossing point should be provided linking the new development to existing footpaths that facilitate Harmers Way and lead to the centre of the village. The developer will also need to negotiate the existing 30mph speed limit being extended further south along New Road with the local Highways Authority.

4.310 The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Potential and is approximately 80 metres from a Bronze Age barrow. Archaeological investigation work should be undertaken to access the archaeological potential within the site prior to construction work commencing.

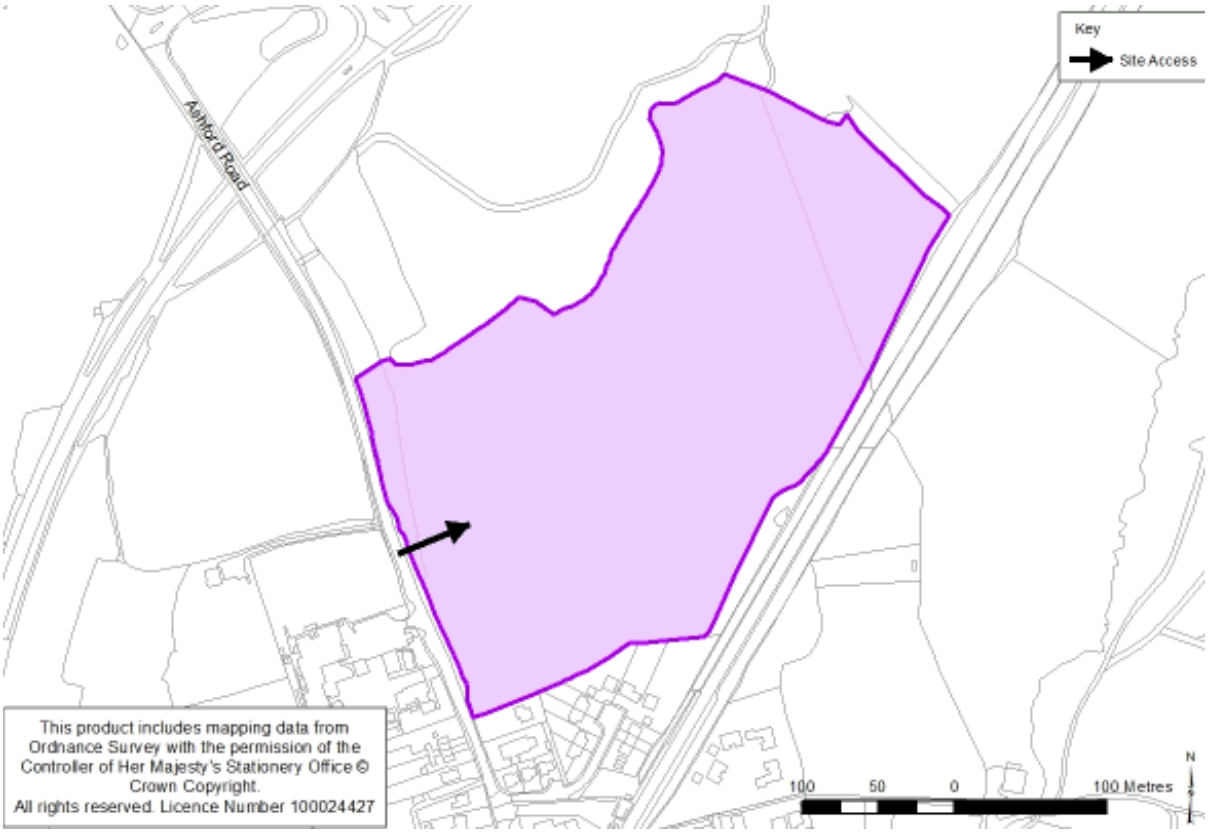
4.311 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground provision will be sought.

Policy S30 - Egerton - Land on New Road

The land north east of New Road is proposed for residential development for up to 15 units. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and views of the village church. The Egerton Parish Design Statement should be taken into account;**
b. **Create soft landscaping along the south eastern edge to lessen the visual impact of development when approaching the village from the south;**
c. **Provide primary vehicle access on New Road, as shown on the policies map and the extension of the existing 30mph speed restriction;**
d. **Provide new pedestrian routes throughout the development and connections to existing rural routes facilitating Harmers Way and local services;**
e. **Undertake Archaeological investigation work.**

Hamstreet - Land North of St Mary's Close



4.312 This site is located in the north of Hamstreet village covering an area of land between the Ashford to Rye Railway line and Ashford Road. The site is currently cultivated agricultural land. The northern boundary adjoins Court Wood which is ancient woodland and a narrow strip of woodland borders the western boundary. There are open views to the north east of the side where a Public Right of Way bisects the site. St. Mary's Close, a residential development built in the 1980's, adjoins the sites southern boundary.

4.313 The site adjoins existing development and is within easy walking distance of Hamstreet railway station, the village centre and the range of services provided there.

4.314 The site is opposite the Hamstreet Primary Academy and the development of this site presents a unique opportunity to deliver improved facilities for the school which currently has limited space within its existing site. Development of the site would enable the provision of a youth football pitch (Under 14/15's) with an associated changing room facility (2 room and storage) for the use of the Academy that could also be used by the wider community. Also, the Academy currently has limited car parking on site and this is an opportunity to provide additional staff car parking spaces within the new development. The site will also enable the provision of an outdoor classroom facility and this should be located on the eastern edge of the site within the second phase of the development. The expansion and improvement of the Academy's facilities will also help to facilitate the expansion of the academy to a full 2FE school.

4.315 Alongside these facilities, the site is considered suitable for a residential development of up to 80 dwellings (15dph). Due to the size of the development, it is proposed that the site

should be developed in two phases. The initial western phase (Phase A) is for 50 units with a second phase (Phase B) for an additional 30 units that should not come forward before 2023. Phase B should not be developed before Phase A.

4.316 Vehicular and pedestrian access shall be provided from Ashford Road but the road will separate the school from its new facilities associated with the development site and the control of traffic and parking along Ashford Road will be crucial in ensuring a safe environment for children, parents and the residents of the new development.

4.317 Any development scheme for this site must contain detailed proposals for the management of traffic, including traffic calming measures, along this section of Ashford Road to improve vehicular and pedestrian safety at this point in the village. Such traffic management proposals shall need to indicate how vehicle speeds can be slowed on the approach to the access, especially from the north, and will be required to facilitate the delivery of suitable measures to improve pedestrian safety at this point in the village. The treatment of the access point and the immediate area outside the school needs careful consideration to deliver a safe crossing between the site and school.

4.318 The location of the development site adjoining open countryside and sensitive woodland areas means that the density of new development should be and provide generous landscaped buffers to the northern and eastern boundaries. A mix of dwelling types and sizes should be provided. The site has a rural aspect and given the character and appearance of the surrounding area, dwellings no greater than 2 storeys in height would be appropriate here. The design and layout of any scheme must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. The Hamstreet Village Design Statement should be taken into account to achieve a suitably designed development that reflects local character and to ensure that any development makes a positive contribution to the built environment.

4.319 The existing Public Right of Way that runs through the site leading to Bourne Lane and Hamstreet Woods (a SSSI and National Nature Reserve) should be retained within the overall layout of the new development. The developer will need to work with Network Rail to minimise risks to pedestrians when crossing the railway line.

4.320 The topography of the site means that the site slopes generally from north to south and it will important to ensure that sustainable drainage systems are provided as part of the development to mitigate against runoff to the existing properties to the south. Any drainage scheme should be provided in line with the SuDS Policy.

4.321 The Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site lies immediately to the south west of the village along the Royal Military Canal. All applications for the development of this site should therefore include an Environmental Impact Assessment study demonstrating how the proposals will effect upon the integrity of the biodiversity of this designated wildlife area. Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ramsar Site will not be permitted. Opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks in this area and to mitigate against any potential increase in recreational pressure that may arise from the development of this site.

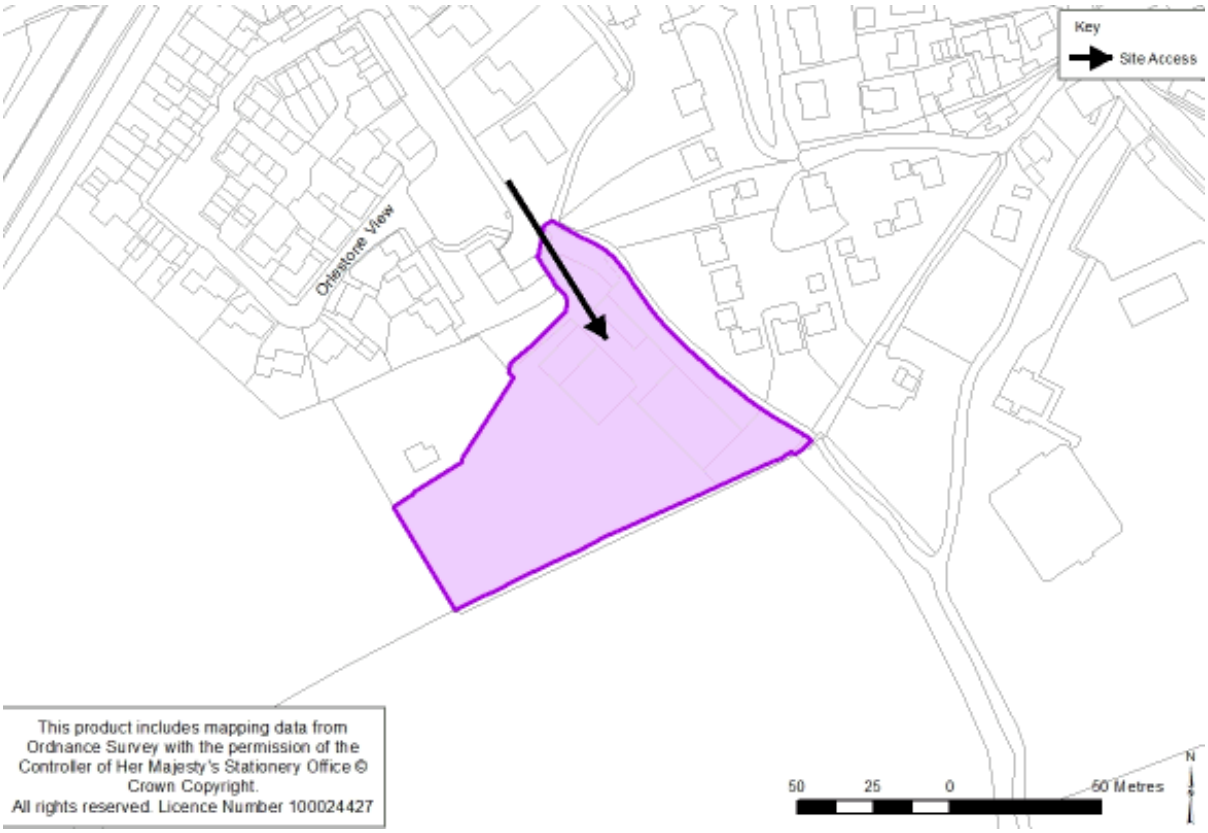
Policy S31 - Hamstreet - Land North of St. Mary's Close

Land North of St. Mary's Close, Hamstreet is proposed for residential development for up to 80 dwellings and associated facilities for use in conjunction with Hamstreet Primary Academy. The area shall be implemented in two separate phases with the western part of the site (Phase A) of up to 50 units to be developed first. The eastern part (Phase B) of up to 30 units shall not commence until 2023.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Provide a new youth football pitch to Football Association standards with changing room facilities and storage, for use by the Academy and by the wider community at other times;**
b. **Provide a new area of staff car parking for the Academy with a minimum of 60 spaces which would be used to serve the new football pitch at other times;**
c. **Provide an outdoor classroom facility for the Academy at the eastern edge of the site within Phase B;**
d. **Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance of open areas. The development should be no more than two storeys in height. The guidance in the Hamstreet Village Design Statement shall inform the design and layout of the development;**
e. **Provide vehicular and pedestrian access from Ashford Road;**
f. **Provide and fund the implementation of an agreed detailed traffic management plan for the scheme that includes measures that reduce vehicle speeds along Ashford Road and improve pedestrian safety at this point in the village;**
g. **Fund implementation of suitable on-street parking restrictions for non-residents;**
h. **Provide new pedestrian and cycle routes throughout the development and connections to the existing PRoW that runs through the site, as well as any necessary improvements to the pedestrian crossing at the railway line as part of PRoW;**
i. **Provide a generous landscaped buffer to the northern and eastern boundaries of the site;**
and,
j. **Provide for the installation of children's equipped play facilities within Phase A of the development.**

Land at Parker Farm



4.322 The site is located to the south west of the village, and is directly adjacent to the recent development at Orlestone View. The site is currently in agricultural use and there are several large agricultural buildings located along the eastern boundary. The Speringbrook sewer and 2 pumping stations are adjacent to the site boundaries. The southern boundary of the site abuts open countryside but the typography of the land means that long views to the south are contained.

4.323 This site was allocated for residential development within the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (as policy HAM2) with an indicative capacity of 20 dwellings, phased post 2016. However, the latest Environment Agency flood mapping shows that flood zones 2 and 3 have extended into the site since its previous allocation in 2010, and is now covering approximately half of the site area. For this reason, the developable area has been reduced to 0.38ha and only includes the area outside of the flood zones. This has lowered the capacity of the site for up to 10 dwellings (at 26dph).

4.324 The farm currently owns the private vehicular access onto Warehorne Road. This road also provides access to five existing properties and will need to be widened in places to provide appropriate passing points and re-surfaced along its length to accommodate the level of development proposed. Access to the site via the Orlestone View estate would not be acceptable, given the tightly-knit nature of this estate and its limited capacity.

4.325 The large agricultural buildings are of no great architectural value and therefore, it is required that these buildings be removed as part of the development of this site. This will enable safe vehicle access into the site and to improve the visual amenity of the immediate area for existing and new residents.

4.326 Development of the site must provide landscaped screening along the southern boundary to 'break up' the urban edge of the site and help create a clear edge to the settlement and provide a transition from the built form of the village to the open countryside. Screening must also be enhanced along the site boundaries with the residential areas, to limit the visual impact on these neighbouring properties, particularly the one farm property directly adjacent to the site.

4.327 A public right of way runs alongside the southern boundary of this site. The layout of development on this site should enable pedestrian access to this public footpath to create links to the wider countryside and the village services to the east.

4.328 Due to the close proximity of the Pound Lees recreation ground on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the Pound Lees provision will be sought. The area of the site within the floodzones should be designed as informal open space.

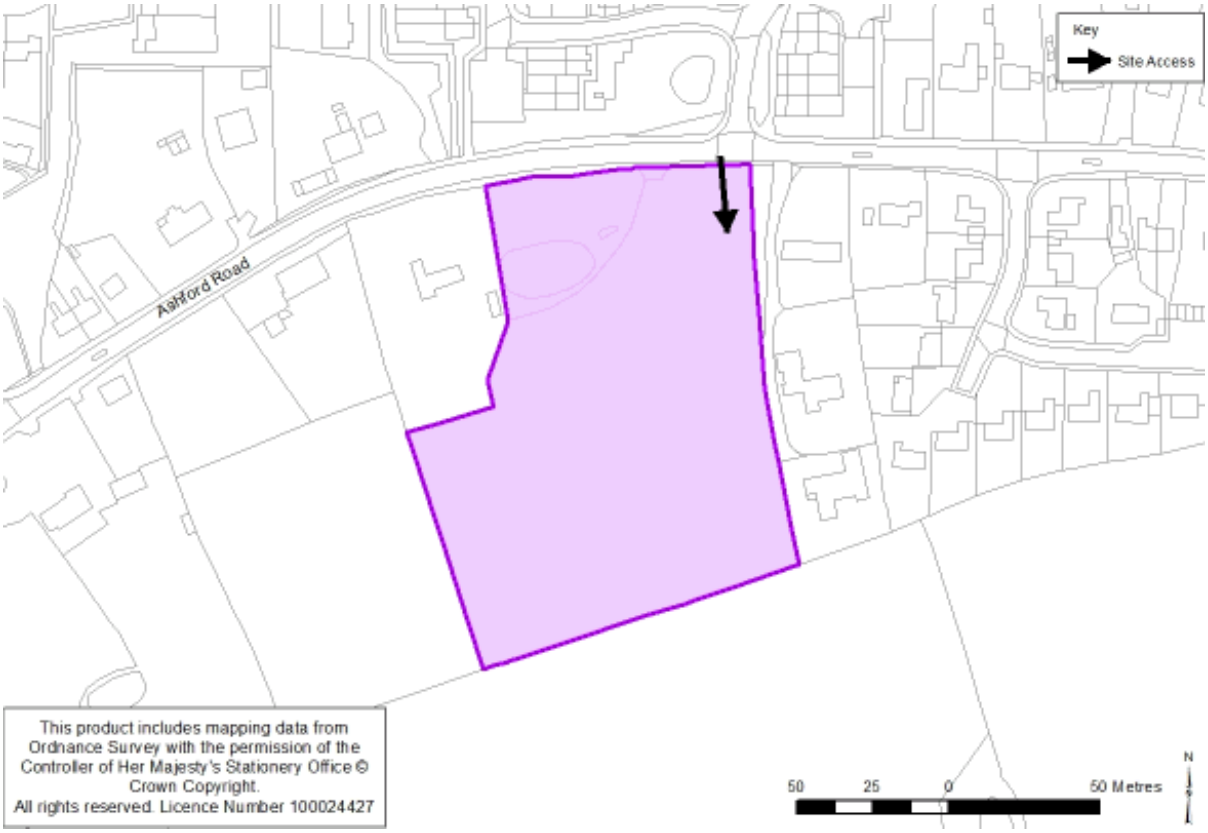
4.329 The Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site lies immediately to the south west of the village along the Royal Military Canal. All applications for the development of this site should therefore include an Environmental Impact Assessment study demonstrating how the proposals will effect upon the integrity of the biodiversity of this designated wildlife area. Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Ramsar Site will not be permitted. Opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks in this area and to mitigate against any potential increase in recreational pressure that may arise from the development of this site.

Policy S32 - Hamstreet - Land at Parker Farm

Land at Parker Farm is proposed for residential development for up to 10 units. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Retain and enhance the existing hedge and tree boundary around the site to screen the development from the open countryside and create soft landscaping along site boundaries. The Hamstreet Village Design Statement should be taken into account when considering design and layout;**
b. **Provide a dedicated vehicular access directly onto Warehorne Road via the existing private access lane, creating appropriate vehicle passing places along its length and re-surfaced to accommodate new traffic;**
c. **Remove the existing agricultural structures;**
d. **Create a pedestrian link to the public right of way that runs alongside the southern boundary of the site;**
e. **Provide informal open space in the flood zone area of the site; and**
f. **Provide a flood risk assessment in consultation with the Environment Agency.**

High Halden - Land at Hope House



4.330 This site is located within the village of High Halden on southern side of the A28 opposite the housing estate known as Hopes Grove. The site is currently an open area of grassland comprising a field with a large pond in the western area which adjoins Hope House, a Grade ll listed building. The land slopes upwards towards the southern boundary where there is a substantial hedge and tree line. There are also some small trees growing in the area around the pond and some more substantial trees to the rear of Hope House.

4.331 This site has been identified as a suitable location within the confines of a large village, for residential development whilst also being able to retain and improve the wildlife habitat around the pond and links with the adjoining countryside to the west and south.

4.332 The part of the site considered appropriate for development is 1.3 hectares, which is the land between Oakland, Rowans and Lynton in the east and Hope House to the west and including the land immediately to the rear of Hope House. The area in which the pond is located has not been taken into account for built development and must be enhanced to create a wildlife area. The site is therefore considered suitable for up to 25 units which is equivalent of around 20 dwellings per hectare.

4.333 Given the character and appearance of the surrounding areas, a scheme of 1 – 2 storey buildings would be most appropriate here. The design and layout must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, particularly on the eastern boundary and avoid any adverse impact upon the adjoining listed building. Particular attention needs to be given to the topography of the site.

4.334 Dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance to the enhanced pond and wildlife area. Dwellings on the Ashford Road parcel should provide frontage development here. Larger properties in generous plots should be generally located in the most sensitive locations on the rural edge and around the listed building.

4.335 In view of the limited visibility splays currently available, the development will be dependent upon the provision of 2.4 x 43m.visibility splays being provided in conjunction with the extension of the 30mph limit to cover the site access, to be agreed with the local highway authority. The new speed limit area will need to be accompanied by traffic calming measures such as traffic islands and interactive signs to help reduce traffic speeds to the desired level or red surfacing with speed limit roundels as in the case of the existing adjoining 30mph restriction. Proposals for the site must also include the provision of a footpath between Oakland and Hope House.

4.336 Due to the site's proximity to a Grade ll listed farmhouse (Hope House), high quality design must be achieved within the new development. For example, development proposals should include details of the design of outdoor lighting and street furniture, signage, and landscaping. The built footprint of development on this site needs to be carefully planned. It should avoid and enhance the existing areas of hedges and trees that provide both natural screening and habitat whilst also including a soft green buffer along part of the western and southern boundaries to help mitigate the impact on the adjacent residential occupiers and on the character and setting of the adjoining countryside.

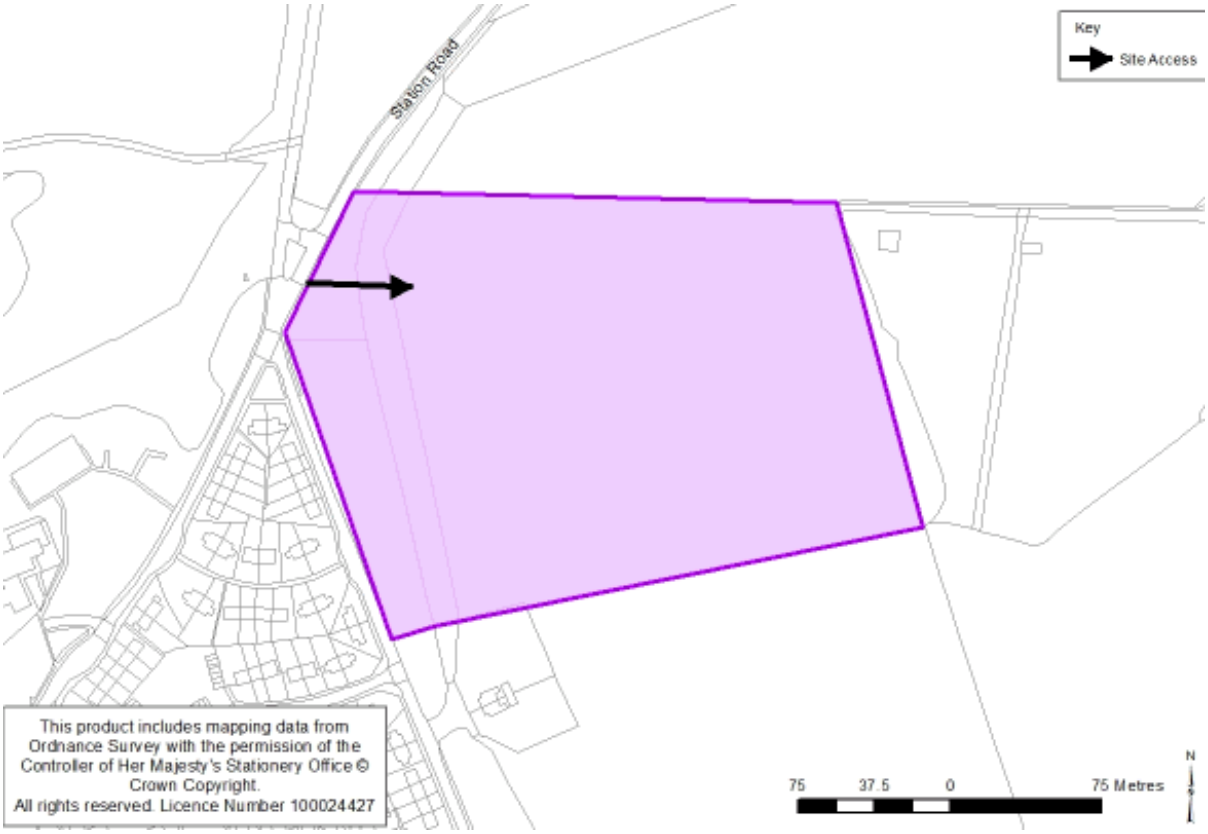
4.337 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground provision will be sought.

Policy S33 - High Halden - Land at Hope House

Land at Hope House is proposed for residential development for up to 25 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Enhance the north western area of open space associated with the existing pond/s and mitigate against impacts from development on the biodiversity. Provide a wildlife corridor from this area to the adjoining countryside by retaining existing trees and hedging within the site, where possible;**
b. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the character and setting of the village and the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings, particularly the listed building, Hope House; attention needs to be given to the topography of the site and dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance of the wildlife/pond area;**
c. **Provide primary vehicle access onto the A28 Ashford Road, as shown on the policies map and include the provision of traffic calming measures to slow the traffic to 30mph or less, in accordance with the recommendations of Kent Highways;**
d. **Retain and enhance the hedge and tree boundaries around the site, particularly the adjoining countryside the development and listed building.**

Hothfield - Land East of Coach Drive



4.338 Hothfield is a relatively compact village with a central residential core and clearly defined edges to open countryside along its eastern and southern boundaries. It lies to the west of the A20 and is well screened by a combination of the local topography and the wooded areas that form part of the Hothfield Common SSSI.

4.339 This site is located on the north eastern edge of Hothfield at the main entrance point to the village when approached from the A20. The site adjoins Coach Drive which, on its eastern side, has a substantial tree belt that is the subject of a Tree Preservation Order and hence the site is relatively well screened from the existing built part of the village.

4.340 Hothfield has been designated as a Neighbourhood Area with the intention that there will be a Neighbourhood Plan prepared for the parish. This site has been identified in this Local Plan as the most appropriate location for additional residential development in the village but it may be possible for an emerging Neighbourhood Plan to identify alternative locations for development.

4.341 The site provides an opportunity to create a modest expansion to the village that can help to sustain and support local services but it is important that the development is limited to an area that would not be visible from the northern approach to the village, particularly from the A20, and hence the site is proposed for 40 units. This may necessitate the provision of single storey accommodation on the eastern and northern edges of the built footprint of the development with a suitable buffer of mature landscaping provided to screen mid to long range views. The

central residential core of the village contains relatively high density residential development so some relatively low density development is appropriate on part of the site.

4.342 The site should be accessed by vehicles via a single access point from the junction of Coach Drive and Station Road. Suitable traffic management arrangements will need to be implemented to ensure a satisfactory junction arrangement at this point.

4.343 The existing tree belt along Coach Drive is a significant local feature that will be a barrier between the existing built part of the village and the new development. However, it is important that the proposed development is integrated into the rest of the village whilst retaining the large majority of the tree belt and hence it is proposed that provision should be made for a pedestrian and cycleway link through the tree belt on Coach Drive to provide direct links and connectivity to the main part of the village.

4.344 Hothfield Common SSSI lies to the north of the village and is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. This is a site of national importance that is already under considerable pressure from recreational use. Any development proposal needs to give careful consideration to potential additional recreational use of the Reserve and contributions towards appropriate mitigation measures will be required. This site is also within the Biodiversity Opportunity Area of Mid Kent Greensand and Gault and this should be reflected in any landscaping, planting or open space provision associated with the development. Liaison with the Council and Kent Wildlife Trust will be necessary to ensure that appropriate measures are defined and delivered as part of the wider programme for the management of the SSSI.

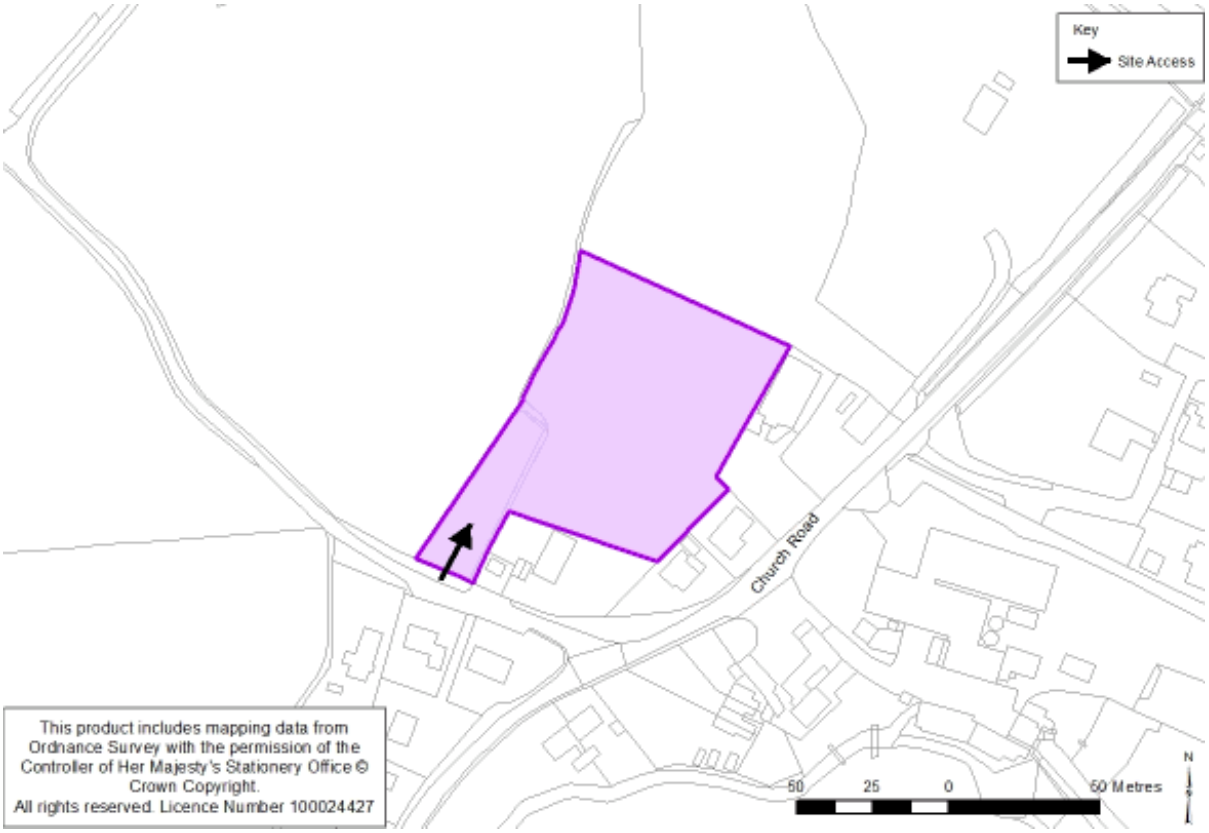
Policy S34 - Hothfield - Land East of Coach Drive

Land to the east of Coach Drive, Hothfield is proposed for residential development for up to 40 units.

Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **be designed and laid out with particular attention given to the topography of the site and dwellings should be orientated to limit the impact of the development on the landscape to the north and east of the site;**
b. **Provide vehicular access from the junction of Station Road and Coach Drive as shown on the policies map;**
c. **Provide a new pedestrian and cycle route from the development to Coach Drive;**
d. **With the exception of meeting clauses b and c above, retain the existing trees along the boundary to Coach Drive that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order;**
e. **Provide a financial contribution towards the provision, management and maintenance of existing community facilities, open space and play equipment in the village;**
f. **Ensure that any direct or indirect impact on the SSSI or the Mid Kent and Greensand and Gault Biodiversity Area is suitably mitigated.**

Mersham - Land adjacent to Village Hall



4.345 This site is located in the south western edge of Mersham village behind Church Road. The north eastern part of the site adjoins Mersham Village Hall and associated parking facilities, in addition to three detached bungalows that wrap around the southern boundary. The site is in agricultural use and is currently used for grazing. The western boundary of the site is lined with trees and hedgerows providing a natural buffer to the countryside beyond. The northern boundary is a continuation of the field beyond and so there is currently no natural boundary.

4.346 This site provides an opportunity to facilitate an extension to the Village Hall as well as additional parking provision. It is within walking distance of the village centre and the range of services provided there. It is considered suitable for residential development for up to 10 dwellings (15 dwellings per hectare).

4.347 This area is residential in character and consists mainly of detached dwellings and bungalows, some of which are listed and so, the scale and density of new development should also be low. A mix of dwelling sizes and types should be provided, within a scheme of no more than 2 storeys in height. The design and layout must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

4.348 The site has a rural aspect and abuts open countryside to the north and west. Trees and hedgerows must be retained where possible along these edges. New screening may be needed along the western edge beside the new access road to soften this edge and provide a gradual transition from the village to the countryside. The development should be well designed and

must not result in any significant adverse impact on the character of the area or the surrounding landscape or the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

4.349 A new vehicle access point shall be created to provide access to the development from Blind Lane. The layout of the site should enable direct access from the new residential development to the village hall for pedestrians. This will enable new residents to safety access existing facilities within the village such as the school.

4.350 Village halls have an important role to play in helping to keep local communities active. Mersham Parish Council has identified the need for a village hall extension and to increase the capacity of existing parking provision which serves the village hall. This development provides a unique opportunity to deliver an extension to the village hall and additional parking which should be undertaken in consultation with Mersham Parish Council.

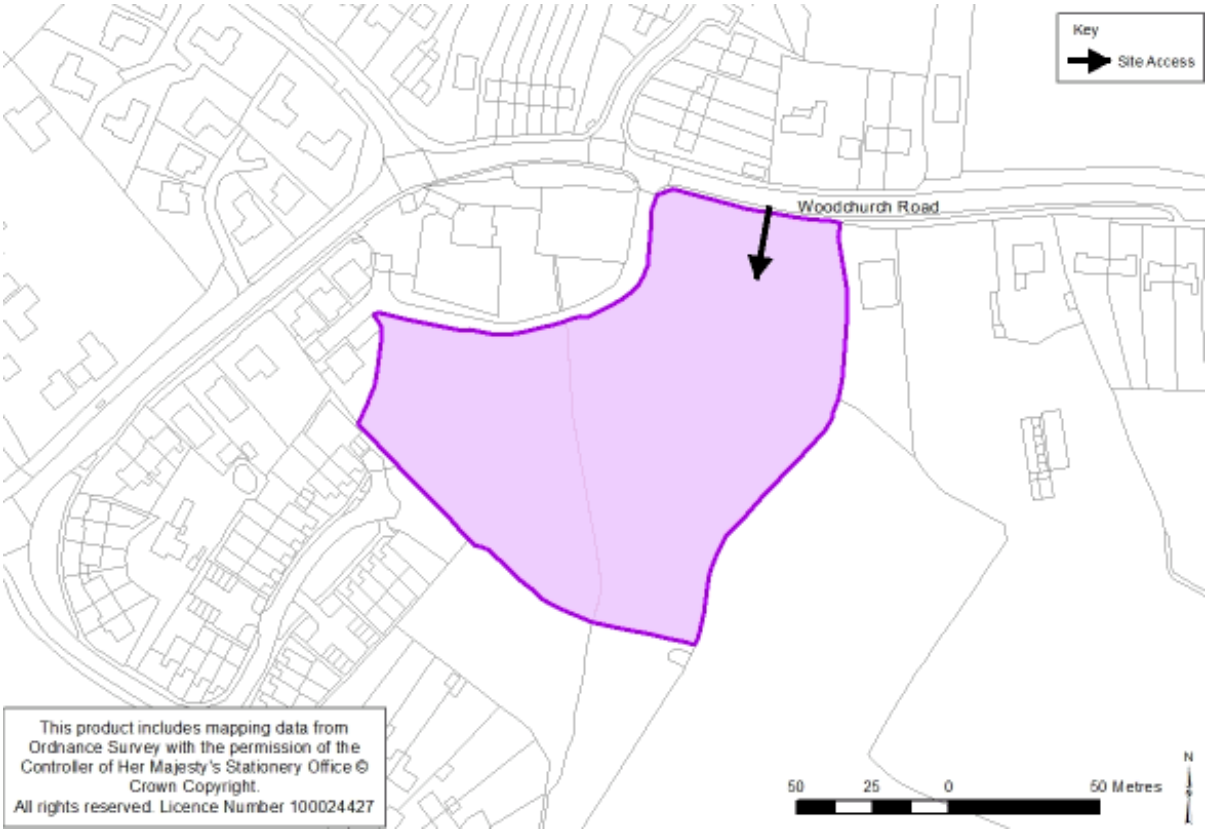
4.351 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground provision will be sought

Policy S35 - Mersham - Land adjacent to the Village Hall

The site on land adjacent to Mersham Village Hall is proposed for residential development, for up to 10 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance of open areas;**
b. **Provide new pedestrian routes throughout the development and connections to existing rural routes facilitating the village hall and local services;**
c. **Create soft landscaping along the southern and western boundaries to lessen the visual impact of development on the countryside beyond;**
d. **Provide an extension to the Village Hall in consultation with the Parish Council with additional parking provision. These elements should be completed before work can commence on the residential elements of the scheme.**

Shadoxhurst - Rear of Kings Head PH



4.352 This site is located on the eastern side of the village of Shadoxhurst, which has a very linear settlement form. This part of the village has seen more development in recent years and is emerging as the core of the village, centred around the Kings Head Public House (PH). The site wraps around the south of the PH, and has already been partly developed in the western edge as 'Maytree Place', a small development of 4 detached units, with a private access road which also serves the pub car park.

4.353 There is a cul-de-sac development which adjoins the site on the south west, Nairne Close, which is terraced 2-storey housing and contains a small open space area (this used to include play equipment). The close is well screened from the site by a line of mature trees. To the east of the site the built form is mostly in linear form along the road frontage and is a mix of styles.

4.354 At 1.4ha in size, the site is considered suitable for up to 25 units, depending on the size and layout of the dwellings. Larger properties should be located on more spacious plots joining on to the open countryside to the south and east. Development should front onto Woodchurch Road, Maytree Place and the proposed new access road, creating rows of development. There is also opportunity for small clusters of development in the southern area of the site.

4.355 The design of proposals coming forward should take into account the setting of the Public House which is a listed building. The existing hedgerows trees must be retained around the boundary of the site and new planting should be placed around the new development to

provide screening between the site existing residents and create soft landscaping to lessen the visual impact of the development.

4.356 The main vehicular access will be provided on Woodchurch Road, as shown on the policy map. This new access road should be designed in a way that the current Maytree Place access will connect to it. The current Maytree Place access will be closed to only serve the PH car park in future. The visibility splays that have been created along the roadside verge at the front of the PH must be retained.

4.357 The development site has a prominent frontage to Woodchurch Road and there is the potential to create a central feature for the village that could be in the form of a village green. Any development on this site should investigate the potential to deliver this as part of the development. together with suitable arrangements for its management. There is potential for this site to provide additional benefits to the village in the form of retail space. This should be explored further through the4 design and planning of this development.

4.358 There are 2 north/south public rights of way across the site which are well used as connections across the village. A new pedestrian/cycle access should be provided through the site to enhance these connections. This creates an opportunity to connect to the Nairne Close open space area, which should be enlarged to provide a wider open space community benefit and assist with village integration.

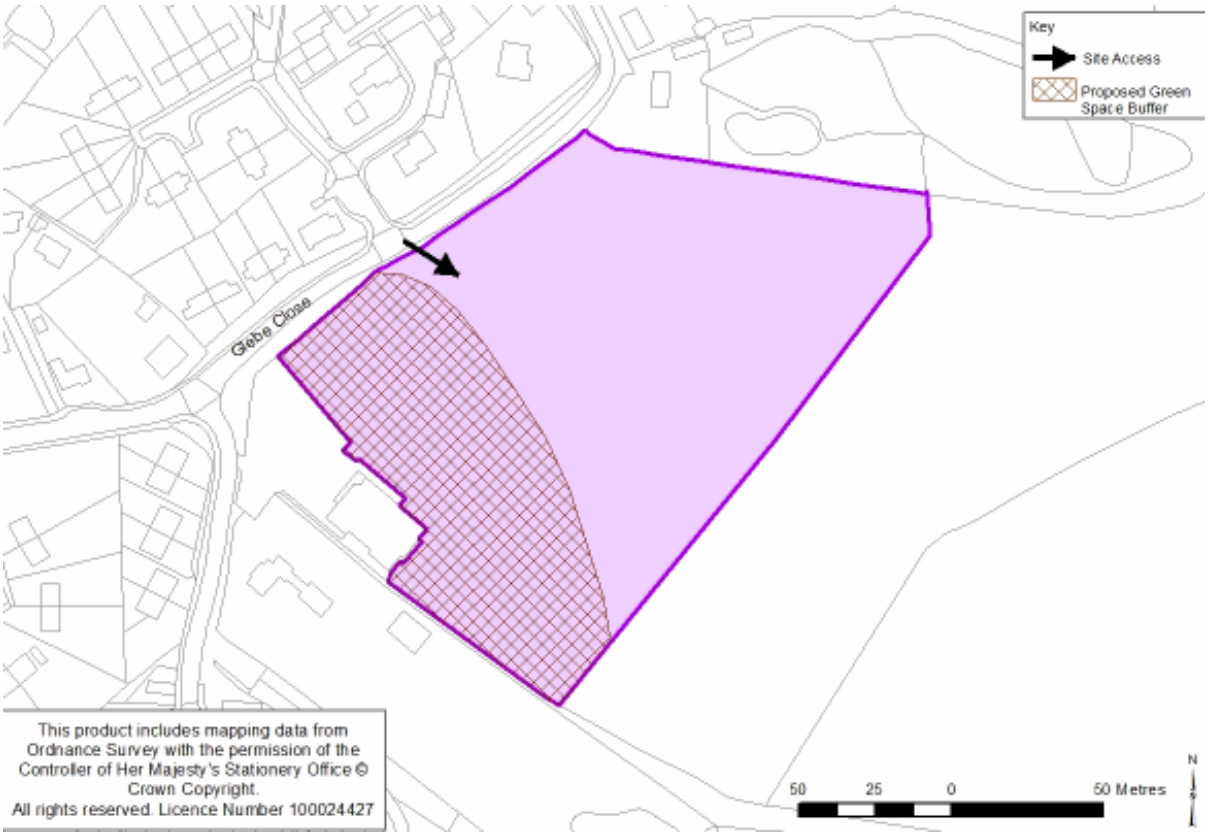
4.359 The site is in an area of archaeological potential, and close by to known Iron Age/Romano activities. Evaluation and Investigation work should be undertaken, in consultation with KCC Heritage team prior to development commencement.

Policy S36 - Shadoxhurst - Rear of Kings Head PH

The site rear of the Kings head in Shadoxhurst is proposed for residential development for up to 25 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the setting of the PH listed building and take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.**
b. **Proposals should seek to link the new development with adjoining Nairne Close, to create an area of shared public space;**
c. **Provide primary vehicle access on Woodchurch Road, as shown on the policies map, which will also serve Maytree Place. The existing Maytree Place access will serve only the public house car park once development is complete;**
d. **Create a pedestrian/cycle route through the site to enhance the current connections and retain or enhance the existing PRoW's;**
e. **Development proposals should investigate the potential to create an area of open space along the frontage to Woodchurch Road along with appropriate management arrangements;**
f. **Retain the hedge and tree boundary around the site to screen the development of the site and create soft landscaping to lessen the visual impact of the development;**
g. **Assess the opportunity of providing retail facilities within the site to serve the wider community.**

Smarden - Land adjacent to Village Hall



4.360 This site is located along The Street, the main route through village. It is currently a field in agricultural use, bounded by hedgerows and trees. The site is a gap in the linear form of built development along this road and is situated to the north of the Village Hall. Smarden is a village with much historic character and contains many unique listed buildings in its central core, which is designated as a Conservation Area. The site is situated outside of this historic core of the village but is still within walking distance of the many community facilities and services available there.

4.361 To the north and north-west of the site are a number of 2-storey detached dwellings along the road frontage. There are also a number of cul-de-sac developments off the main road in this area, to the north-west and south of the site. To the east is open countryside, and an area that falls within floodzones 2 & 3 along the river Beult, over 400m away. There is a mature hedgerow along the road frontage, but no footpath in this location.

4.362 At approx. 1.2ha in size, the site is considered suitable for around 25 units, dependant on a suitable layout and design. Development should enhance the character of this part of the street by providing attractive frontage development with fits in with the street scene, whilst preserving the rural edge by backing on to the countryside.

4.363 Development of this site is proposed at a low density (around 25dph), and should reflect the open landscape, and the density of the surrounding developments by providing lower densities along the countryside edge. The design of proposals coming forward should also reflect the 'guidelines' set out in the Smarden Parish Design Statement.

4.364 The hedgerows and trees must be retained around the boundary of the site and new planting should be placed around the eastern edge of the new development to provide screening between the site and the countryside. It should be shown in the design proposals that care has been taken to limit the visibility of the new development from the main road and the nearby Public Right of Way (PRoW) and also must minimise the impact on neighbouring properties by providing planting, particularly in the area adjacent to the property 'Weathercock'.

4.365 The area alongside the village hall in south is highly visible from the main street, and is an important aspect of the village hall setting and usage. It also contains a PRoW that leads into the countryside. This area should be provided as informal Public Open Space, as shown on the policies map, which will benefit the village hall users and new residents and will also minimise the visibility of the new development.

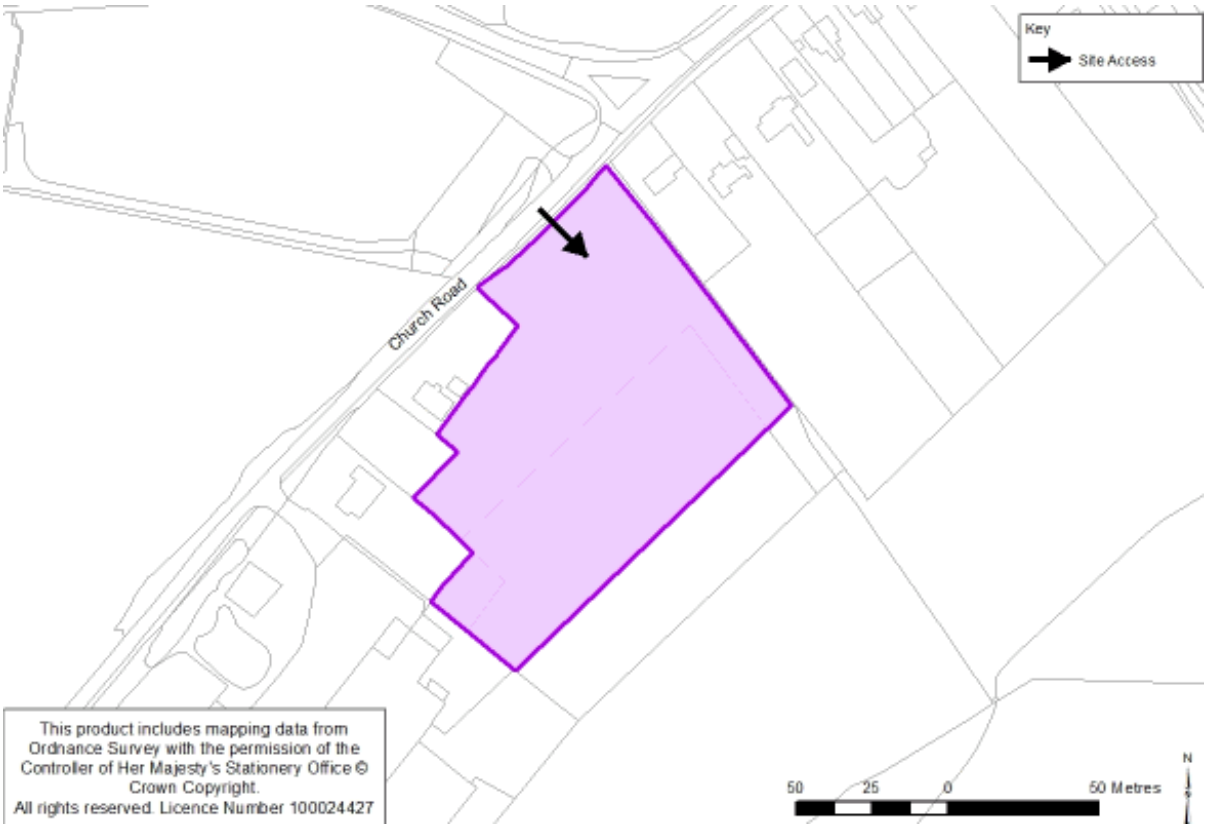
4.366 Access to the site should be close to the village hall, as shown on the policies map. There is currently no footpath on this side of the road, and one should be provided within the development. However, proposals should attempt to preserve the green edge of the street, the hedgerow and ditch along the road frontage here.

Policy S37 - Smarden - Land adjacent to Village Hall

The site adjacent to the Village Hall in Smarden is proposed for residential development for up to 25 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed in accordance with the Smarden Parish Design Statement. Particular attention needs to be given to the visibility of new development from the Street and the village hall and minimise the impact on adjoining countryside;**
b. **Create an area of informal Public Open Space along the southern parcel of the site, adjacent to the memorial hall, which includes the existing PRoW, as shown on the policies map;**
c. **Retain and create new hedge and tree boundary's to screen the development from the open countryside and neighbouring residents and create new soft landscaping throughout the development;**
d. **Provide primary vehicle access on The Street, as shown on the policies map;**
e. **Provide a new footpath along the road frontage, which must retain hedgerows where possible.**

Smeeth - Land south of Church Road



4.367 This site is located on the south western edge of Smeeth village along Church Road opposite the village playing field. This area of the village is characterised by detached dwellings. The site is currently a gap between development along Church Road and also wraps behind Walnut Tree Farm. The north western boundary of the site is lined by a mature hedge providing screening of the site along Church Road. A PRoW runs along the north eastern edge of the site with sporadic hedging. The site is open in the south-eastward direction however distance views are restricted by a wooded area approximately 200m beyond.

4.368 This area is residential in character and consists mainly of detached dwellings and bungalows so the scale and density of new development should be low. The site is within walking distance of the village centre and the range of services provided there, as is located opposite the village recreation field. It is considered suitable for residential development of around 30 dwellings depending on the size and layout (at around 30 dwellings per hectare).

4.369 A mix of dwelling sizes and types should be provided within a scheme of no more than 2 storeys in height. The design and layout must take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers.

4.370 With the exception of creating a suitable point of access at the point shown on the policies map, existing hedgerows should be retained. The site abuts open countryside to the southeast and so new soft landscaping with an element of screening will be required to soften this edge and to provide a gradual transition from the village to the countryside.

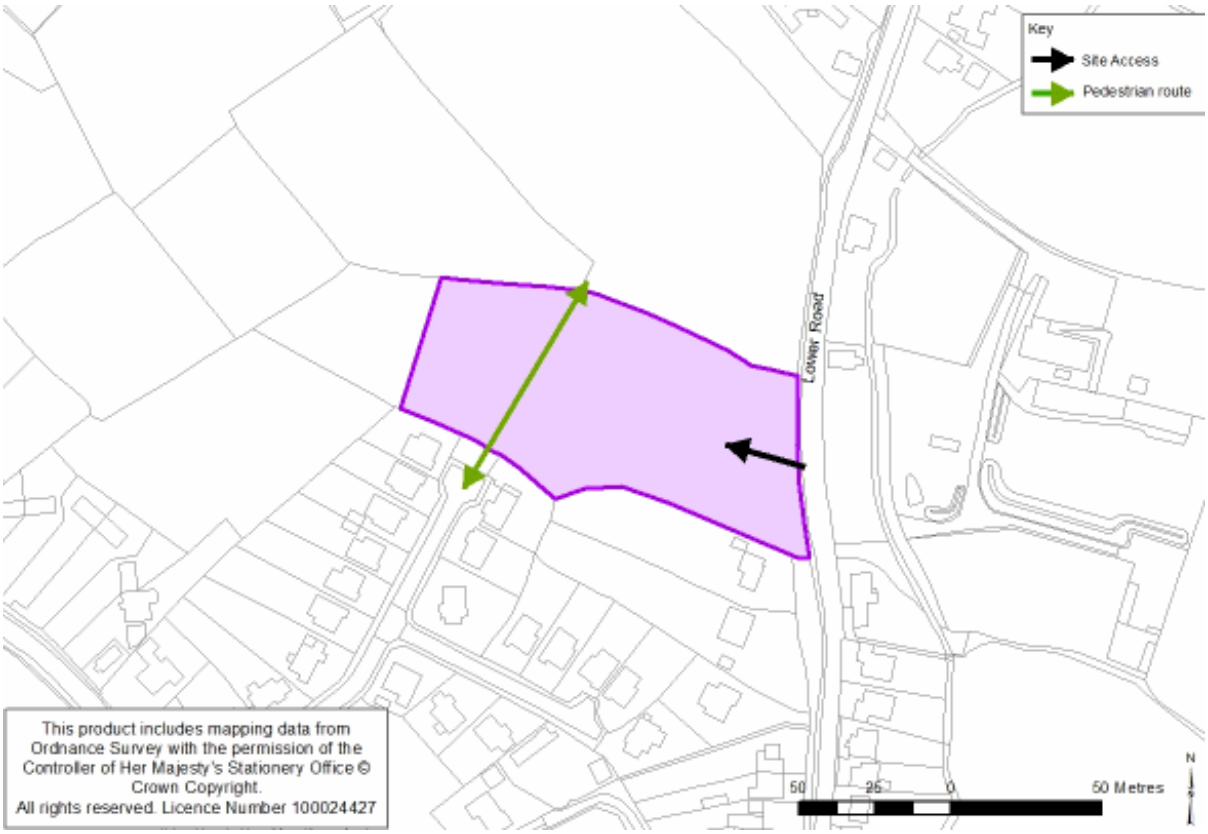
4.371 Due to the close proximity of the village recreation ground opposite, on-site provision of public open space will not be expected but appropriate contributions towards the management, maintenance and enhancement of the village recreation ground provision will be sought.

Policy S38 - Smeeth - Land South of Church Road

The land south of Church Road is proposed for residential development for up to 30 units. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out to take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Dwellings should be orientated to enable overlooking and natural surveillance of open areas. The development should be no more than two stories in height;**
b. **Provide a pedestrian link to the public footpath that runs alongside the eastern boundary of the site;**
c. **Create soft landscaping along the south-eastern edge to lessen the visual impact of development on the countryside beyond.**

Woodchurch - Lower Road



4.372 This site is located on Lower Road, one of the main roads that runs through the eastern edge of village. The site is currently a field in agricultural use bounded by hedgerows and trees, and is currently a gap in the linear form of built development along this road. The site is very central in the village and in walking distance of the many services and community facilities available here.

4.373 To the north of the site is an open area of land in the centre of the village, used for agriculture, but an important part of the setting of the village centre. The area immediately to the north of the site, along the road frontage has recently commenced construction for a single dwelling and a holiday let. These fields adjoin a well used village green further to the North which is accessed from Lower Road and Front Road. Adjoining the site to the south is the residential close of Kirkwood Avenue, a 'T' shaped cul-de-sac development of detached bungalows, which is accessed from Front Road. There are also adjacent properties along Lower Road, in linear form, mainly detached 2-storey properties.

4.374 At 0.7ha in size, the site is considered suitable for up to 8 units, depending on the size and layout. Development here is proposed at a low density to be in keeping with the open landscape here and village green to the north.

4.375 The design of proposals coming forward should reflect the 'guidelines' set out in the Woodchurch Village Design Statement and take into account the Conservation Area Setting of this site. The open character of Lower Road should be retained where possible, along with the views towards the church. This can be achieved through low density housing in this

location. Development should front Lower Road, and the access road, as shown on the policies map.

4.376 The main vehicular access will be provided on Lower Road as shown on the policy map, but there is an opportunity to provide an emergency access point through Kirkwood Avenue. A pedestrian/cycle access should also be provided here to link the new development with the southern end of the village.

4.377 The hedgerows and trees must be retained around the boundary of the site and new planting should be placed around the south of the new development to provide screening between the site and Kirkwood Avenue residents. It should be shown in the design proposals that care has been taken to limit the visibility of the new development from the open space to the north, and limit the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

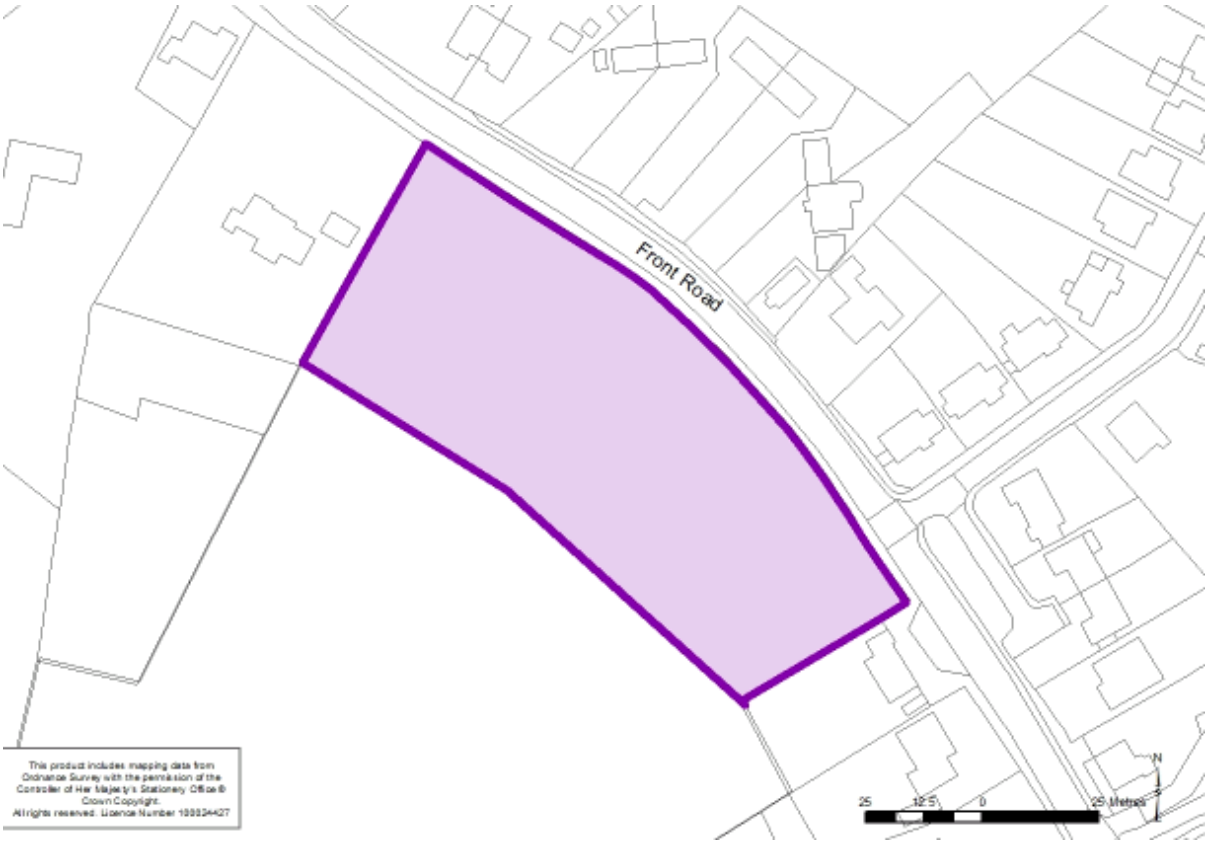
4.378 The area around Woodchurch is one of the areas of darkest skies in the county and meets the criteria for designation as an 'intrinsically dark landscape' as described by the NPPF. It provides important opportunities for stargazing activity. All applications for the development of this site should therefore include a full lighting scheme and should comply with policy ENV4 and with the guidance contained in the Council's Dark Skies SPD 2014 with regard to the installation of external lighting schemes.

Policy S39 - Woodchurch - Lower Road

The site in Lower Road is proposed for residential development for up to 8 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect the character and setting of the Conservation Area and protect and enhance the views towards the church. Village Design Statement guidelines must be taken into account;**
b. **Take account of the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers. Particular attention needs to be given to the visibility of new development from the open areas to the north and the open setting of Lower Road;**
c. **Create a green link from Kirkwood Avenue towards the village green, with suitable pedestrian access;**
d. **Provide primary vehicle access on Lower Road, as shown on the policies map. An emergency access could be provided through Kirkwood Avenue;**
e. **Retain the existing hedge and tree boundaries around the site to screen the development of the site from Kirkwood Avenue and Lower Road and create soft landscaping to lessen the visual impact of the development.**

Woodchurch - Front Road



4.379 This site is located on Front Road, the main road through the village centre which also serves many of the services and community facilities. The site is located on the western side of Front Road, approximately halfway between the village green to the north and the Stonebridge Inn Junction to the south and is within walking distance of the many services and community facilities available at the centre of the village.

4.380 The site is currently a field in agricultural use, located between the linear form of built development along this road which comprises of different dwelling types, styles and ages but has a very rural 'informal' nature. The site is raised above road level, has a hedged road frontage and open character Visibility of the site from Front Road is currently limited at most times of the year due to the high hedge.

4.381 The linear form of this road has been punctuated in several locations by cul-de-sac layouts on the eastern edge, including Kirkwood Avenue, a 'T' shaped cul-de-sac development of detached bungalows, located opposite the site, but this would be out of character on this western edge.

4.382 This 0.6ha site was allocated for residential development within the Tenterden and Rural Sites DPD (as policy WOOD1) with an indicative capacity of 10 dwellings. However, a number of planning applications for the site have shown that this scale does not achieve an appropriate, design in this prominent location, which is situated at the entrance to the village and forms part of the setting of the Conservation Area.

4.383 In order to respect the rural setting of this part of the Conservation Area, proposals for development in this area must have a sufficient degree of openness and visual connection with the countryside. The design and layout of the scheme should allow for significant spaces between buildings to allow for long views through the site to the countryside beyond. This could be achieved with varying plot sizes.

4.384 In order to respect the adjoining Townland Green Character Area within the Conservation Area and the siting of properties opposite the site, development should be set well back from Front Road and not be of a scale or massing which would dominate this approach to the Conservation Area or the public views from it.

4.385 The site is now therefore considered suitable for up to 8 units depending on the size and layout of the dwellings. Development here is proposed at a low density (>14dph).

4.386 Due to the height of the land above the road and rise in land from south to north, a maximum of 2-storey housing only will be acceptable. The design of proposals coming forward should reflect the 'guidelines' set out in the Woodchurch Village Design Statement and take into account the Conservation Area setting of the site, with reference to the updated Conservation Area Appraisal.

4.387 The layout and design of the development must be consistent with the current linear building line and principal elevations should be located on the road frontage, with parking located on the front and side of properties.

4.388 The main vehicular access will be provided on Front Road as shown on the policy map, however access to properties fronting the road may be achieved individually if this does not require significant hedge loss. A pedestrian footpath must also be provided along the frontage.

4.389 The south western boundary of the site is open to long views from the South (Brook Street) and therefore appropriate, substantial landscaping must be provided along this boundary to lessen the visual impact on the landscape, but also be designed to allow views through the site to the countryside beyond..

4.390 The area around Woodchurch is one of the areas of darkest skies in the county and meets the criteria for designation as an 'intrinsically dark landscape' as described by the NPPF. It provides important opportunities for stargazing activity. All applications for the development of this site should therefore include a full lighting scheme and should comply with policy ENV4 and with the guidance contained in the Council’s Dark Skies SPD 2014 with regard to the installation of external lighting schemes.

Policy S40 - Woodchurch - Front Road

The site in Front Road, Woodchurch is proposed for residential development for up to 8 dwellings. Development proposals for this site shall:

a. **Be designed and laid out in such a way as to protect and enhance the character and setting of the Woodchurch Conservation Area. The updated Conservation Area Appraisal and Woodchurch Village Design Statement guidelines must be taken into account when considering the design of the site;**
b. **Be of a scale or massing which would not dominate this approach to the Conservation Area and ensure a maximum height of 2-storey properties;**
c. **Be set well back from Front Road with the principal elevations facing the road frontage;**
d. **Subject to providing safe access to the site, retain and enhance a hedge boundary to Front Road and provide substantial soft landscaping around the site to screen the development from the open countryside and protect the amenity of neighbouring properties, whilst allowing some views through the site to the countryside.**

Exclusive Home Sites

4.391 Following the NPPF guidance which requires LPAs to promote a wide choice of quality housing, it is part of the vision of this Local Plan to provide a full range of housing that meets a wide variety of needs and choice of home for all residents. The opportunity for local need, affordable and starter housing for those not yet on the property ladder will be achieved through policies HOU1 and HOU2, and general market housing, of mixed sizes and varying locations, will be met through the wide range of site allocations within this plan.

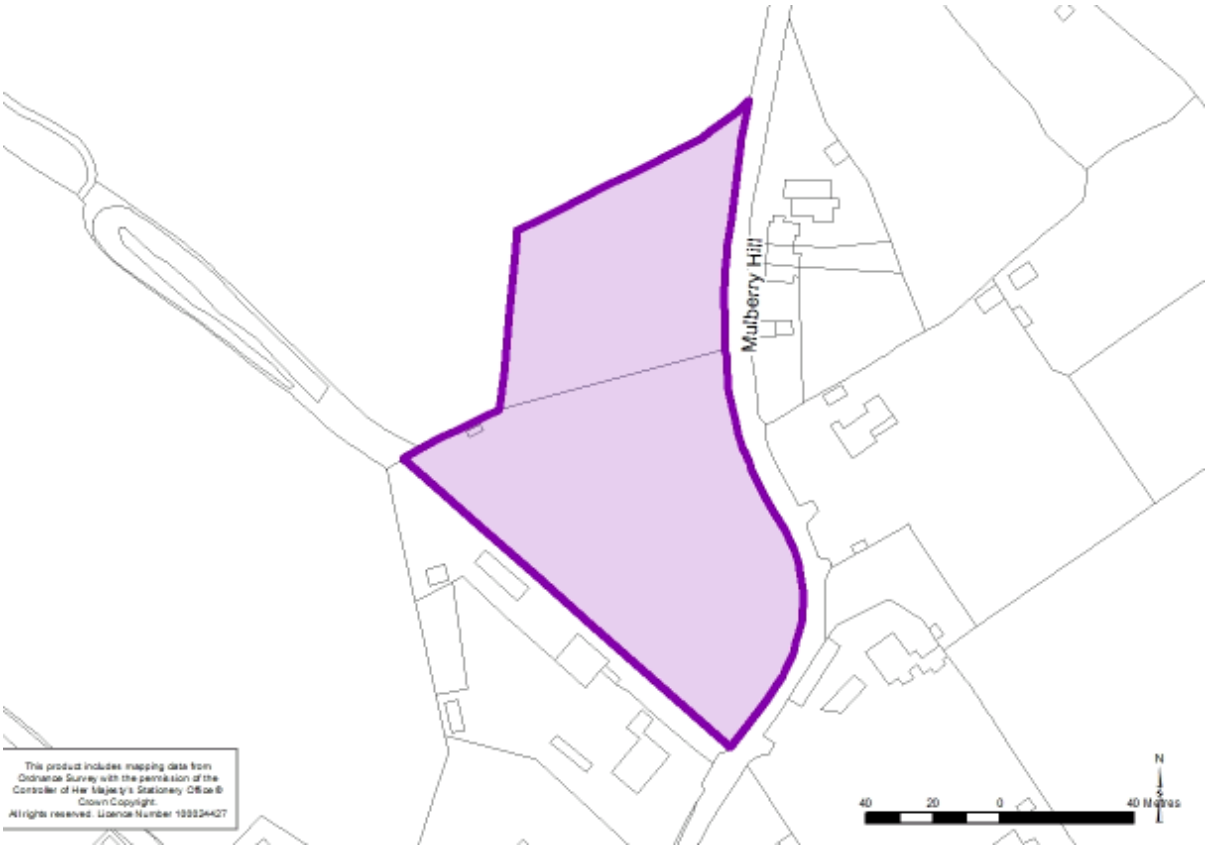
4.392 However, there is also a need to provide opportunities for delivering housing which is of an 'exclusive' nature, at the top end of the housing market, and will cater for those people wishing to design their own, larger properties.

4.393 Although the NPPF directs that 'isolated' dwellings in the countryside should be avoided, it also allows for special circumstances. Paragraph 55 directs that where the design of a dwelling is of 'exceptional quality' or 'innovative in nature' it is considered an exception to the principle of restraint. The criteria to meet this special circumstance states that such a design should:

- "be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;
- reflect the highest standards in architecture;
- significantly enhance its immediate setting; and
- be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area".

4.394 To meet the requirements of the NPPF that all development should be sustainable, the council has assessed sites on the edges of settlement confines across the borough that would not be suitable for general market housing due to the location or other constraints, but could be appropriate for this type of extremely low density 'exclusive' housing. This has resulted in two sites that are considered appropriate for allocation for this exceptional use, which can accommodate a small number of 'exclusive' high quality designed properties and which would not be detrimental to the setting and character of the countryside and local area they are situated within.

Chilham - Mulberry Hill, Old Wives Lees



4.395 This site is located between the built area of Chilham village and the small hamlet of Old Wives Lees, on a connecting road between the two settlements. The road is a narrow rural lane, on a steep gradient, with limited vehicle passing places and no footpaths to either settlement. It is therefore unable to accommodate a large increase in vehicular traffic and would not be sustainable for general market housing due to the restricted access to services. However, there are a small number of large detached properties located around the site boundary, and therefore the site is not considered to be completely 'isolated' in the countryside.

4.396 The site considered to be suitable for the provision of 2 'exclusive' properties. The properties must be of outstanding design and quality or 'innovative' in nature, reflecting highest standards of architecture in accordance with paragraph 55 of the NPPF.

4.397 The site is located within the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has views of the surrounding countryside setting. The innovative and high quality design of the 2 properties and the landscaping of the curtilage must not harm the immediate or wider setting, or have a detrimental impact on the amenity of the neighbouring properties.

4.398 The buildings should be located on the eastern side of the site, in a similar distance from the road to that of the neighbouring properties, to minimise views of the buildings from the AONB to the west. There are two suitable access points at opposite ends to the site which would serve the two dwellings independently, and these are shown on the policies map.

4.399 The nearby village of Chilham is particularly important in heritage terms as it contains Chilham Castle and a large number of Listed Buildings within a Conservation Area which covers most of the settlement. There are also sites of archaeological importance in close proximity to the site. The design of the properties here must be sensitive to these defining heritage assets and characteristics of the local area. Design proposals coming forward must also indicate how the immediate setting will be enhanced.

Policy S41 - Chilham - Mulberry Hill, Old Wives Lees

Land on Mulberry Hill is allocated for 'exclusive' residential development of up to two dwellings.

Development proposals for this site must:

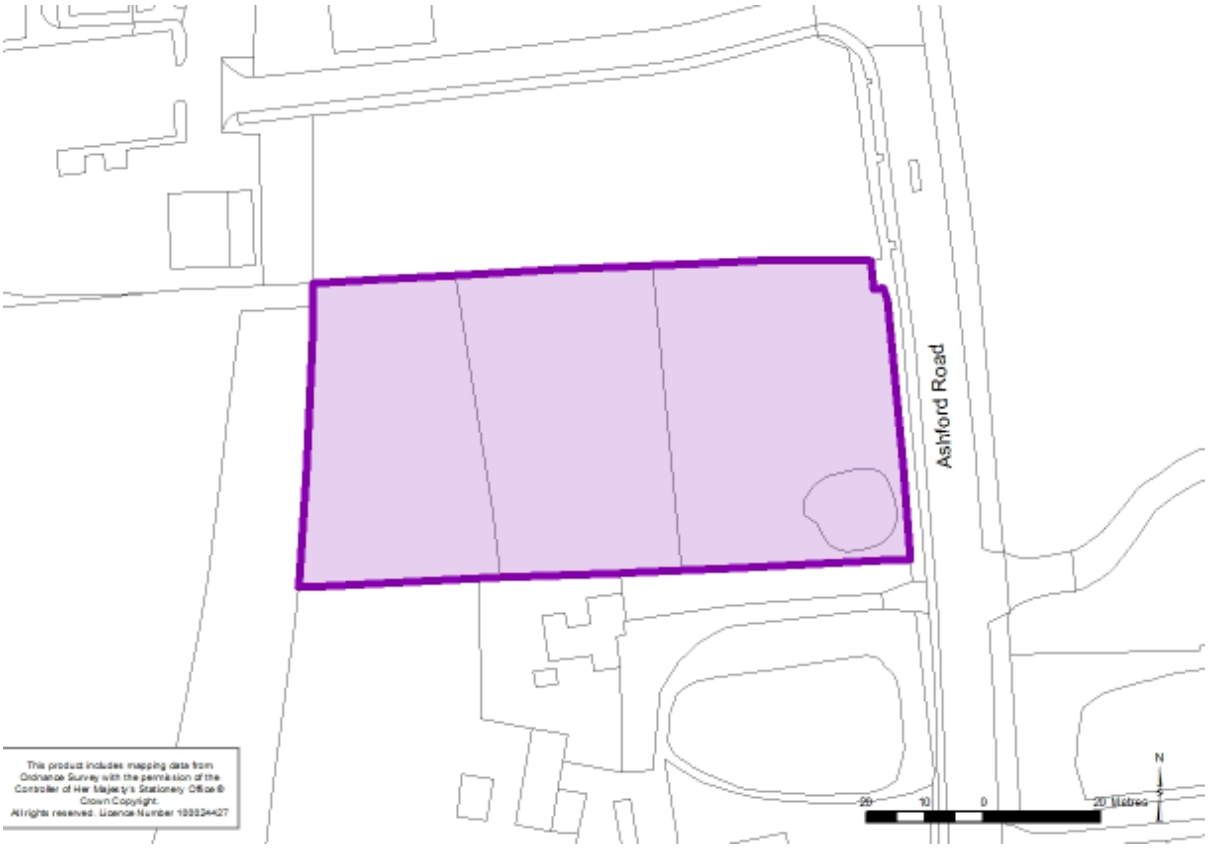
a. **Meet exceptional quality or innovative nature of design criteria:**
   - **be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;**
   - **reflect the highest standards in architecture;**
   - **significantly enhance the immediate setting; and**
   - **be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.**

b. **Retain and enhance the existing hedge and tree boundary around the site and screen the development from the AONB and open countryside by creating soft landscaping along site boundaries;**

c. **Provide a dedicated vehicular accesses for each dwelling, as shown on the policies map;**

d. **Provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

St. Michaels - Beechwood Farm



4.400 This site is located on the A28, Ashford Road on the entrance to the built up settlement of St. Michaels, Tenterden. The London Beach Golf Club and Hotel is situated to the north of the site but is not visible, due to the set back nature of buildings. The site is overgrown scrub and contains a significant mature tree and hedgerow boundary, including a prominent Oak on the road frontage. There are views to the open countryside on the opposing side of the road and the housing directly to the south comprises of detached dwellings in large curtilages, creating a rural setting.

4.401 The site contains many trees and hedgerows within and around, and a TPO protects high trees to the rear of the site. If these mature trees and hedges are removed it would significantly harm this rural setting and the character of the neighbouring properties and local area. The site is not suitable for average density, general market housing due to this impact, however, there is a footpath along the road towards the services in St.Michaels, and therefore the site is not considered to be completely 'isolated' in the countryside.

4.402 The site was submitted for low density 'high quality' detached dwellings and is considered suitable for this 'exclusive' home purpose, for up to 3 dwellings only. This amount of development enables the retention of the mature trees and hedges, in particular the large Oak and enhancement of the pond that lies beneath it.

4.403 The design of the properties here must be sensitive to characteristics of the local area and design proposals must indicate how the immediate setting will be enhanced. The buildings must be of innovative and high quality design and must not harm the immediate or wider

setting. The properties should be situated away from the road frontage, in large plots, reflecting the built form of neighbouring properties to the south, and will share one access from Ashford Road as shown on the Policies Map.

Policy S42 - St. Michaels - Beechwood Farm

Land at Beechwood Farm is allocated for 'exclusive' residential development of up to three dwellings.

Development proposals for this site must:

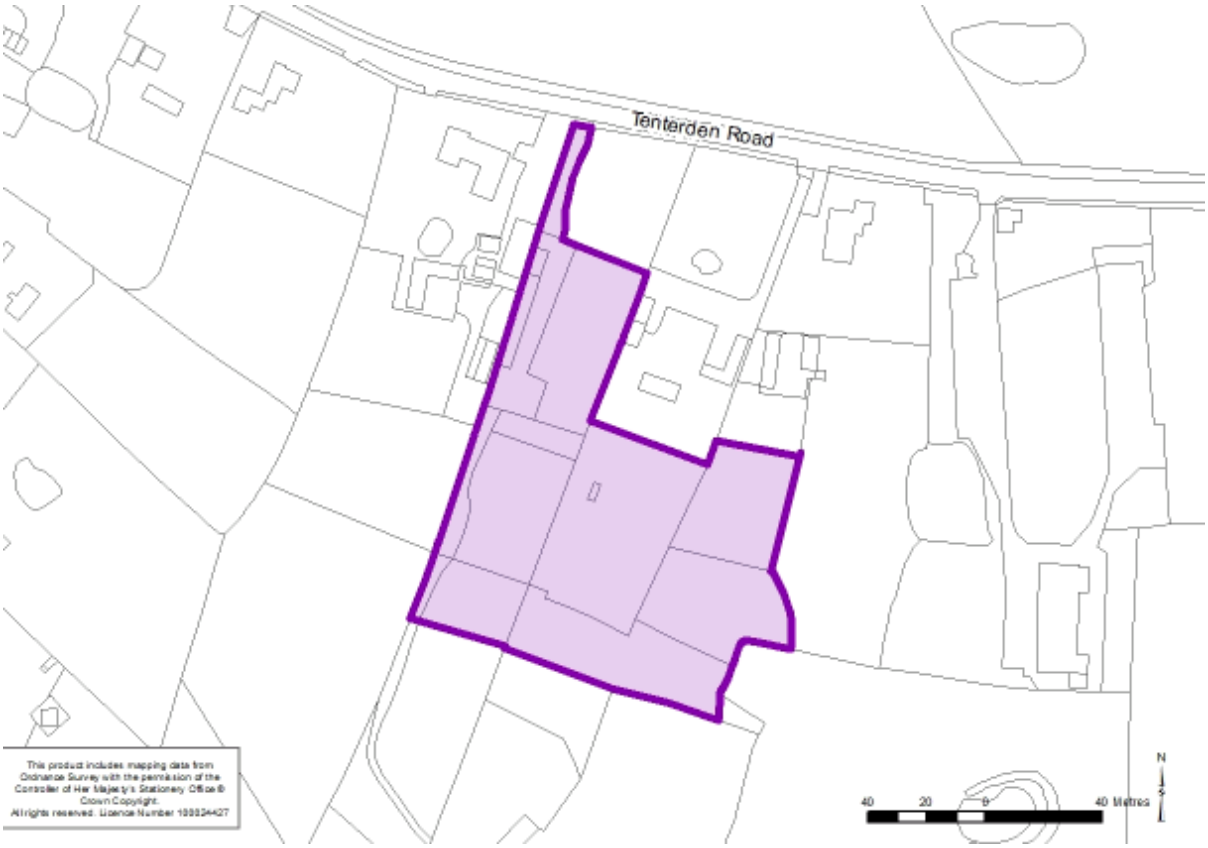
a. **Meet exceptional quality or innovative nature of design criteria:**
    - **be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas;**
    - **reflect the highest standards in architecture;**
    - **significantly enhance the immediate setting; and**
    - **be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.**

b. **Retain and enhance the existing mature hedge and tree boundary around and within the site where possible to screen the development and reduce impacts on neighbouring properties;**
c. **Provide a singular vehicular access, as shown on the policies map;**
d. **Provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage system for maintenance and upsizing purposes.**

Traveller Sites

4.404 The following two sites are specific allocations for sites for travellers in accordance with the need to plan for the housing requirements of the gypsy and traveller population in line with government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and its companion document "Planning policy for Traveller sites"

Biddenden - Priory Wood



4.405 This existing gypsy and traveller site is located in the parish of Biddenden on the main Tenterden Road and within the Clapper Hill wooded farmlands landscape character area. It is located within a row of linear, low density development with a single access point provided between an extensive hedgerow, it is not visible from the road. The site currently has permission for one pitch which was granted in 2005. It is proposed that the area outlined above, which is only a small area of the overall site, has the capacity to provide for two additional pitches.

4.406 Due to the location of the site, the new pitches should be placed on the site where there is the least impact on neighbouring occupiers and any landscape views. This approach to caravan 'siting' could also be complimented with additional tree screening to lessen the impact. The 'siting' of the pitches and the need for any additional screening should be considered further at the planning application stage.

4.407 The wider boundary of the existing gypsy and traveller site is located directly adjoining ancient woodland to the south. However, the proposed position of the additional pitches is

located 120m from this woodland. Despite this distance from the ancient woodland the site for the new pitches does contain a number of trees and prior to the positioning of any static caravans or hard standing for touring caravans, a survey of the trees that could be impacted upon must be undertaken to identify trees that are of merit. If this is found to be the case, then new trees of the same species should be re-provided elsewhere, planting these on the wider site would be seen as an acceptable approach.

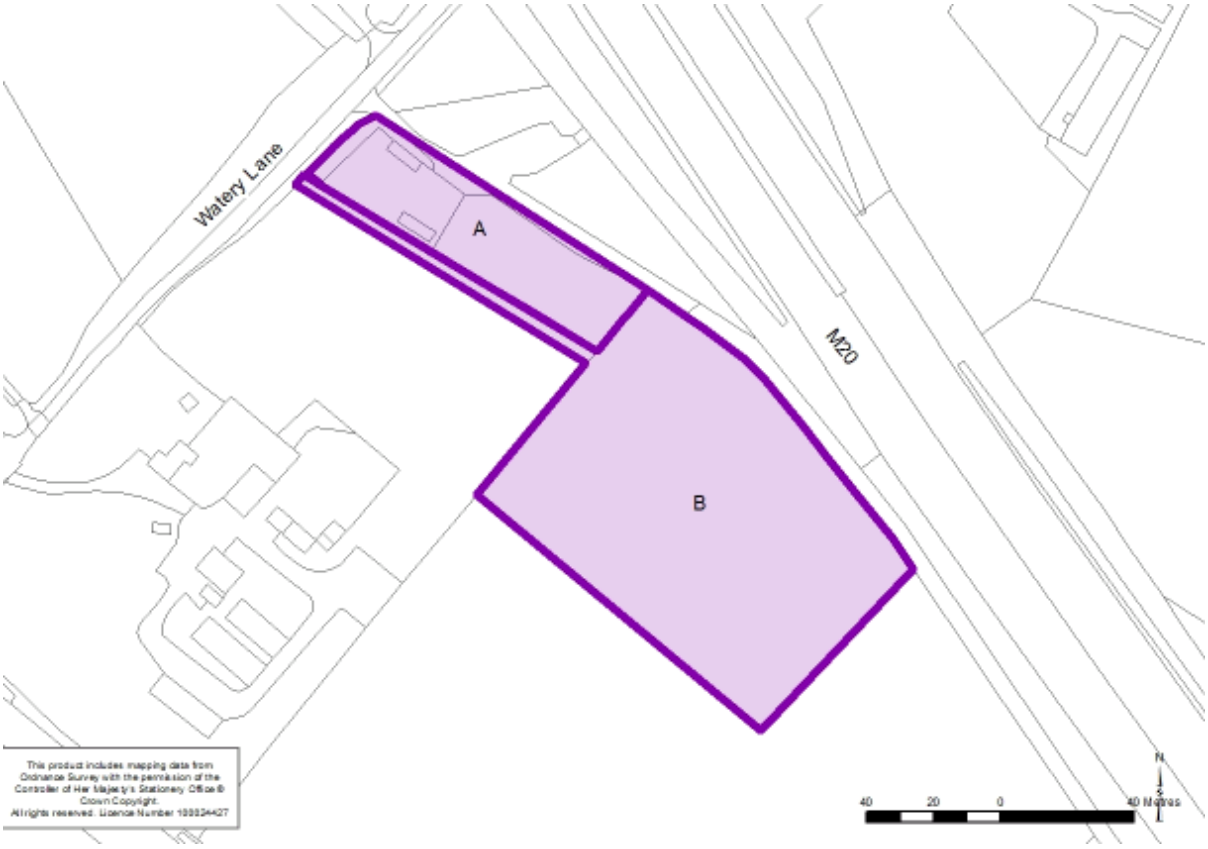
4.408 Finally, to ensure that the site can be provide for the benefit of the wider gypsy and traveller community any pitches should only be occupied by those persons who meet the most current definition of Gypsies and Travellers.

Policy S43 - Biddenden - Priory Wood

Planning permission for 2 permanent pitches at Land at Priory Wood, as shown on the policies map, will be granted if the following criteria are met:

a) **The total capacity of the site does not exceed 3 traveller pitches.**
b) **Access to the site is via the existing access off Tenterden Road**
c) **The additional pitches are sited in a location that provides the least impact on neighbouring occupiers and the landscape.**
d) **New trees are planted to replace any trees of merit that have been lost due to the development**

Westwell - Watery Lane



4.409 This site is currently located on a parcel of land on the outskirts of the village of Westwell. The site directly adjoins the sidings of the M20 motorway to the north and is located within a wider agricultural field to the south, which itself is bounded by the railway line. The buildings of Sunnybridge Farm are located to the southwest, some 80 metres from the site entrance.

4.410 Area A of the larger site is currently utilised as a single Gypsy and Traveller pitch, which is resided on by a specific named family on a temporary permission basis.

4.411 Area B of the site is currently an agricultural field, which has the ability to accommodate an additional 4 pitches

4.412 Although both sites are currently separate, proposals that unify the sites into one single site of 5 pitches would be seen as a suitable approach, although keeping them independent in their own right would also be considered acceptable. In both instances the design and layout should facilitate proper management and access, in addition to providing a layout conducive to community and individual well being. Utilising the guidance set out in the licencing document 'Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England- Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960' should be used when designing the layout of the site, as this is currently the most up-to-date standards available on pitch design. However, any design for the scheme should utilise the most up-to-date guidance available at the time.

4.413 The overall site is located within an area designated as AONB. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty. Despite this designation the provision of a Gypsy and Traveller site in this location is considered tolerable, as the area has been significantly altered by the provision of the M20 Motorway. In addition, the site is relatively low lying, and although visible from the Motorway itself, can be easily screened and remodelled through landscaping and planting. Therefore, any proposals for development of this site should provide a landscaping scheme to mitigate against any potential impacts on the AONB, which would need to be agreed by the Council.

4.414 Due to the location of the site within direct proximity of the M20 motorway, the site would need to provide some form of acoustic protection on its northern boundary, to ensure the well being of the residents that will reside there. Whether this could be provided via planting or other acoustic measures would need to be explored in further detail at the planning applications stage. The possibility of providing this acoustic protection in connection with the landscaping scheme would be seen as an acceptable approach.

4.415 Finally, to ensure that the site can be provide for the benefit of the wider gypsy and traveller community any personal permissions regarding parts of the site should be removed at planning applications stage and the site shall only be occupied by those persons who meet the most current definition of Gypsies and Travellers.

Policy S44 - Westwell - Watery Lane

Planning permission will be granted for a maximum of 5 pitches at Watery Lane, Westwell, if the following criteria are met:

a) **Noise mitigation measures are provided on the northern boundary of the site**
b) **Suitable landscaping is provided for the site to minimise its visual impact on the landscape**
c) **The design of the site utilises the most up-to-date guidance on pitch design and layout.**

5 TOPIC POLICIES

SECTION A - HOUSING

Affordable Housing

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to ensure that Local Plans meet the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. Where there is an identified need for affordable housing, policies must be set to meet this need on site or where robustly justified through an off-site contribution of broadly equivalent value. The NPPF states that such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.

5.2 The Council's 2014 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) establishes that around 50% of all future houses delivered in the borough should be affordable, in order to meet our 'full' objectively assessed housing needs. However it also states that this figure is unlikely to be delivered on the ground, mainly due to the housing market's inability to deliver it.

5.3 This conclusion is supported by whole plan viability testing that has been carried out in support of this Local Plan, which tested various levels of affordable housing requirements, including different thresholds and tenure mixes. The policy has been set at a level which is considered deliverable in terms of viability, when tested alongside all of the other policies set out in this Local Plan, balanced against the need to maximise potential affordable housing delivery to meet the identified need.

5.4 Affordable Housing for the purposes of this policy includes affordable/social rent, shared ownership, and starter homes.

5.5 Starter home provision within this policy has been set in line with the government's current consultation on the implementation of the national starter homes policy. It is therefore proposed that starter homes will be required at a level of 20% on sites of 10 units or more (and 0.5 hectares or more), across the Borough. In order to align with this, it is proposed that the threshold for all affordable housing requirements is set at the same thresholds.

5.6 The viability evidence demonstrates significant variation in the viability of residential development across the Borough, which is mainly due to variations in sales values. The requirements for affordable housing have therefore been set at different levels across the value areas of the Borough in order to ensure development is viable and can be delivered. These areas are shown on the Map 6.

5.7 Ashford Town area covers the wards of Victoria, Aylesford Green, South Willesborough, Norman, Beaver and Stanhope. The viability evidence shows that developments in this area can only meet the minimum requirement for starter homes provision at 20% with no other affordable housing provision. As an exception to this, higher density flatted development is not viable at this level of starter home provision, and it is therefore proposed that such development will not be required to provide any affordable housing.

5.8 Ashford Hinterlands area covers the wards of Godinton, Bockhanger, Stour, Bybrook, Little Burton Farm, Kennington, North Willesborough, Highfield, Park Farm North, Park Farm South, Singleton South, Washford, Great Chart with Singleton North, the southern area of Bougton Aluph and Eastwell, the northern part of Weald South and the eastern area of Weald East. In this area, development can support up to 30% affordable housing, with 2/3 of this provided as starter homes, and 1/3 split evenly between affordable/social rent and shared ownership.

5.9 Rest of Borough includes the villages and rural area covering the wards of Saxon Shore, Wye, Downs North, Downs West, Charing, Weald North, Weald Central, Biddenden, Rolvenden and Tenterden West, Tenterden South, St Michaels, Tenterden North, Isle of Oxney. the northern area of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell, the western area of Weald East and the southern area of Weald South. This area has the potential to support higher levels of affordable housing, and it is proposed that development within this area will provide a minimum of 40% affordable housing, half of which will be starter homes, and half to be split evenly between affordable/social rent and shared ownership.

5.10 In line with national policy, the provision of affordable housing will normally be expected to be provided on-site. Where this is not possible, specific justification will need to be provided.

5.11 The Council has in the past adopted a flexible approach in relation to affordable housing requirements, and where the viability evidence has supported it, accepted reduced levels of affordable housing on a site by site basis. Given that this Plan has been subject to much more stringent viability testing than previous ones, and the policy has been framed from this evidence, it is expected that the number of applications where viability issues are identified should significantly reduce, and it will certainly not be expected as the norm.

5.12 Site specific circumstances will need to be clearly set out in any case being put forward. This will not include where land has been purchased speculatively above realistic threshold land values.

5.13 Whilst the viability testing has considered impacts of changing market conditions, it is impossible to predict what may happen within the housing market in the future. Should market conditions shift dramatically from those assumed within the viability assessment, flexibility in provision of affordable housing will be allowed for these reasons.

5.14 Where the requirements of this policy are proposed not to be met, viability evidence will be required to be submitted in support of an application and will be rigorously tested by independent advisors, paid for by the applicant, in line with the principles set out in policy IMP2.

5.15 The government's consultation on starter homes proposes exemptions to their provision including for specialist accommodation such as residential care homes; estate regeneration and other affordable housing led developments (for example rural exception sites); student housing; and potentially custom build developments. In addition the consultation proposes potential provision of off-site commuted sums in lieu of on-site provision for private rented sector development and older people's housing (with no additional support required).

5.16 The following policy seeks to maximise the provision of affordable housing to meet identified needs, taking into account the government's proposals for a national starter homes policy, whilst ensuring the requirements do not put the delivery of the Local Plan at risk as a whole.

Policy HOU1 - Affordable Housing

The Council will require the provision of affordable housing on all schemes promoting 10 dwellings or more (and on sites of 0.5 hectares or more), with provision being not less than the area specific requirements set out in the following table:

Area	Total affordable housing requirements (% of total dwellings)	Starter Homes requirements (% of total dwellings)	Affordable/Social Rented Requirement (% of total dwellings)	Shared Ownership requirements (% of total dwellings)
Ashford Town*	20%[#]	20%[#]	0%	0%
Ashford Hinterlands*	30%	20%	5%	5%
Rest of Borough*	40%	20%	10%	10%

**These areas are defined at paragraph * of this Local Plan.*

[#]Excluding flatted development, which will not be required to provide any form of affordable housing.

Affordable housing provision should be delivered on site, including starter homes provision. However, should independently verified viability evidence establish that some (or exceptionally all) of the non 'starter home' elements cannot be delivered on-site then a financial contribution to secure the equivalent provision elsewhere may be acceptable. Those sites allocated for the delivery of exclusive homes, which are of 0.5ha or greater, will be required to pay an off-site contribution in lieu of affordable provision on site. In addition to this, certain types of development as set out in government regulations on starter homes may provide an off-site contribution in lieu of on-site provision of starter homes.

All proposals are expected to meet their full affordable housing provision. However, should independently verified viability evidence establish that it is not possible to deliver the affordable housing as required by this policy - and this position is supported by the Council – then a degree of flexibility could be applied in line with the Council's deferred contributions policy.

If a site comes forward as two or more separate schemes, of which one or more falls below the appropriate threshold, the Council will seek an appropriate level of affordable housing on each part to match in total the provision that would have been required on the site as a whole.

Local Needs / Specialist Housing

5.17 This policy applies to the delivery of local needs housing and specialist housing schemes. These are defined as:

5.18 <u>Local needs housing:</u> *Subsidised 'affordable' housing for people who have a genuine need and local connection to the area, as per the Council's housing procedure note.*

5.19 <u>Specialist housing schemes:</u> *A specific type of subsidised housing accommodation (self-contained or communal) to cater for more vulnerable local residents who have a genuine need and local connection to the area. It allows certain residents to live a higher quality of life near to where they have support or are where they are familiar with their surrounding area.*

5.20 Both these types of housing are normally delivered on sites that would not normally be permitted for housing development because they are subject to planning policies of restraint. Therefore a specific exception sites policy for promoting their delivery is required in the Local Plan.

5.21 The NPPF supports this position by setting out under Para 54 that LPA's should '*be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate……..(and) should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.*

<u>Local needs housing</u>

5.22 Ashford Borough Council, working with Housing Associations and Parish Councils has an excellent record of local needs housing delivery. Over 300 local needs homes have been completed since the 1990s and this has been achieved through various iterations of Local Plan policies where 100% of local needs housing is delivered on 'exception' sites.

5.23 In order to qualify as a local needs housing scheme, a proposal will need to meet all of the following criteria in that:

- it meets an identified housing need in the particular parish that cater for people who have a genuine local connection, in line with the Council's Rural Local Needs Housing Guidance Note,
- it provides local needs housing that is appropriate in terms of its tenure, type, size and cost to meet the needs identified,
- the local need housing element is conditioned so that subsequent occupancy of the dwelling will be controlled by a binding agreement to ensure the property remains available to meet local needs in the future and does not only benefit the first occupier.
- has the support of the relevant Parish Council.

5.24 Proposals may provide for one or more groups of people, although it should be noted that decisions on exception sites and the specific needs to be catered for are essentially local

issues and the views of the local Parish Council will be taken into consideration. The requirements of a variety of groups of people that will be considered when assessing local needs is set out under the Council's Affordable Rural Local Needs Housing Guidance note.

5.25 The scale of any proposal for local needs housing will need to take account of:

- what affordable housing provision is planned nearby (on sites with planning permission or sites allocated in this Local Plan, including potential future starter homes) that could play a role in meeting some of the need identified and,
- its sustainability in planning terms with regards the impact on the character of the area, the landscape setting, the local road network and the amenity of existing residents.

Specialist housing

5.26 The Council recognises that some residents within the rural areas require specialist accommodation to enable them to live a certain quality of life and where moving away to a more urban area is not always appropriate.

5.27 Where an identified need for specialist accommodation from a Parish or a group of Parishes that share a common need for such accommodation is identified, the Council will consider the use of exception sites to bring forward carefully planned and designed schemes that meet the needs of a specific client group from within the local area. Where applicable, this could also involve specialist accommodation needs from outside the Borough boundary where there are linked with the needs from parishes within the Borough.

5.28 Such schemes could be brought forward for a range of vulnerable people. This varies from main local needs (as set out above) in that any proposals will be developed for a specific client group whose needs may require a degree of communal facilities incorporated together with the provision of self-contained accommodation.

5.29 The Council will support and encourage Parish Councils to work collectively to identify specific needs, appropriate sites and delivery partners to bring forward specialist housing to serve residents of rural communities in the Borough.

Delivery of local needs/ specialist housing

5.30 It is expected that local needs/ specialist housing schemes are delivered without any cross subsidy from the market being required. This approach has been the mainstay of the Council's policy in the past and has not, in the large majority of cases, adversely affected the delivery of local needs housing coming forward.

5.31 However, the Council accepts that in light of the reduction in government subsidy for Registered Providers (e.g. Housing Associations) and the requirement within the NPPF to provide a flexible policy approach to assist delivery, there may be occasions where cross subsidy might be needed to bring 'local needs' schemes forward. In this context there are several similarities with other issues of viability referenced in this Local Plan.

5.32 Any viability case will be rigorously tested by independent advisors for the Council. Where issues of viability demonstrably exist, the Council will adopt a hierarchical approach (as set out in the policy below) with regarding the nature of any cross-subsidising market housing.

5.33 Any enabling element of a scheme that is needed should fall within two targeted sectors of the housing market – starter homes and custom/ self-build properties. The merits of these schemes, and the desire for the Council to deliver these types of properties are set out under policies HOU1 and HOU6 within the Local Plan.

5.34 Focusing on these sectors of the housing market boosts their potential delivery and also maintains an element of 'affordability' to the overall approach which is consistent with the overall aim of this policy, even though these particular types of houses can't be conditioned to remain for local people in perpetuity.

5.35 Proposals which promote general market housing as a means of enabling the identified need element of a scheme will not normally be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding planning benefit from its delivery (this includes where it is required to deliver a specialist housing scheme)* or where there is no other cross subsidy solution.

5.36 This is to avoid general market housing in the countryside in unsustainable locations – a key spatial aim of this Local Plan.

**For specialist housing schemes on exception sites where it has been demonstrated to not be viable to deliver 100% affordable housing, an element of open market sale could be incorporated in order to cross-subsidise the development as these schemes do not tend to lend themselves to starter home or custom / self-build housing. For example an extra care scheme for older people developed as a scheme with shared communal facilities and support services.*

Policy HOU2 - Local needs / specialist housing

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for local needs / specialist housing within or adjoining rural settlements identified under policy HOU4 as 'exceptions' to policies restraining housing development provided that all the following criteria is met:

a. **the local need or requirement for specialist housing is clearly evidenced,**
b. **the scheme has the support of the relevant Parish Council/s,**
c. **the development is well designed and would not result in a significant adverse impact on the character of the area or the surrounding landscape,**
d. **there would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers.**

It is expected that all local needs/ specialist housing schemes will be delivered without the need for any cross market subsidy.

Where this is not the case a proposal will need to be supported by robust and transparent viability evidence that will be independently verified by the Council. Should a viability case be proven, the Council will accept an enabling amount of starter homes and /or custom build/ self-build plots as a means of providing the necessary subsidy to allow the identified need to be delivered, providing the proposal remains in accordance with criteria b) – d) above.

Proposals which promote general market housing as a means of enabling the identified need element of a scheme will not normally be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding planning benefit from its delivery and that there is no other cross subsidy solution.

Residential Windfall Development

5.38 Residential development which comes forward on sites outside of those allocated in the Local Plan are known as housing 'windfalls'. Historically, the Borough has had a strong tradition of delivering housing windfalls and they will contribute towards meeting our objectively assessed housing needs (see Strategic Policies chapter).

5.39 In line with the NPPF and supporting PPG, it is important that suitable redevelopment oppourtunities for housing within the built-up confines of particular settlements are allowed to come forward. The scale and quantity of housing development proposed should not be out of proportion to the size of the settlement concerned and the level of services present.

5.40 This allows for a sustainable pattern of development across the Borough and avoids the environmental, social and economic impacts that typically occur where development is proposed that is out of scale with the settlement. This approach is consistent with the strategic distribution of allocated sites, identified under policy SP2 of this Local Plan.

Residential windfalls within Ashford

5.41 Ashford is the largest settlement in the Borough and is clearly the most sustainable location, enjoying access to good transport links and a range of services, facilities and shops. Although there is currently limited available land in the urban area to develop that has not been allocated in this plan or is not already subject of a planning approval, it is likely that there will be opportunities for new development or infilling to come forward over the plan period.

Policy HOU3 - Residential development in Ashford urban area

Windfall residential development is acceptable within the built up confines of Ashford providing that it can be easily integrated into the existing urban area and the development:

a. **Is of a scale, layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area;**
b. **Does not create an adverse significant impact on the amenity of residents;**
c. **Would not result in harm to or the loss of public or private open spaces that contribute positively to the local character of the area (including residential gardens);**
d. **Would not result in significant harm to the surrounding landscape; nearby heritage assets or important biodiversity networks.;**
e. **Is capable of having safe lighting and pedestrian access provided without significant impact on neighbours or on the integrity of the street-scene.**

Residential windfalls within rural settlements

5.42 The NPPF and PPG require that Local Planning Authorities promote sustainable development in rural areas to support the vitality of rural communities. Blanket policies restricting housing development in settlements should be avoided unless clearly supported by evidence.

5.43 New housing can enable rural communities to retain their existing services and community facilities and help to create a prosperous rural economy. However, a balance must be achieved between allowing new housing with the need to protect the character, form, heritage and attractiveness of the rural settlements themselves and the surrounding countryside.

5.44 Across the borough there are a number of settlements which play a service centre role in that they contain a number of services such as a primary school; a GP service; a community venue (such as a pub or a village hall); a shop which is able to meet a range of daily needs and a commuter-friendly bus or train service. There are also a number of settlements which are smaller and play a more 'secondary' role, yet they still have a limited number of community facilities and services. These settlements often rely on the services of the nearby primary settlements or the town of Ashford and are therefore relatively 'accessible' in a rural context. Within these settlements, appropriate small scale development is acceptable in principle.

5.45 The Borough's remaining rural settlements are not considered to play a service centre or secondary role on account of their small size and their lack of services and facilities (or proximity to these services/facilities). Residents of these settlements are typically reliant on the private car to meet all of their everyday needs. These settlements are considered to be countryside for the purposes of determining planning applications.

Important considerations

5.46 In order to ensure that windfall schemes are integrated properly within an existing settlement, all development proposals will need to show how they can complement the existing settlement character in terms of their layout, design, scale and appearance.

5.47 Many rural settlements include important green spaces or gaps within the built up confines that contribute to the form and attractive character of the settlement and any harm or loss of these areas should be avoided. Proposals promoting the development of residential garden land must also meet the requirements of policy HOU10 of this Local Plan.

5.48 Development proposals must also avoid causing significant harm to nearby local heritage assets and take into account environment, biodiversity and landscape considerations. Where proposals fall within or adjoining the AONB then their intrinsic landscape value will be an important material consideration.

5.49 Where proposals fall within an area that has an adopted village design statement that is supported by the Parish Council, schemes should be designed in accordance with the key principles contained within them.

5.50 Windfall residential opportunities within the rural area should focus on sites that are not in active use, particularly where those uses are contributing to the vitality of the area by providing employment or community facilities.

Settlement confines

5.51 The traditional approach taken to defining settlement confines in the Borough has been to rely on a written definition, rather than a boundary line drawn on a map. This enables a more flexible approach to assessing windfall developments, particularly given the number of settlements within the Borough and given that the confines may change over time in response to development coming forward.

5.52 This approach has been largely successful in controlling the release of sites for windfall residential development and over time the built up confines have become well established. Therefore, and for the purposes of this Plan, the confines of a settlement are defined as:

'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (e.g garden areas)'.

5.54 This definition may, however, include sites suitable for 'infilling' which is the completion of an otherwise substantially built-up frontage by the filling of a narrow gap, usually capable of taking one or two dwellings only.

5.55 However, it should be noted that there are opportunities for all communities through the Neighbourhood Plan process, to formally define the built confines of their settlements. Alternatively, mapping a settlement's confines can also be achieved informally by Parish Councils through undertaking a 'village envelope' exercise working with the local community. On satisfactory completion of this exercise, the Borough Council will informally endorse the defined village envelope and will treat this as a material planning consideration for the purposes of determining relevant planning applications.

Policy HOU4 - Residential Development in the rural settlements

Minor residential development and infilling of a scale that can be easily integrated into the existing settlement will be acceptable within the confines of the following settlements:

Aldington, Appledore, Appledore Heath, Bethersden, Biddenden, Bilsington, Boughton Lees/Eastwell, Brabourne Lees/Smeeth, Brook, Challock, Charing, Charing Heath, Chilham, Crundale, Egerton, Egerton Forstal, Godmersham, Great Chart, Hamstreet, Hastingleigh, High Halden, Hothfield, Kenardington, Little Chart, Mersham, Molash, Newenden, Old Wives Lees, Pluckley, Pluckley Thorne, Pluckley Station, Rolvenden, Rolvenden Layne, Ruckinge, Shadoxhurst, Shottenden, Smarden, Stone in Oxney, Tenterden (including St Michaels) Warehorne, Westwell, Wittersham, Woodchurch and Wye.

Providing that the following requirements are met:

a. **The proposal adheres to the requirements (a) – (e) of policy HOU3 above;**
b. **The proposal is able to be safely accessible from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the wider road network,**
c. **The proposal does not need substantial infrastructure or other facilities to support it;**
d. **The proposal would not displace an active use such as employment, leisure or community facility.**

Where a proposal is located within or adjoining the AONB, it will also need to demonstrate that it is justifiable within the context of their national level of protection and does not significantly undermine their intrinsic or scenic beauty.

Housing Development Outside Settlements

Residential windfall development in the Countryside

5.56 Policies HOU3 and HOU4 – as well as the site allocations identified in this Plan - seek to control general market housing development. Combined, they provide a sound planning approach by focussing suitable levels of residential development to established settlements, providing certain important criteria are met.

5.57 However there is another aspect to residential windfall development in relation to when it is proposed in the Borough's countryside areas - i.e all of the areas of the borough outside of the

confines of Ashford and the settlements listed under policy HOU4. Here, its suitability relates to whether it is considered isolated or not, according to the requirements within the NPPF.

Non-isolated residential development in the countryside

5.58 By definition, residential development that comes forward through a site allocation within this Local Plan or is covered by policy HOU3 and HOU4 above is not isolated. In addition, there are also certain other locations within the Borough that offer opportunities for non-isolated residential development.

5.59 The NPPF is clear in its desire to promote sustainable development in general and utilise suitable brownfield opportunities where possible, all within the wider context of boosting housing supply, meeting a range of housing needs and using development as a means of improving the quality of a place and / or its setting.

5.60 Although isolated locations are not defined in the NPPF, it is clear that these criteria form the key material considerations on which to make a judgement on proposals on a case by case basis. They also form a sound planning basis in which to underpin the policy approach below.

5.61 The Council understands that any policy which proposes to release sites for residential development in the countryside must be strictly defined given the desirability of the location to the housing market and the impact over-development would have. It is certainly not the intention of this policy to promote substantial numbers of new dwellings in the countryside. This would also be inconsistent with the core objectives of the NPPF.

5.62 Therefore it is crucial that any release of land is only done so in certain circumstances, as defined by this policy. For a proposal to be considered as promoting non-isolated residential development in the countryside it must adhere to the definition below.

'Non-isolated residential development is 3 or less new dwellings that come forward on suitable sites in the countryside that are currently brownfield or incorporate a disused agricultural building/s and are within easy walking distance to a shop or facility in an adjoining settlement, as listed under policy HOU4 above and Ashford'.

5.64 A proposal for 'non-isolated' residential development must also demonstrate that it (and its associated infrastructure) is well designed and sited in a way that can:

- sit sympathetically within the wider landscape,
- enhance its immediate setting,
- be consistent with any prevailing character and built form, including its scale, bulk and the material used,
- does not harm neighbouring uses or the amenity of nearby residents.

5.65 Proposals will also need to demonstrate that the existing buildings on site have been there for a number of years and are no longer needed for their current use. This is to avoid speculative new buildings being built with a view of replacing them with new dwellings in the countryside at a later date – undermining the targeted nature of this policy.

Isolated residential development

5.66 Residential development in the countryside that does not meet the definition above will be considered 'isolated'.

5.67 The NPPF clearly states that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided, unless there are special circumstances. Para. 55 of the NPPF lists a number of exceptions to the general rule of restraint and these are replicated in the policy below, alongside proposals for replacement dwellings and local needs/ specialist housing schemes. As both these types of proposal may be located within the countryside, they are included in the policy for clarity.

Policy HOU5 - Residential windfall development in the countryside

Proposals for non-isolated residential development in the countryside will be permitted providing that each of the following criteria is met:

a. **the scheme is for 3 dwellings or less,**
b. **the site is currently brownfield or has an agricultural building on site and that any building on site is no longer used and has been in situ for a number of years,**
c. **the site is within easy walking distance of a shop or facility in an adjoining settlement, as listed under policy HOU4 or Ashford,**
d. **the development (and associated infrastructure) is well designed and sited in a way that can:**
e. **sit sympathetically within the wider landscape,**
f. **enhance its immediate setting,**
g. **be consistent with the prevailing character and built form, including its scale, bulk and the materials used,**
h. **does not harm neighbouring uses or the amenity of nearby residents,**
i. **does not adversely effect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1.**

Isolated residential development in the countryside will only be permitted if the proposal is for at least one of the following:

a. **Accommodation to cater for an essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside;**
b. **The optimal viable use of a heritage asset or would be appropriate enabling development to secure the future of heritage assets;**
c. **The re-use of redundant or disused buildings and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting;**
d. **A dwelling that is of exceptional quality or innovative design* which should be truly outstanding and innovative, reflect the highest standards of architecture, significantly enhance its immediate setting and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area;**
e. **A replacement dwelling, in line with policy HOU7 of this Local Plan;**
f. **A local needs/specialist needs scheme in line with policy HOU2 of this Local Plan.**

Where a proposal is located within or adjoining the AONB, it will also need to demonstrate that it is justifiable within the context of their national level of protection and does not significantly undermine their intrinsic or scenic beauty.

these proposals will be required to be referred to Ashford Design Panel and applications will be expected to respond to the advice provided.

Self-Build / Custom Build Development

5.68 The Council will support the principle of Self and Custom Build development as an opportunity to bring choice to the housing market as well as enabling local people to design and build their own home that will meet their bespoke needs.

5.69 The NPPF makes it clear that LPAs should identify and make provision for the housing *'needs of different groups in the community such as people wishing to build their own homes'.* 'Self-build housing' is identified by the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations as a dwelling built by (or commissioned by) someone to be occupied by them as their sole or main residence for at least three years. Custom-Build homes encompass self-build but tends to be where individuals work with specialist developers to build their home.

5.70 This policy will contribute towards the availability of self and custom build plots enabling local residents to deliver high quality homes, as well as supporting the local economy providing work for builders and associated trades.

5.71 The establishment of a Right to Build Register and evidence gained from future SHELAAs and SHMAs will help inform the level of need for Self Build.

5.72 The Council will also support qualifying bodies in taking forward local self and custom build projects through the neighbourhood planning process, subject to the wider planning considerations within the strategic policies of the Local Plan.

Policy HOU6 - Self and Custom Built Development

The Council will support self and custom build development by requiring all urban area sites delivering more than 40 dwellings to supply no less than 5% of dwelling plots for sale to self or custom builders.

In the rural areas sites delivering more than 20 dwellings must supply no less than 5% of dwelling plots for sale to self or custom builder.

The following criteria must be met:

a. **Where this equates to more than 5 custom build dwellings on a single site a Design Brief should be submitted and agreed with the Council prior to the application being submitted;**
b. **Where plots have been marketed and not sold for at least a 12 month period the plot(s) may either remain on the open market as custom build unless the plot is being offered in lieu of affordable housing in which case it will be offered to the Council or a Housing Association.**
c. **Development proposals must be of high quality design and demonstrate a positive response to sustainable development.**

Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

5.73 Proposals involving the replacement of existing dwellings in the countryside need careful management in order to protect the character and integrity of the rural landscape of the borough. Given that such forms of development encompass isolated new dwellings, which are an exception to the other policies of restraint, together with the protected status of much of the borough's countryside, design issues are of particular importance when proposals of this kind are considered. Developments in particular will need to ensure that any replacement dwellings sit sympathetically with the existing character and appearance of the local area in order to prevent overbearing and bulky replacement dwellings, whatever their scale or increase in footprint or mass.

5.74 Applications will therefore be required to justify the design approach to the replacement dwelling, its proposed scale, bulk and materials, its siting in relation to the surrounding built form, character of the street scene or the position in the landscape, highway access details, the impact on any neighbouring uses and residential amenity and any resultant implications for the extent of residential curtilage. In certain circumstances there may be a need to focus on scale, as a point of principle. These circumstances are likely to manifest themselves particularly in sensitive locations within the borough, such as the Kent Downs and the High Weald AONBs, Conservation Areas or where a dwelling would be clearly prominent in the landscape. Here scale might need to be restricted to respond to these particular sensitivities.

5.75 Usually the replacement dwelling will be required to be sited on, or adjacent to the site of the existing dwelling. However, where there is an opportunity to achieve a development with a reduced visual impact on the landscape or a reduced impact on neighbouring uses or occupiers by changing the siting of the dwelling, then this will be encouraged. In such circumstances, where the replacement dwelling is sited differently to the existing, the Council will seek through condition or agreement the demolition of the existing dwelling within 3 months of the occupation of the replacement, in order to prevent two dwellings remaining on site in contravention of policy restricting additional residential development in the open countryside.

5.76 Although the ability of the planning system to control larger extensions to properties has been much reduced in recent years, the importance of maintaining a housing stock comprised of a wide choice of properties catering for the needs of different groups in the community, remains enshrined in the NPPF (paragraph 50).To this end, replacement dwellings that are larger than the existing dwelling will usually only be granted planning permission subject to a condition withdrawing permitted development rights for residential extensions, in order to maintain the integrity of the policy's intentions and bring future alterations to the scale and nature of the new property within the control of the planning system.

Policy HOU7 - Replacement dwellings in the countryside

Proposals for a replacement dwelling will be permitted provided that the proposal:

a. **is replacing an existing individual dwelling that has a lawful residential use; and,**
b. **complements the surrounding built form and the character and appearance of the area and / or the existing street-scene; and,**
c. **is sympathetic in terms of its scale, bulk, massing and the materials used; and,**
d. **can be suitably accessed;**
e. **does not harm the landscape, the functioning of neighbouring uses or the amenities of nearby residents.**

Where a replacement dwelling is proposed in a Conservation Area or a visually prominent position in the landscape, or within or adjoining an AONB, proposals will be required to address the specific sensitivities that are prevalent in these areas. Particular consideration will be given to the scale and wider impact of a replacement dwelling in these locations.

Where planning approval is given, planning obligations will:

- **remove 'permitted development' rights where a replacement dwelling has increased the floorspace of the existing dwelling,**
- **ensure that the existing dwelling is removed within 3 months of the occupation of the replacement dwelling (where an alternative location is proposed).**

Residential Extensions and Standalone Annexes

5.77 The enlargement of dwellings to accommodate additional living space is important in ensuring that the existing housing stock is suitable for the current and future residents of the borough. By modernising, adapting or enlarging an existing dwelling its life can be significantly extended, which in turn, contributes to the future sustainable development of the Borough. Small scale extensions and alterations to properties have in recent years often become categorised as 'permitted development' under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015.

5.78 Where an extension requires permission, the Council requires that the scale and visual impact of such development is appropriate in relation to both the existing dwelling and the surrounding area and that the living conditions of neighbours are not adversely affected. To this end, alterations and extensions should be designed to complement the scale, massing and materials of the existing building, preserve and features of interest, provide a satisfactory relationship between the old and new fabric and not lead to overlooking, overpowering or overshadowing of neighbouring properties.Therefore, when assessing proposed extensions, account will be taken of the potential impact of the extension on the living conditions of any neighbouring occupiers and on any other adjacent uses, its impact on the character of the existing dwelling and its setting in the landscape, including its contribution to the street scene.

5.79 In AONBs and Conservation Areas, particular attention will be paid to the size and design of extensions. In these protected locations it is more likely that only smaller extensions which clearly present as subordinate to the main dwelling will be acceptable. Applications will need

to demonstrate that particular attention has been paid to the design of extensions to the roofspace, which should be kept as simple as possible. Throughout the borough, where very small rural dwellings are proposed for extension, the standard of the existing accommodation will also be taken into account.

Policy HOU8 - Residential Extensions

Proposals for extensions to dwellings will be permitted if each of the following criteria is met:

a. **the existing dwelling[5] enjoys a lawful residential use; and**
b. **the proposed extension would not materially harm any neighbouring uses including the living conditions of adjoining residents; and,**
c. **the proposed extension is suitable in size, scale and built form to the existing dwelling to which it should be physically linked; and**
d. **the proposed extension is designed sensitively to avoid harm to the overall character or street scene of the surrounding area and the landscape and the distinct features of the landscape character area in which it is located.**

Annexes

5.80 Annexes which are physically linked to the main dwelling will be determined against Policy HOU8 including in schemes where they contain all the facilities essential for independent residential occupation.

5.81 For all annexe schemes (attached or standalone) a planning permission is likely to be conditioned to ensure that the annex in question remains used for its intended purpose. This is to avoid an annex becoming an independent and separate residential unit at some point in the future without planning permission, particularly as the 'need' can only ever be for a temporary period (for example the need is lost once a relative dies or requires greater care than can be provided at home)

5.82 Standalone annexes will be supported where it can be demonstrated that there is a need for such a facility - for example to provide a home for elderly or infirm relatives unable to live independently, or for staff accommodation and that the standalone annex is sited appropriately and that it has a real and functional relationship between the occupation of the main dwelling and the annexe. It is unlikely that a standalone annex located outside the curtilage of the main dwelling will be supported in principle.

5.83 Annexes within the curtilage of listed buildings or buildings that are a historical asset or are located within a conservation area, which have particular character are likely to be difficult to achieve in terms of satisfactory design. Where these proposals cannot be sited in an acceptable way beyond the curtilage of these buildings, such proposals will not be supported.

[5] The term 'existing dwelling' is defined as the property at the time of the planning application

Policy HOU9 - Standalone annexes

Proposals for detached annexe accommodation to residential property will be permitted where;

a. **the existing residential property enjoys a lawful residential use; and**
b. **the proposed annexe would not materially harm any neighbouring uses; and,**
c. **the scale and appearance of the proposed annexe is sympathetic and modest in proportion to the principal dwelling and site; and**
d. **sited to achieve a clear dependency is retained between the annexe and the main building at all times; and**
e. **the proposed annexe is designed sensitively to complement the existing dwelling and is clearly ancillary and visually subordinate to it in design and massing; and**
f. **the proposed annexe would not have a harmful visual impact on the overall character of the surrounding area and/or the street scene or be visually intrusive in the landscape in which it is located**

Development of Residential Gardens

5.84 Much of the character and attractiveness of the Borough's towns and villages is derived from private garden areas. Residential gardens provide important breaks or gaps in built up frontages and in overall built massing, play an important amenity role by providing private recreational space for residents and providing important wildlife habitats and green networks particularly where the gardens are well established. Biodiversity levels in residential gardens are often cited as being higher than those in agricultural use.The Council is keen to reflect the value it places on such areas in policy.

5.85 Para 53 of the NPPF states that Councils should consider providing a policy framework to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, although such an approach needs to be balanced against the objectives of sustainable development and of encouraging development in the first instance on land that was previously developed. Recent Court rulings have supported the exemption of private residential gardens in built up areas from the definition of previously developed land.

5.86 The uncontrolled loss of residential gardens can lead to a piecemeal and inappropriate pattern or style of development being delivered. This can individually or cumulatively erode openness, disrupt wildlife corridors, and harm the living conditions of neighbouring residents.

Policy HOU10 - Development of residential gardens

Development proposals involving the complete or partial redevelopment of residential garden land will be permitted provided the proposed development complies with the Council's external space standards as set out in Policy HOU15 and does not result in significant harm to the character of the area including:

a. **The surrounding grain and built pattern of development including the prevailing building density, line, frontage width, building orientation, distance from the road, existing plot sizes and visual separation between dwellings;**
b. **The surrounding built form comprising the scale, massing, height, design and materials of construction of the buildings;**
c. **The wider landscape and/or the countryside setting;**
d. **wildlife corridors and biodiversity habitats;**
e. **The amenity of adjoining residents.**

Houses of Multiple Occupation

5.87 Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) are properties which are occupied by unrelated households that share one or more facilities such as a bathroom or kitchen. HMOs are an example where a high degree of sharing facilities is typical, where living arrangements, being more intense than single family occupation.

5.88 In 2010 government introduced a new use class (C4), which covers small shared houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities. Planning permission is generally not required for a change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to C4, as it is permitted under the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO). Large houses in multiple occupation (those with more than 6 people sharing) are unclassified by the Use Classes Order, and planning permission is required for a change use of from a C3 or C4 to a large house in multiple occupation.

5.89 The Council subsequently approved an Article 4 direction so that planning permission would still be required for a change of use from C3 to C4 in specific wards in Ashford. A loss of control over such changes is considered to harm the sustainability of neighbourhoods within Ashford over the long term. An increase in concentrations of HMOs in an area alters the population mix, impacting on the facilities and services that can be supported, as well as affecting residential amenity and social cohesion; and can give rise to noise, nuisance, more callers, a higher parking requirement and visual deterioration of buildings and gardens. These issues cannot be addressed successfully by neighbourhood management measures alone. In recent years HMOs have encroached into areas traditionally characterised by family housing.

5.90 The problems associated with high concentrations of HMOs have been recognised nationally, by residents and organisations, the press and by the government. The study 'Evidence Gathering-Housing in Multiple Occupation And Possible Planning Responses' carried out by Ecotec for the government in 2008 summarise the impacts as including:

- antisocial behaviour, noise and nuisance
- imbalance and unsustainable communities
- negative impacts on physical environment and streetscape
- pressures upon parking provision
- increased crime
- growth in private rented sector at expense of owner-occupier
- pressure upon local community facilities, and
- restructuring of retail, commercial services and recreational facilities to suit the lifestyles of the predominant population.

5.91 In Ashford, the principal impacts have been from noise and disturbance, impact on the environment from neglected gardens, litter, overflowing bins, and pressure on parking due to more people living in an HMO than would generally live in the same size house. The principal areas of concern in Ashford, and where the Article 4 direction has been put in place are:

- South Ashford where there has been a concentration of conversion to HMO of three storey properties in Beaver Ward. Some also have the ground floor garage converted into a separate flat. This has resulted in issues of noise, antisocial behaviour and parking pressures.
- Bushy Royds and Little Burton Farm where there has been increased pressure on parking on street,
- Drummond Grove, Adams Drive, Billington Grove, Rayworth Court and Stroudly Close where there is potential for the above mentioned impacts if additional HMOs are created.

5.92 The following policy sets out the criteria which will be considered when determining applications for new HMOs or when deciding whether the take enforcement action.

Policy HOU11 - Houses in Multiple Occupation

Proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupation (small or large) will only be permitted where the proposed development, taken by itself or in combination with existing HMOs in the vicinity of the site, would not result in an unacceptably harmful impact in respect of any of the following:

a. **Residential amenity, caused by increased noise and disturbance;**
b. **Highway safety, caused by insufficient onsite parking provision thereby resulting in an unacceptable increase in on street parking, or**
c. **Visual amenity, including that from inappropriate or insufficient arrangements for dustbin storage.**

Permissions granted will normally be subject to a condition that restricts the number of occupants allowed to reside at the property as their main residence.

Residential Space Standards

Residential Space Standards (internal)

5.93 The Council's supplementary planning document entitled 'Residential Space and Layout' adopted in 2011, provided guidance to support the Core Strategy 2008 Design Quality policy CS9. In part (g), policy CS9 requires flexibility, adaptability and liveability as aspects of the design quality. The Local Plan 2030 provides an opportunity to include detailed requirements concerning these aspects of design quality.

5.94 The Government has introduced a set of Nationally Described Space Standards to ensure consistency of approach across the sector and invited Local Planning Authorities to consider including them in their Local Plans. The national space standards cover internal space only and rather than return to a position of having no minimum space standards, the council considers that new developments should meet at least the national standards if design quality, flexibility, adaptability and livability standards are to be maintained.

5.95 The national space standards are based upon the areas required to accommodate essential furniture and storage items and the need for the occupants to be able to circulate around them. Good practice would be to exceed these standards where practical in order to provide a good range of accommodation.

5.96 The space standards help to ensure that new homes have sufficient space for the number of occupants they are designed to accommodate including storage of functional and personal items. Minimum bedroom sizes, floor to ceiling heights and storage space are included in the standards set out in the policy below.

5.97 It may, very occasionally, be necessary to make an exception to development meeting the national minimum standards, for example, in the case of the conversion of historic buildings where it may be desirable to maintain important and distinctive characteristics that contribute to the character of the building. However, without strong justification, proposals which do not comply with the standards are unlikely to be acceptable.

Policy HOU12 - Residential space standards (internal)

All new residential development, including dwellings created through subdivision or conversion, shall comply with the Nationally Described Space Standards set out in the table below

Table 1 Minimum gross internal floor areas and storage (m^2)

Number of bedrooms (b)	Number of bedspaces (persons)	1 storey dwellings	2 Storey dwellings	3 storey dwellings	Built- in storage
1b	1p	39 (37)[1]			1.0
	2p	50	58		1.5
2b	3p	61	70		2.0
	4p	70	79		
3b	4p	74	84	90	2.5
	5p	86	93	99	
	6p	95	102	108	
4b	5p	90	97	103	3
	6p	99	106	112	
	7p	108	115	121	
	8p	117	124	130	
5b	6p	103	110	116	3.5
	7p	112	119	125	
	8p	121	128	134	
6b	7p	116	123	129	4
	8p	125	132	138	

Accessible and Adaptable

Homes suitable for family occupation

5.98 The amount of space for cooking, living and eating is not defined in the new standards. The rooms used for those purposes are important areas for families to interact and usually include areas for play, study and storage as well as the basic functions of each of these areas. Although one large room is sometimes provided to accommodate all of these functions in homes designed for one or two people, this is not usually an appropriate layout for family occupation. At least two separate rooms, rather than one large room, should therefore be provided to accommodate cooking, eating and living in homes suitable for family occupation with three or more bedrooms. Provision of a separate room does not necessarily require any increase to the gross internal floor area.

Policy HOU13 - Homes suitable for family occupation

All new residential development designed for family occupation and having 3 or more bedrooms shall include at least 2 separate rooms to accommodate space for cooking, eating and living.

Accessibility standards

5.99 Local Planning Authorities are required by the NPPF to plan to create safe, accessible environments and promote inclusion and community cohesion, to take account of evidence that demonstrates a clear need for housing for people with specific housing needs and plan to meet this need.

5.100 In order to help to fulfil this requirement, all new dwellings created as 'new build', should be built to comply with a minimum of 'level 2' access (building regulations part M4 (2). Houses built to this standard are designed to meet the needs of occupiers throughout their lifetime. Level 2 accessibility is intended to allow a home to be accessible by providing facilities such as space to manoeuvre a wheelchair, the availability of an entrance level WC with shower drainage and enough space for an entrance level bedspace. Level 2 homes are also built to be adaptable standards so that additional facilities such as a stair lift or hoists can be easily fitted without major cost and upheaval.

5.101 The features of a level 2 accessibility home help to provide a safe, accessible living environment to those with reduced mobility due to accident, illness or age. Homes with this degree of accessibility extend the period of independent living, can reduce the length of a hospital stay and allow people to be cared for in their own home if the need arises. For those with permanent mobility problems, more specialised wheelchair accommodation provides greater freedom for independent living. Larger room sizes are required to enable greater ease for wheelchair dependent occupants.

5.102 In addition parking spaces provided in connection with M4(2) and M4 (3) dwellings may need to be larger to facilitate the increased access requirements, as per the current building regulations.

Policy HOU14 - Accessibility standards

Accessibility in compliance with building regulations part M shall be provided as follows:-

a. **All 'new build' homes shall be built in compliance with building regulations part M4 (2) as a minimum standard.**
b. **In 'new build' properties which are affordable, a proportion of wheelchair accessible homes complying with building regulations part M4 (3b) will be required. The number of homes built to M4 (3b) standards will be dependent upon the number of households on the Council's housing waiting list requiring wheelchair accessible homes and the suitability of the location for wheelchair users.**

External Space Standards

Private external open space

5.103 Ashford Borough Council's Residential Space and Layout SPD adopted in 2011 included guidance for providing residents with a private area of external space. The need for private outdoor amenity space as suggested by the Council's SPD was supported at appeal in 2015. The main issues in the appeal were considered to be harm to the character and appearance of the area and the unsatisfactory living conditions of future occupants in relation to the provision of private amenity space.

5.104 Outdoor private space is highly valued and it is important for both children and adults to have access to some private or at least, semi-private outdoor space for play and relaxation as well as more practical requirements. In the case of non flatted developments, this can most easily be provided in the form of a private enclosed garden. The provision of a garden also makes it easier to provide outside covered storage for items such as bicycles, garden tools, garden furniture and outdoor toys.

5.105 In the case of flats, balconies or terraces/roof gardens may take the place of a garden. Easily accessible communal areas may be acceptable but lack the element of privacy, which is important for relaxation. Lack of outdoor private space will therefore only be acceptable if there are particular design features which mitigate against this lack of provision.

5.106 A private outdoor space is one which is not overlooked from the street or other public place. For a house or ground floor flat a garden with direct access is the best solution. It should accommodate an area for drying washing, for garden furniture and play space as well as planted areas to provide an attractive environment for residents. In order to accommodate these elements in a private garden attached to a house, a minimum area based on the 10m long 'rule of thumb' multiplied by the width of the dwelling provides a helpful starting point. The first 5m of this space should not be overlooked by surrounding properties. Another advantage of the 10m minimum depth is that it imposes a reasonable separation distance between properties where the rear windows face one another. However, where overlooking is not an issue, the standard can be flexible providing it can be adequately demonstrated that alternative solutions provide a sufficient area of usable private outdoor space.

5.107 A balcony or terrace on flatted developments can provide space for outdoor relaxation with the benefits of privacy, fresh air, extra living space and growing plants. The size of a balcony or terrace should reflect the number of occupants and in the case of a balcony should be at least 1.5metres in depth in order to accommodate a small table and chairs. The value of a balcony or terrace is partly dependant upon its aspect, privacy and outlook. A balcony close to a heavily trafficked road, with no sunlight and a poor outlook is of little or no value to the occupants. Lack of privacy and exposure to noise and fumes would also deter its use. A balcony should be easily accessible from the dwelling and preferably from a dining or living area.

Policy HOU15 - Private external open space

Unless drawings indicate alternative provision of private useable external open space, new dwellings, whether created as 'new build', subdivision or conversion shall be provided with an area of private open space in accordance with the table below:

Minimum sizes for individual private open spaces for flats and houses not overlooked from the road or other public spaces.			
Number of bedspaces	Minimum depth of balconies	Minimum area of private space per flat (balcony, roof garden or ground level patio)	Minimum depth of private garden area (the width will normally be the width of the dwelling).
1 – 2	1.5m	$5m^2$	10m
3	1.5m	$6m^2$	10m
4	1.5m	$7m^2$	10m
5	1.5m	$8m^2$	10m
6	1.5m	$9m^2$	10m

Traveller Accommodation

5.108 The need to plan for the housing requirements of the gypsy and traveller population is in line with Government guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its companion document 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites'. These documents ensure that everyone, including members of the travelling community has the opportunity of living in a decent home.

SETTING A PITCH TARGET FOR TRAVELLERS IN THE LOCAL PLAN

5.109 The 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites' (PPTS, August, 2015) sets out the Government's planning policy specifically relating to Travellers and this document has the main overarching aim:

"to ensure fair and equal treatment for Travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of Travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community" (paragraph 3)

5.111 The 2015 PPTS replaced the 2012 PPTS, at the same time redefining the definition of who qualifies as a 'traveller'[67] . Under the new definition travellers who have ceased to travel are now excluded. The new definition defines travellers as:

"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such"

Objectively Assessing Local Traveller Need:

5.113 Therefore, in order to achieve the overarching aim of Government policy the Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in 2013, which provided an Objectively Assessed Pitch Need (OAPN) in the borough. Then following the publication of the new PPTS the Council undertook a piece of work[8] , re-assessing the travelling habits of travellers using the GTAA raw data. This piece of work removed any travellers that no longer travel, to ensure that any future need is consistent with the requirements of the PPTS policy. The following assumptions have therefore been defined:

5.114 The GTAA outlined a pitch requirement of **57 pitches for the 15-year period 2013 - 2028**. However, following reassessment of the base data a new OAPN requirement of 48 pitches between 2013 and 2028 can be established. As the Local Plan runs to 2030, on a pro rata basis this would result in a OAPN of **54 pitches by 2030**.

[6] In accordance with PPTS, Annex1 (4), the term "travellers" refers to "gypsies and travellers" and "travelling showpeople"
[7] Ashford Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Update Paper – Post PPTS (Aug 2015)
[8] See 5yr Land Supply Position Statement on Traveller Sites

How many pitches have been provided to date:

5.115 The Council has a good record of delivering Traveller pitches on appropriate sites and since the GTAA was published 31 pitches have received full planning permission.

5.116 Using the new OAPN target above, this leaves a residual need to **provide at least 23 pitches by 2030.**

Achieving the Objectively Assessed Pitch Need (OAPN):

5.117 The council has considered whether all 23 pitches should be provided through site allocations to ensure the OAPN has been achieved from the outset. However, due to the current lack of suitable, available sites, this has not been possible. The Council is proposing to provide 7 pitches through site allocations, see policies S43 and S44.

5.118 Also, due to the substantial number of windfall sites that have been delivered since 2013, the Council considers that the remainder of the OAPN requirement is likely to be achieved via a windfall approach. For example, even a modest continued delivery of 2 windfall pitches per year would mean 30 new pitches over 15 years, more than meeting the required need.

5.119 Therefore, the most pragmatic approach for delivery of the OAPN would be to deliver pitches through a combination of windfalls and allocations. At the same time, to ensure resilience in this approach it is proposed to set out a criteria based policy, requiring the retention of all existing Traveller sites to ensure their continual supply in the market.

Traveller Windfall Policy:

5.120 Ashford has a long history of delivering Traveller accommodation, especially through the provision of 'windfalls'. 31 pitches have been provided through this means since the publication of the Borough's GTAA. This Local Plan is allocating two sites to provide 7 pitches. Therefore, within this Local Plan there is a requirement to provide a minimum of 16 pitches through windfall sites in order to meet the OAPN. Because there is a shortfall of sites coming forward it is considered that the strategy of providing some pitches through windfalls maximises the opportunity for new sites to come forward without relying on a single means of provision, for example the allocation of new sites only.

5.121 A specific, clearly worded windfall policy enables the Council to deal with planning applications for Traveller sites on a site by site basis and would allow suitable sites to continue to be permitted provided they meet criteria set out in the policy. To this end, suitable sites, which are well-related to existing and proposed services and facilities, that may previously not have been identified have the opportunity to come forward in the plan period.

5.122 The 'windfall' policy below sets out a threshold to provide for additional small sites in the borough. This approach is consistent with the approach set out in the PPTS (Paragraph 10d), which states that in producing Local Plans, Local planning authorities should 'relate the number of pitches or plots to the circumstances of the specific size and location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density'.

5.123 Local evidence, identified from the bi-annual gypsy count[9] suggests that Travellers in Ashford tend to reside on small sites which accommodate their immediate and extended family. Coupled with the lack of available land identified in the GTAA and the long standing issues managing larger sites, a number of smaller sites spread throughout the district would be a more effective means of providing sustainable and flexible accommodation to meet the need.

5.124 For example, The Council owned site at Chilmington Green, which has 16 pitches, often has empty and long standing vacant pitches, with Gypsies and Travellers stating themselves that they would rather live with their extended family than on a site which supplies pitches on the open market. Although not specifically a 'planning' concern the site does have issues with antisocial behaviour between different gypsy groups and has suffered extensive vandalism.

5.125 Finally, the impact of new Traveller accommodation on existing communities and how well proposals can be integrated is an important consideration in the determination of applications for Traveller provision. New applications will need to adhere to the criteria in Policy HOU16 below to ensure that this impact is mitigated.

Policy HOU16 - Traveller Accommodation

Planning permission for new sites to accommodate Gypsy and traveller accommodation or accommodation for travelling showpeople will only be permitted outside of allocated sites if the following criteria are met:

a. **The Council is satisfied that there is a clearly established need for the site and the proposals cannot be accommodated on an existing available site or allocated site;**
b. **The site would not accommodate more than 5 pitches or make an existing site exceed 5 pitches in size;**
c. **The site would provide a good living environment free from the risk of flooding and risks to health through contamination, noise or pollution;**
d. **Occupation is limited to those meeting the definition of Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople in the relevant national planning policy;**
e. **Local services and facilities - shops, public transport, schools, medical and social services, can be readily accessed from the site;**
f. **The site is capable of being provided with on-site services such as water supply, sewage disposal and power supply;**
g. **The form and extent of the accommodation does not adversely affect the visual or other essential qualities of an AONB, SSSI, Ancient woodland, international, national or local nature reserve or wildlife site, or the key characteristics of a Landscape Character Area;**
h. **Access to the site which does not endanger highway safety for vehicles and pedestrians can be provided;**
i. **Proposals incorporate a landscape strategy, which will be required by use of planning conditions, where mitigation of the impact on the landscape is necessary to protect the quality of the surrounding landscape.**

[9] See 5yr Land Supply Position Statement on Traveller Sites

Safeguarding existing traveller sites

5.126 It is important to protect existing Traveller sites from being developed for alternative uses whilst there is a need for such sites, as currently demonstrated by the GTAA (Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment). It is also important to safeguard these sites for future generations of gypsies and travellers. In particular it is important to safeguard the traveling showpeople site in Ashford as there is currently only one site in the Borough and the GTAA has established that no further sites are required at this time.

5.127 Therefore, any sites with existing lawful use as a Traveller site should not be lost to an alternative use, unless an alternative replacement site has been identified. Sites that have been granted a personal permission, to be inhabited by a named family, will not be safeguarded under this policy. Any new traveller sites granted planning permission and implemented shall also be safeguarded under provisions of this policy as long as the need for traveller accommodation within the Borough remains.

Policy HOU17 - Safeguarding existing Traveller sites

Existing authorised gypsy and traveller sites and sites for travelling showpeople shall be retained for the accommodation of gypsies and travellers and for travelling showpeople as defined in the relevant National Planning Policy Document.

Any new gypsy and traveller sites granted permanent planning permission shall also be safeguarded under the provisions of this policy.

This policy may not apply if:-

a. **There is a surplus of available accommodation over and above the required five year supply of sites,or,**
b. **The site will be replaced by a site of similar proportions in an appropriate location which complies with the criteria listed in policy HOU16, or,**
c. **A site has been granted a personal permission restricting residency to a named occupier or family.**

SECTION B - EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

5.128 Providing for employment and the local economy is a critical part of the overall strategy set out in this Local Plan. The strategic approach to employment delivery has been set out in policies SP3 and SP4. The following sections support the approach and includes detailed policies for the consideration of proposals for new employment uses in the towns, villages, and rural areas, as well as those which result in the loss of employment premises.

5.129 The development of the town centre is an integral part of the economic strategy of this Plan, as set out in Policy SP5. This section also includes detailed policies in relation to retail, leisure and other town centre uses. The NPPF requires local authorities to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based upon a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages and to set policies making it clear what uses will be permitted. This section also covers issues in relation to the sequential test for town centre development, as well as supporting and protecting local and village service centres.

New employment uses

5.130 The provision of new employment space is critical to the delivery of employment and jobs in the Borough. Policy SP3 sets out the strategic approach to the delivery of employment and identifies the strategic sites which are allocated for employment purposes. Other specific sites for employment development are identified with site policies in this Plan.

5.131 There are also other existing employment sites including those identified in the Employment Land Review 2016, which have not been specifically allocated, but which may provide potential for redevelopment, enhancement and reconfiguration. There may also be opportunities for employment development which have not been specifically identified and are not located in existing established employment locations.

5.132 It is important that new employment development occurs in locations which provide suitable access to the local road network, and can also be accessed by a range of means of transport. The following policy seeks to support such proposals, provided they are in sustainable locations, create additional employment and do not have any other adverse impacts. It is essential that appropriate provision is made to access the site and that sufficient car parking is provided.

5.133 The NPPF makes it clear that planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas and the Council's Rural Economic Assessment 2014 concluded that the current policy approach has been successful in delivering substantial rural employment opportunities. The study indicated that it could be possible to allocate additional sites but that a continuation of the current flexible policy approach that enables the market to determine the optimum location of additional employment space on an ad hoc basis regulated by planning generic policies. Hence, a suite of criteria based policies for new employment space provision, retention of employment space and extension of employment premises, provides a flexible and responsive approach to the delivery of appropriately-scaled employment opportunities in the rural areas.

5.134 New employment development should be provided at a scale that is appropriate to the existing settlement, without detriment to its amenity, character or setting. All new development should be of good design as required by Policy SP6.

5.135 It is important that the rural road network that supports new development is suitable for the scale and type of vehicle movements associated with new employment proposals. For example, significant numbers of HGV movements are unlikely to be appropriate along quiet rural lanes or in historic environments. Similarly, developments that would generate large amounts of traffic per se may be better suited to more sustainable locations where alternative means of transport may be more readily available.

Policy EMP1 – New employment uses

Provision of new employment premises, and the redevelopment, enhancement and reconfiguration of existing employment premises will be permitted within or adjoining the built-up confines of Ashford, Tenterden and the rural settlements, provided that:

a. **the character and appearance of the settlement or surrounding landscape is not damaged significantly by the form of development proposed by virtue of its layout, building design and scale, the level or type of activity it generates, and the functional and visual relationship it has with adjoining uses;**
b. **there would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers;**
c. **appropriate provision can be made for parking and access; and**
d. **any impact upon the local road network can be mitigated. In the rural settlements, it must be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Loss or redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises

5.136 The Council acknowledges that the changes that have been made to permitted development rights have meant that some buildings can be converted from a commercial use without the need for planning permission. Nevertheless there is still a requirement to retain, where possible, existing employment generating uses and to maintain the existing policy approach that has been in place for some time.

5.137 The NPPF stresses the importance of identifying a range of sites to facilitate a broad range of economic development, including mixed use development. The council believes it is necessary to make specific policy provision for the retention of the existing stock of employment premises in the town to complement the strategy of identifying areas for employment development.

5.138 With Ashford already home to approximately 53,700 jobs (BRES 2014), an important aspect of achieving the growth in jobs within the town will be the facilitation of growth in existing companies alongside new investment. The safeguarding of existing employment sites (B1-B8) within the urban area is important to retain a good supply and range of units in size, type and cost to enable local companies to continue to prosper. Smaller sites and units continue to

be the most vulnerable premises to competition from higher value land uses that do not create employment for the area.

5.139 The Employment Land Review 2016 includes an assessment of existing employment estates in the Borough.

5.140 In a few exceptional circumstances, the continuation of an employment use on a site may ne inappropriate by virtue of, for example, an impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, or an unsafe vehicular access. However, this judgement should be based upon the impact of a range of potential employment generating uses on the site and not solely that of the previous or most recent operations at the site.

5.141 Otherwise, for proposals involving the loss of employment floorspace, either an equivalent amount of floorspace must be provided at a suitable site elsewhere in the Ashford urban area, or it will be necessary for developers to provide robust evidence that the premises have been markets unsuccessfully for a substantial period of time on reasonable terms. Whilst each proposal will need to be treated on its own merits with the context of the prevailing market conditions, as a guide, appropriate marketing for less than one year is unlikely to be considered sufficient. Evidence should be provided that the terms compare with other similar premises and locations being let or sold for employment uses within the local area. The extent of the marketing carried out will be an important factor in the weight given to the evidence.

5.142 In addition to marketing the site, developers will need to have carried out a viability assessment of the redevelopment potential of the site for any other types of suitable employment generating uses. These uses might include, for example, trade counter uses, motor dealerships, education and training facilities, or small scale leisure facilities not suitable for town centre locations. The viability assessment should consider not only the redevelopment of the site in the current market conditions, but also redevelopment of the site within the timescale of this Plan.

5.143 Where mixed use redevelopment proposals involving an element of residential development are proposed on an existing employment site, these will only be acceptable if they retain at least the equivalent amount of employment floorspace within the redevelopment scheme as was available on the existing site or otherwise meet one of the criteria in Policy EMP2 below.

Loss or Redevelopment of employment sites and premises in the rural area

5.144 Whilst there is a considerable supply of employment space in the rural areas, much of this tends to be in relatively remote locations and opportunities in and around the villages are generally limited. Whilst it is important to retain existing employment sites, a balance may need to be struck between the viability of the existing employment space and the continuing need for employment in the local area.

5.145 It is desirable to enable jobs to be provided locally to cater for the needs of residents in the Borough's rural areas and to avoid unsustainable patterns of commuting. Hence, in general, proposals for the loss of existing employment sites in or adjoining the more sustainable rural settlements will not be supported. However, the Council recognises that there may be two circumstances where a different approach can be justified.

5.146 As a main objective of the Council's policy is to retain local job opportunities, the replacement of an employment use with new employment space elsewhere that is of the same size or larger may be an acceptable mitigation to the loss of an employment site. However, in order to retain the link between the employment use and local residents, it is likely that only employment uses that are relocated within or adjacent to their existing rural settlement or the nearest rural service centre will be acceptable and only if it can be demonstrated that development of the selected site will not have a detrimental impact on any existing uses, the quality of the landscape or the character of the area. This will also help to deliver a more sustainable form of development by limiting the need to travel longer distances to employment locations.

5.147 When considering an application for the loss of an employment site, an assessment will need to be made as to the viability of the existing use or an alternative employment use. In order to demonstrate that a site is no longer viable for an employment use, the application must be supported by robust evidence that the premises have been marketed unsuccessfully for both the existing use and any alternative suitable employment use for a period of at least 6 months on terms that should compare with other similar premises and locations being sold or let for employment purposes. The extent of any marketing carried out and the prevailing market conditions will also be material considerations in the Council's assessment of viability evidence.

Policy EMP2 - Loss or redevelopment of Employment Sites and Premises

In the Ashford urban area:

Proposals for the loss or redevelopment of existing employment sites or premises (outside the town centre) will not be permitted unless at least one of the following criteria applies:

a. **The site is no longer appropriate for the continuation of the previous or any other employment use in terms of its serious impact on the neighbouring occupiers or environment; or,**
b. **It has been shown that the unit has remained unlet or for sale for a substantial period for all appropriate types of B class employment uses, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell it on reasonable terms, and furthermore, that it will not be viable to redevelop the site for any appropriate types of alternative employment use within the Plan period; or,**
c. **The premises are replaced with similar facilities within the existing site or elsewhere in the Ashford urban area, providing at least the overall amount of developable B class employment floorspace that would be lost to redevelopment.**

In the rural area:

Proposals for the loss or redevelopment of existing employment sites or premises in Tenterden or the villages listed in Policy HOU3 will not be permitted, unless;

a. **they are replaced with the same-sized or larger sites or premises within or adjoining the same rural settlement, or at the nearest rural service centre,or,**
b. **It has been shown that the unit has remained unlet or for sale for a substantial period for all appropriate types of B class employment uses, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let or sell it on reasonable terms, and furthermore, that it will not be viable to redevelop the site for any appropriate types of alternative employment use within the Plan period.**

Extensions to employment premises in the rural area

5.148 The NPPF indicates that Plans should support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas and in line with the conclusions of the Rural Economic Assessment 2014, the Council will, in principle, encourage and support proposals for extensions to existing employment sites within or adjacent to Tenterden and other rural settlements. Proposals for extensions to existing employment premises in the countryside will particularly need to demonstrate that they would not have a detrimental impact on the character of the landscape. In both cases, extensions to existing employment sites should demonstrate that they will have no individual and cumulative impact on the rural environment, either visually or in terms of traffic and overall activity levels that will be generated.

5.149 In exceptional cases, where a business is located as part of a well-established collection of industrial or business premises, and is accommodated in a converted building whose

character would be unacceptably affected by a physical extension, new floorspace may be accommodated in a new freestanding building that is designed and sited so as not to compromise the character of the existing building or group of buildings or wider landscape.

Policy EMP3 - Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area

Proposals to extend existing employment premises in the rural areas will be permitted, provided that the following criteria are met:-

a. **the development can be integrated sensitively into its context, respecting the character of the landscape, existing historic and or architecturally important buildings and sites of biodiversity value;**
b. **the proposal does not involve an extension to a previously converted building where that building has character that would be seriously affected;**
c. **there would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers; and,**
d. **it can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Conversion of rural buildings to non-residential uses

5.150 Many agricultural and other rural buildings may no longer be suitable for their original purpose or be surplus to requirements as farming practices change. Both individual and groups of rural buildings can play a valuable role in creating the character of the countryside in a positive way.

5.151 The NPPF supports the conversion of rural buildings to support sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas. The Council supports this approach in principle as this stock of buildings can provide a useful and viable means of enabling the local rural economy to evolve and diversify without requiring new buildings to be developed in sensitive rural locations. It is acknowledged that recent changes to permitted development rights mean that in some cases the change of use of agricultural buildings does not require planning permission.

5.152 Not all buildings in the rural areas are suitable for conversion because of their design for a particular purpose and / or their condition or location. Buildings must be realistically capable of conversion from their existing state and not require complete or substantial reconstruction. If this issue is in doubt, applicants must be able to produce adequate supporting information, usually a survey report and associated drawings, to illustrate the existing condition of the building.

5.153 Where a rural building is proposed to be converted for employment, non-residential tourism (i.e attractions), leisure or community related purposes, the Council will normally be supportive of such schemes, particularly where they are located adjacent to Tenterden or another rural settlement. However, for this to be the case, the building to be converted must be of a permanent and substantial construction. It will also be important to consider the specific impacts of the proposal in respect of the proposed use(s). For example, in locations not within or adjacent to existing settlements, the scale and nature of the use proposed in terms of its floorspace and consequential potential trip generation should be limited according to the suitability of the local rural road network that serves the site, taking account of the

nature of the vehicle movements that would result. In locations adjacent to settlements, a greater trip generation potential may be acceptable subject to the quality of the surrounding road network and any impacts on local residential amenities.

5.154 The Council has adopted supplementary planning guidance on the re-use of agricultural buildings which gives clear guidance on the design of building conversions. This guidance will continue to apply to proposals for conversions to ensure that the integrity and character of the existing building is retained where applicable. When planning permission is granted for a conversion, the Council will also usually remove permitted development rights to extend the building or erect additional buildings within its curtilage. Without this control, the architectural and historic integrity of converted buildings and the rural character of the countryside could be damaged.

Policy EMP4 - Conversions of rural buildings to non-residential uses

Proposals to convert rural buildings to employment, non-residential tourism, leisure or community-related uses will be permitted subject to meeting all of the following criteria:-

a. **the building does not require complete or substantial reconstruction;**
b. **the building is of a permanent and substantial construction;**
c. **the building is to be converted in a way that preserves its integrity and character;**
d. **it can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it; and,**
e. **the scale and nature of the proposed use would not result in any significant adverse impacts on the character of any settlement or buildings, the surrounding landscape, its biodiversity value or the amenities of local residents.**

New employment premises in the countryside

5.155 New employment sites (i.e. not conversions) in the countryside will not be permitted unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to set aside the normal presumption against such developments. Such circumstances may include the functional need for a countryside location, such as the processing of local agricultural products. New employment sites in the countryside will need to have regard to the need to protect countryside sites with specific, landscape, biodiversity or historic qualities.

Policy EMP5 - New employment premises in the countryside

Proposals for employment development on new sites in the countryside will not be permitted unless the following criteria can be met:-

a. **it is essential to be located in the countryside;**
b. **development can be integrated sensitively into its context respecting the character of any important existing buildings, the landscape setting and sites of biodiversity value;**
c. **there would be no significant impact on the amenities of any neighbouring residential occupiers; and,**
d. **it can be demonstrated that the development will not generate a type or amount of traffic that would be inappropriate to the rural road network that serves it.**

Promoting of Fibre To The Premise (FTTP)

5.156 The e-technology sector is undergoing major changes and the Government - through Broadband Delivery UK[10] - is supporting investment to:

- provide superfast broadband coverage to 90% of the UK by early 2016 and 95% by December 2017,
- provide access to basic broadband (2Mbps) for all from December 2015,
- explore options to provide superfast coverage to the hardest to reach parts of the UK.

5.157 At the local level, the availability, reliability and speed of broadband provision is now a key consideration for house buyers and many view it as essential as the standard utilities. Similarly, it is also a key concern for the business sector.

5.158 Planning policy can play a role in helping to achieve the transformation in broadband. The NPPF clearly recognises this and supports the delivery of advanced, high quality communications infrastructure and the expansion of high speed broadband where possible.

5.159 Ashford has long been ahead of the national agenda in this regard. In 2008, the Core Strategy took proactive steps to prioritise communications infrastructure by ensuring that duct space was provided for fibre cabling on each new development in the urban area. In the 8 years since this policy approach was developed the fibre network in Ashford has received significant private and public sector investment and the fibre footprint in the Ashford borough has spread significantly. All of Ashford's exchanges are now fibre enabled.

5.160 The policy below builds upon this pioneering approach and challenges the market yet further to require fibre to the premise (FTTP) for all new developments, wherever practical. In doing so, the approach underpins one of the key principles of this Local Plan with regard to the utilisation, enhancement and expansion of existing infrastructure wherever possible.

5.161 FTTP is recognised by the Government and European Commission as a 'Next Generation Access (NGA) technology[11] and have prioritised investment accordingly. While superfast

[10] The government department charged with delivering superfast broadband

speeds can be achieved on current generation copper networks it is widely accepted that NGA technologies should be prioritised. By seeking FTTP, the Council are aiming to provide a futureproof solution for broadband delivery within the Borough.

5.162 Adopting this approach will prevent the need for fibre retrofitting programmes in the future which has significant cost implications and often results in attaching fibre to existing copper networks resulting in a less than optimum solution when compared to new fibre networks being delivered.

5.163 In the urban area, where the fibre network now exists, the cost of installing FTTP in new developments is considered to be relatively small particularly during the build phase of the development. Any costs (above BCIS assumptions) must also be balanced with increased sales values that are likely to be achieved on account of fast and reliable broadband speeds being available.

5.164 In the rural parts of the borough, there has been significant investment in rural broadband which has resulted in the fibre network stretching further into the rural area than ever before. As in the urban area this creates an opportunity for developments to utilise this asset to deliver FTTP in new developments.

5.165 However, the Council recognise that there are more challenges in terms of the viability of provision in the rural area and sometimes the ability to connect to the network is more difficult than in the urban area. With this in mind, the policy below is targeted towards schemes promoting 10 residential units or more and proposals that will deliver reasonably sized, or larger, employment uses.

5.166 Schemes that fall below these thresholds will be encouraged to deliver FTTP wherever practical to try to ensure that the Borough's fibre network is delivered to its maximum capacity.

5.167 By implementing this policy approach, the Council is seeking to ensure that future developments remain at the forefront of advances in broadband technology, allowing Ashford to be a market leader and remain a highly attractive location for businesses and residents alike. This aspiration is a central component of the Council's Five Year Corporate Plan.

5.168 However, in order to be consistent with the provisions in the NPPF, the Council recognise that there may be schemes that come forward which cannot fulfil the policy requirements as stipulated below. In such cases, evidence will be needed from the applicant to demonstrate that a departure from policy is justified. Such evidence could include (but is not limited to) issues of viability, the ability to dig the appropriate physical trench and proximity to the nearest breakout point on the fibre network.

5.169 Where a FTTP solution is not deemed possible (and this position is accepted by the Council) provision of technologies capable of providing speeds in excess of 24Mbps should be delivered wherever practical.

[11] Next Generation Access Networks: wired access networks which consist wholly or in part of optical elements and which are capable of delivering broadband access services with enhanced characteristics (such as higher throughput) as compared to those provided over already existing copper networks.' Commission Recommendation 2010/572/EU of 20 September 2010 on regulated access to Next Generation Access Networks (NGA)

Policy EMP6 - Promotion of Fibre to the Premises (FTTP)

All residential and employment developments within the Ashford urban area, including the site allocations promoted in this Plan which adjoin Ashford, will enable FTTP. In the rural area, all residential developments over 10 dwellings and reasonably sized employment proposals shall enable FTTP.

For schemes under these thresholds the Council's expectation is that provision for FTTP will be achieved, where practical.

Where it can be demonstrated that fibre to the premise is not practical due to special circumstances, then non Next Generation Access technologies that can provide speeds in excess of 24Mbps should be delivered wherever practical.

Retail, Leisure and Tourism

Ashford Town Centre Primary and Secondary Frontages

5.172 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes.

5.173 The existing hierarchy of centres in Ashford Borough is set out below. It is proposed that through this Plan the existing hierarchy will be supported and maintained.

5.174 **Ashford Town Centre** – primary regional centre that serves the Borough's administrative area. As the largest service centre within the Borough it plays a key role as the commercial centre for the town and the surrounding rural area. It attracts visitors from across the Borough and beyond.

5.175 **Tenterden Town Centre** – secondary retail centre that offers a smaller range of shops and services to Ashford, but nonetheless attracts visitors from a wider area.

5.176 **Wye, Charing and Hamstreet** – village/local service centres, which perform the role of serving the day-to-day service top up shopping and leisure needs for local catchment areas

5.177 **Local Centres** – there are a number of other local centres, mainly rural village centres, across Ashford, which generally provide more limited day to day top-up shopping provision.

5.178 Ashford Town Centre also fits within a wider retail hierarchy, and faces strong competition from centres outside of the Borough, particularly Folkestone and Canterbury. This reflects the more limited range, choice and overall quality of the town centre's comparison goods offer compared to the competing centres. One of the main challenges for Ashford town centre will be to maintain and strengthen its market share in the face of competition from out of centre facilities, larger neighbouring centres and the internet.

5.179 National Planning Policy requires Local Planning Authorities to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based upon a clear definition of primary and secondary

frontages in designated centres, and to set clear policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.

5.180 The primary and secondary frontages have been defined following an assessment of the characteristics of Ashford Town centre, including an audit of existing uses within the town centre, taking into consideration recent trends and committed and future development proposals.

5.181 Ashford is focused around a compact core. The primary shopping street of the town centre is the traditional High Street, where retail uses are focused, and around 80% of existing units are occupied in retail use. The two shopping centres of Park Mall and Country Square shopping centres front directly on to the High Street, to the north and south respectively. These centres are dominated by A1 retail uses, and County Square is the main focus for major national multiples and Class A1 retailers in the town centre.

5.182 Secondary areas of Ashford Town Centre, which have a lower proportion of A1 uses, and are dominated more by service uses such as A2 uses, include the western end of New Rents, Bank Street and North Street.

5.183 With planning permission being granted for the cinema and restaurants on Elwick Road in the southern part of the town centre, Bank Street will become an important pedestrian route linking the proposed leisure-led scheme and the High Street. In this respect, it is proposed that once this has been developed it will become part of the Primary Shopping Area, as this is shown by an extension to the existing PSA on the map in Policy EMP7.

5.184 In the past, frontage polices for Ashford Town Centre have restricted the amount of non-A1 uses within the primary shopping frontages, and the amount of A2 uses within the secondary areas of the Town Centre. With the introduction of more relaxed permitted development rights there is much more flexibility around proposed uses, and planning permission is not required for changes between different class A uses.

5.185 Town centres are changing and will no longer be solely supported by traditional retail development, having to expand their offer to wider uses in order to maintain their vitality and viability. Ashford Town Centre is no different. Recent trends show that the proportion of Class A1 within the primary frontage of Ashford Town Centre has fallen, which reflects national trends and a more flexible and pragmatic policy approach to the definition of the primary and secondary shopping frontages is required.

5.186 It is therefore not considered necessary to restrict particular percentages of retail uses in certain areas. It is considered that the primary shopping frontages will remain the predominant area for class A uses, and that the secondary frontages will have a broader range of uses.

5.187 Residential development plays an important role in the vitality and viability of a town centre, bringing people into the town at different times of the day, increasing footfall and supporting a more vibrant evening and night time economy. Residential development will therefore be supported in the town centre in suitable locations. However residential development on the ground floor within the Primary Shopping Frontage would be harmful to the economic health of the town centre. Proposals for change of use to residential within this area will therefore be resisted when considering applications for prior approval.

5.188 The following policy defines the locations of the primary and secondary shopping frontages in Ashford Town Centre, as well as the Primary Shopping Area, and sets out what uses will be permitted in such locations.

Policy EMP7 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontage in Ashford Town Centre

Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages and the Primary Shopping Area are defined for Ashford Town Centre as set out on the Policies Map.

Within the Primary Shopping Frontages, development falling within Use Classes A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 will be permitted.

Residential development will not be permitted on the ground floor within the Primary Shopping Frontage.

Within the Secondary Shopping Frontage, proposals for all town centre uses, including residential, will be permitted.

Tenterden Town Centre Primary and Secondary Frontages

5.189 Tenterden town centre is characterised by an attractive historic environment, and serves a sizeable rural catchment. Its shopping, leisure and service provision is focused around its historic linear high street, which has approximately 70 retail, leisure and service outlets. Its offer is distinctly different to Ashford and comprises a good mix of independent and specialist businesses trading alongside some high street brands. The good choice of high quality specialist shops in the town reflects its important role as a tourist and visitor destination, as well as serving its local population.

5.190 Tenterden also benefits from two food stores, which both help to underpin Tenterden's vitality and viability, by generating linked trips, footfall and expenditure to other shops and businesses in the town centre. It is therefore important for the role, attraction and trading performance of these two key anchor stores to be maintained.

5.191 The main shopping area is located along the traditional high street, on both sides of the road. It runs from Bridewell Lane to Recreation Ground Road on the south side of the High Street, and from Station Road to East Cross on the north side.

5.192 Previous policies for Tenterden Town Centre, have aimed to maintain a high concentration of A1 uses, by restricting proposals that would result in more than 35% of the length of particular primary frontages becoming non-A1 uses. Whilst the current mix of uses within the centre makes for a well functioning and vibrant centre, given the recent extensions to permitted development rights, as with Ashford town centre, it is not considered appropriate to restrict uses by such a threshold, and in any event, this would have no practical effect.

5.193 No Secondary Shopping Frontage is proposed for Tenterden Town Centre. Due to the particular characteristics of the town centre, the Primary Shopping Frontage already contains the full range of town centre uses.

5.194 The following policy defines the locations of the primary shopping frontages in Tenterden Town Centre, as well as the Primary Shopping Area, and sets out what uses will be permitted in these locations.

Policy EMP8 - Primary Shopping Frontage in Tenterden Town Centre

Primary Shopping Frontages and the Primary Shopping Area are defined for Tenterden Town Centre as set out on the Policies Map and extract above.

Within the Primary Shopping Frontage, all town centre uses will be permitted, with the exception of residential, which will not be permitted on the ground floor of any unit.

Sequential Assessment and Impact Test

5.195 Both Ashford and Tenterden Town Centres are potentially vulnerable to increasing competition from out-of-centre retailing and the growth of internet shopping. There is a concern that existing retailers in the centres, particularly Ashford, could choose to take space in larger more modern units in out-of-centre locations. The loss of existing major retailers in the town centre would be significantly detrimental to the vitablity and viability of the town centre. The provision of additional out-of-centre retail has the potential to have significant negative impacts on the town centres, further reducing the towns' market shares.

5.196 Local planning authorities are required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to apply a sequential test to planning applications for main town centre uses that are not in an existing centre and are not in accordance with an up to date Local Plan. The NPPF requires proposals for main town centre uses to be located in town centres, or if no suitable sites are available, then in edge of centre locations. Only if no sites are available, should out of centre sites be considered. When considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites that are well connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale.

5.197 The NPPF requires local plans to set policies for the consideration of proposals which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres. This policy sets out two key tests, sequential and impact test, which proposals for town centre development, located outside of the Primary Shopping Area (PSA), as defined in Policy EMP7 and EMP8, will need to meet in order to be considered acceptable.

5.198 The NPPF defines edge of centre locations as, for retail purposes, a location that is well connected and within 300 metres of the primary shopping area. For all other main town centres uses, a location within 300 metres of a town centre boundary. For office development, this includes locations outside of the town centre but within 500 metres of a public transport interchange. It states that local circumstances should be taken into account when determining whether a site falls within the definition of edge of centre.

5.199 For the avoidance of doubt Policy SP4 does not over-ride the need for development proposals in edge of centre locations to accord with the following policy.

5.200 Proposals for development outside of the PSA will be required to demonstrate, by carrying out a Sequential Assessment, that there are no sites located within a more central location that

would be suitable for the proposed development. Applicants will be required to demonstrate flexibility in respect of the format and scale of the proposed development.

5.201 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) provides advice in setting locally appropriate thresholds for impact assessments. The Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment concludes that impact assessments will be required for proposals for retail, leisure and office development, which are greater than 500 sqm.

5.202 The scope of the Sequential Test and Retail Impact Assessments which are required to be submitted in support of planning applications should be discussed and agreed between the applicants and the Council at an early stage in the pre-application process. The level of detail included within the assessments should be proportionate to the scale and type of retail floorspace proposed and shall be determined on a case by case basis. National Planning Practice Guidance sets out detailed requirements for carrying out such assessments.

5.203 The following policy sets out the requirements for consideration of applications for main town centre uses that are not proposed in Ashford or Tenterden Primary Shopping Areas and are not in accordance with other site allocations within this Local Plan.

Policy EMP9 - Sequential Assessment and Impact Test

Proposals for town centre development which are not located in the Primary Shopping Areas of Ashford or Tenterden Town Centres (as defined in Policy EMP7 and EMP8 and set out on the Policies Map), and are not in accordance with other site allocation policies in this plan, will only be permitted if all of the following criteria can be met:

a. **A sequential assessment has been carried out to demonstrate that no suitable sites are available in more central locations.**
b. **The site is accessible by a range of means of transport, and is well connected to the town centre, including by public transport, bicycle and foot.**
c. **The proposal, either by itself, or in combination with other committed development proposals, will not harm significantly the vitality and viability of the relevant centre, or any significant negative impact upon the town centres can be adequately mitigated. Proposals for retail, leisure and office development which are greater than 500 sqm, will be required to carry out an impact assessment.**

Local and Village Centres

5.204 Local centres in the towns and villages play an important role in providing for local shopping needs, especially for convenience goods, and other local services. They help reduce the need to travel. They also provide an essential service for those with restricted mobility and are often a focal point for the community.

5.205 Within the built-up area of Ashford, there are a number of local centres which provide such services to local residents. Many of the villages in the Borough have shops which serve the village community and in the case of the larger villages, such as Wye and Charing, serve the surrounding smaller villages and hamlets as well.

5.206 The Council would like to see as broad a range of local shops and services as possible, including some non-A1 uses such as banks, take-away restaurants and public houses. The Council aims to resist the loss of shops and services and to preserve the character of the local centres, especially the retention of key units so that they remain compact centres, although the effects of increased permitted development rights on changes of use should be acknowledged.

5.207 Areas of new residential development in Ashford have in the past been required to make provision of local shops to meet the needs of the new community. Where new local centres are required to support new development in this plan, this is will set out in the site policy.

5.208 The following policy seeks to maintain and enhance the provision of local centres in the built-up areas of the Borough.

Policy EMP10 - Local and Village Centres

In local centres and villages, planning permission will be granted for additional shopping and service provision, where proposals meet a local need, and are of a scale appropriate to the particular centre.

Proposals that result in the loss of shops and services will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

a. **there is alternative provision for a similar use within reasonable walking distance (300 metres); or,**
b. **the unit is no longer viable for that purpose, or an alternative local service, and that it has remained unlet for a substantial period of time, despite genuine and sustained attempts to let it on reasonable terms**[12]

Tourism

5.209 Tourism is a term covering a wide range of activities, including travel and visits for business, professional and domestic purposes, as well as for holidays and recreation. Tourism helps to create and support employment; generate local income; and also to enhance the image of an area as a place to live, work and invest.

5.210 Ashford's Corporate Plan (2015- 2020) identifies one of its key priorities is to have a borough that 'recognises the value of tourism and the benefits its brings to our towns, villages and the borough as a whole.

5.211 The council's tourism review revealed that the Ashford Borough in relation to other Kent districts continued to perform well in terms of visitor numbers, spend and tourism related employment.

[12] What constitutes a 'substantial period of time' and 'reasonable terms' will depend on prevailing market conditions, but as a guidance less than six months is likely to be inappropriate and the terms on offer should compare with other similar premises and locations being let or sold for retail use. The extent of marketing carried out will be an important factor.

5.212 Trends in tourism constantly change, but if new tourism development is to have a positive overall impact, it needs to be properly managed and planned for. More 'sustainable tourism' can only be achieved by making sure that new initiatives respect the character of an area and major development is located where there is public transport access. Poorly controlled tourist development can damage the character of the environment that attracts tourists in the first instance.

5.213 Ashford has the benefit of a good accommodation base in terms of range and quality of bed spaces and is ideally located to attract both UK and overseas visitors. The proximity of the Channel Tunnel and the location of the International Station, with its high speed links to the continent and London, means that Ashford is uniquely placed to benefit from an increase in overseas and domestic visitors. The fact that Canterbury, Rochester and major attractions such as Leeds Castle and Sissinghurst Gardens are nearby also mean that Ashford is a natural centre for tourism. Ashford's unspoilt 'Garden of England' countryside with its picturesque villages, large number of listed buildings, its small, but important range of museums, its quality attractions and the 'honeypot' of Tenterden, add to the appeal. The urban areas of Ashford and Tenterden Towns, as well as the large areas of surrounding countryside make a valuable contribution to the current tourism offer in the Borough, as well as providing for future opportunities to expand and enhance the offer.

5.214 There are a number of planned tourism facilities proposed in Ashford Borough, which will continue to improve Ashford's attraction as a tourist destination. For example, planning permission has been granted for an International Model Railway Exhibition Centre, and Chapel Down Winery is planning to open a state of the art brewery and visitor attraction on Victoria Road in Ashford.

5.215 The following policy seeks to retain existing facilities and support the development of new tourism facilities in appropriate locations.

Policy EMP11 -Tourism

The Council will support the retention of existing tourism facilities and encourage sustainable growth of tourism through the provision of a wide variety of new facilities.

Proposals for new hotel and B&B development will be permitted in locations that are accessible by a choice of modes of transport and will be particularly encouraged in the Ashford urban area.

Proposals for conference and exhibition facilities in Ashford town centre, potentially in association with a hotel development, will be supported subject to other Local Plan policies.

SECTION C - TRANSPORT

5.216 Ensuring that an effective and sustainable transport network is delivered and maintained in the borough is important in an environmental, economic and social context and is a key objective of this Local Plan. As part of its preparation, the Council have liaised with Highways England, the County Council and bus providers. Continued liaison will be needed throughout the life of the Plan to ensure that a joined up and holistic approach is achieved.

5.217 The Council understands that private cars are and will remain an important and necessary part of everyday life in the Borough and this is reflected in car ownership levels - levels which are expected to increase over the next few years and beyond. This is particularly a factor for the Borough given its large and rural nature. Significant traffic movements are also generated by workers, either through commuting to their jobs or travelling as part of their jobs and also by those visiting the town centre to cater for their everyday retail and leisure needs.

5.218 The future development levels as set out in the Local Plan will further add to traffic movements on the road network. This will require interventions on the strategic road network to make sure that it has capacity and the overall flow of movements is maintained and also policies to ensure that the range of small local roads and lanes that form much of the Borough's attractive rural character are protected from too much or unsuitable traffic movements. Increased levels of development also necessitate a need to deal with issues of public parking including park and ride.

5.219 This overall approach needs to be balanced with one that also encourages alternative modes of travel wherever possible. Public transport in the form of rail and bus travel can significantly reduce carbon emissions and ease congestion on the road network, whereas cycling and walking achieves this aim with the added benefit of promoting a healthier lifestyle.

Junction 10a

M20 Junction 10 / 10a

5.220 For many years, the availability of junction capacity at this key node on the strategic highway network has been a constraint on delivering the full potential for growth to the south and east of Ashford. The need for additional capacity was highlighted in the South of Ashford Transport Study (SATS) in 1999 with a programme of measures including an interim improvement to Junction 10 and, subsequently, a new 'Junction 10a' forming part of a strategic solution.

5.221 The existing M20 Junction 10 was improved in 2007 to provide some additional motorway capacity that has enabled development to be released over the last 10 years but even the upgraded junction does not have sufficient capacity to serve all committed and planned development to the end of this Plan period. Over the last decade, the Council has controlled the release of new developments in this area to ensure that the existing junction does not become at risk of over-capacity with consequent queueing back along the slip roads onto the live motorway.

5.222 This constraint has been recognised in the Core Strategy (2008) and the Urban Sites & Infrastructure DPD (2012) and has informed the Council's approach to the allocation and phasing of development sites but it is accepted that the delivery of new junction capacity is fundamental to the realisation of the Council's growth strategy as set out in this Local Plan.

5.223 To this end, Highways England (HE) are currently drawing up an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for a new all-movements, grade separated motorway junction site 700 metres east of the existing Junction 10 with a link road back to the existing A2070 Bad Munstereifel Road. At the time of drafting this Plan, it is expected that the DCO will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate this summer.

5.224 Thereafter, HE anticipates the granting of a DCO in Autumn 2017 with a start of construction to follow soon after, leading to a completion date in Spring 2019. Completion of the junction and associated link road will resolve any strategic junction capacity constraints on proposed allocations in this Plan but prior to this time, the management of development releases by the Council will need to continue.

5.225 In this respect, the Council proposes a pragmatic response based around a realistic assessment of the risk of the existing Junction 10 interchange becoming severely overloaded. It is accepted that until HE obtain a DCO for the Junction 10a scheme, there is a risk that the scheme may be delayed or even fail. Therefore, up to this point, it would not be prudent for the Council to accept the release of additional development that would add to the existing committed and proposed traffic at the junction.

5.226 However, once a DCO is granted, this should enable the works to proceed and construction of the new junction to commence. At this point, the Council considers that the risk of the junction scheme not progressing significantly reduces and should allow a limited amount of additional development to be brought forward. Initially, this will be based on the amount of committed and proposed development assumed to be accommodated by the existing Junction 10 that would not be likely to be occupied by the expected opening date of Junction 10a. It will also take into account the likely traffic generation at junction 10 given the distribution of trips on the strategic network and realistic modal split assumptions contained within individual site Transport Assessments.

5.227 This approach shall also take account of the practical likelihood of development being able to be occupied prior to the completion of Junction 10a given the presence of other infrastructure constraints, market conditions and development lead-in times in order that any available capacity is utilised by developers most able to construct and occupy. The Council will impose appropriate Grampian-style conditions on grants of planning permission for relevant sites to ensure development releases are controlled prior to the completion of Junction 10a.

Developer contributions to M20 Junction 10a

5.228 The funding package for the Junction 10a scheme includes £16m of 'developer funding' (of a total of c.£80m). In recent years, the Council has levied proportionate developer contributions to a package of transport-related measures in the south Ashford area through Section 106 Agreements based on SPG6 (insert title) which was most recently updated in 2004. This has included an element of funding to be used for the delivery of a future 'Junction 10a' scheme.

5.229 The bringing into force of the S106 pooling restrictions in the CIL Regulations in April 2014 now means that the Council cannot use Section 106 Agreements as a mechanism for levying future developer contributions for Junction 10a, so instead it is proposed that, where new developments meet the qualifying tests in SPG6, contributions based on the SPG6 formula will be levied through a Section 278 Agreement between the developer and HE.

5.230 However, once Junction 10a has been completed, the opportunity to levy contributions from new S278 Agreements will cease. At this stage, should further contributions be required to make up the £16m developer funding target, a proportion of CIL receipts from new developments will be utilised for this purpose. This scenario is likely to trigger a formal review of the Council's CIL Charging Schedule.

5.231 In order to ensure full funding is in place in advance of delivery of the scheme, the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) has agreed to forward fund the full £16m developer contribution element on the basis that this is repaid from developer contributions over the Local Plan period.

5.232 Several strategic sites allocated in this Local Plan will be expected to make financial contributions to the delivery of the Junction 10a scheme and this is reflected in the site specific policies. The nature of the contribution will be determined by whether planning permission is granted before or after the completion of Junction 10a.

Other strategic projects

M20 Junction 9 / Drovers roundabout

5.233 On the western side of Ashford, M20 Junction 9 provides from the motorway network to a number of strategic development sites in the town. Both Junction 9 and the nearby Drovers roundabout that provides into the town centre and to the A20 and A28 were recently upgraded in 2011 through forward funding by the HCA (SEEDA at the time) to create additional capacity to serve the proposed Chilmington urban extension to the south-west and other future development opportunities in this part of the town.

5.234 Some Section 106 Agreements have been secured for developer contributions to refund the expenditure on these improvements but there is scope for the proposed allocation at Eureka Park in this Plan to also make a proportionate financial contribution to aid this repayment. The Council will also consider whether any further significant development proposals that would rely on the capacity at Junction 9 and / or the Drovers roundabout should also make a proportionate financial contribution.

Pound Lane Link Road

5.235 The broad location of the Pound Lane Link Road is shown on the Policies Map as a new strategic, single-carriageway link road from Pound Lane to the roundabout at the entrance to the Park Farm development. The creation of this link road is critical to the full delivery of the proposed allocation at Court Lodge Farm (policy S3) but will also provide the opportunity for an additional strategic vehicular link for traffic from the Chilmington urban extension (to the west) to the A2070 trunk road and M20 Junction 10/10a.

5.236 The delivery of this link road will provide relief from existing and future traffic generation from the Chilmington development on parts of the rural road network (notably Magpie Hall Road) and existing local residential estate roads in the Knights Park and Brisley Farm areas.

5.237 The proposed Link road crosses the functional floodplain in parts and full liaison with the Environment Agency will be needed to ensure that full mitigation is delivered as part of the scheme design. The Council owns land in this area and it would be physically feasible to construct the link road on land within the Council's ownership, although this would result in a sub-optimal scheme in terms of highway design and impact on neighbouring residents. Consequently, third party land is ideally required to deliver this scheme recognising that such land has minimal development value given its floodplain status.

5.238 The Council, in association with KCC, will seek to acquire the necessary rights to deliver the preferred route of the Link road although the option to use Compulsory Purchase powers if necessary will be entertained. As yet, there is not a fully designed and costed scheme but in principle it is proposed to fund the delivery of the scheme through a combination of site specific Section 106 or 278 Agreements and other public sector funding sources.

A28 dualling and Chart Road improvements

5.239 The A28 dualling and Chart Road improvement scheme includes changing the A28 into two lanes of traffic each way between the to be improved 'Tank' and 'Matalan' roundabouts and will also provide for improvements to junctions on to this new strategic corridor. The scheme will cater for the development at Chilmington Green, providing for improved capacity and safety in this area and relieve congestion and journey times.

5.240 The business case was approved at the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's board in February 2016 and Local Government Funding of £10.2 million has been approved for release. The remaining £23m funding cost of the scheme is being provided for by Kent County Council and the development consortium for Chilmington Green. The outline design is now complete with minor work being carried out on issues raised through public engagement.

Ring road junction improvements

5.241 In response to various current residential and commercial development proposals within the Town Centre area, a series of improvements to the junctions around the former Ring Road are needed. Kent County Council Highways are current designing these improvements and it is anticipated that developments will make proportionate contributions towards the key junctions either side of the Beaver Road bridge. This will facilitate early release of new developments that are fundamental to the growth and development of the town centre and its attractiveness as a location for new investment.

Policy TRA1 - Strategic Transport Schemes

The Council will seek the implementation of highway and other strategic schemes that will remove serious impediments to growth and/or secure important environmental benefits. These include a new motorway junction (Junction 10a), the Pound Lane link road, the A28 dualling and Chart Road improvements and measures to improve the former Ring Road junctions.

Where development of a site includes part of an identified strategic scheme, land will be reserved for the route of facility as part of the design of the proposal. Proposals which undermine the delivery of a strategic transport scheme will not be supported.

Public Parking Facilities Serving The Town Centre

5.242 The availability of publically available car parking has a major influence on the means of transport chosen and is also recognised as being crucial to ensuring new development is successful. The Commercial Quarter (policy S1) in particular envisages a significant amount of new office space which requires adequate parking nearby to ensure commercial terms can be achieved and space can be successfully let, at least in its initial stages.

5.243 The Parking Study that supports this Local Plan set out the need for new town centre parking to partly replace existing car parks and partly to cater for additional demand from new development (some of which relates to development that is subject to extant planning approval). It also explored the merits of a Park and Ride Facility on the outskirts of the town.

5.244 The Study highlighted that that the town centre currently has enough vacant car parking spaces to cater for current and future demand. However, this position was caveated in that not all of these spaces are truly available in practice as many were located on the periphery of the town centre in relatively inaccessible locations and therefore it is questionable how attractive these spaces are for short stay users. Also, a number of vacant spaces are also housed in either car parks that are privately run, meaning the Council has little control over operations, or at Edinburgh Road and Vicarage Lane Car Parks - publically owned car parks which have the potential to be suitable locations for redevelopment in the longer term but which play a key role in supporting the town centre at the current time.

5.245 In light of the above, the Study recognised that a flexible approach to parking was needed, one which can best respond to development as it comes forward in a way that caters for both the needs of long stay and short stay users.

Elwick Place

5.246 Elwick Place will become a significant new retail and leisure destination in the Town Centre through the delivery of a new multi-screen cinema and hotel and a number of new restaurants. A new public car park that will provide for an additional 280 car parking spaces will also be delivered. Not only will this car park cater for the retail and leisure development at Elwick Place, it will also become a key facility that supports growth in the wider town centre and also provide flexibility in the parking stock.

Multi Storey Car Parks

5.247 In Ashford town centre, delivering new multi-storey car parks (MSCPs) has been a long held aspiration of the Council and it remains a valid one. New MSCPs will provide the opportunity to redevelop some of the Town Centre's existing surface level car parks - highly accessible and sustainable brownfield sites - through the decanting of spaces to new MSCPs. In order to be successful, MSCPs generally need to be located in accessible locations near to shops and leisure facilities and in doing so tend to cater for the shorter term parking demand. They also need to be clean, attractive and provide a sense of safety for its users.

5.248 In the Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2010), land was allocated to deliver two MSCPs at Victoria Road and New Street by 2020. These were both required to meet the needs generated by significant levels of planned retail and leisure development, envisaged to come forward by 2020.

5.249 This Local Plan is not proposing to deliver such large scale of development in the Town Centre. Nevertheless, MSCP provision is still seen as an important component of meeting parking needs in the longer term to respond to development coming forward. Although not allocated in this Local Plan, land at Victoria Road close to the pedestrian bridge over the railway lines remains a suitable and practical location for such a facility given its excellent accessibility to the core of the town centre area. Discussions are ongoing with the developers here for such provision to be secured. In addition, policy S1 of this Local Plan identifies land within the Commercial Quarter for the delivery of a new MSCP (of around 400 - 600 spaces), on land largely owned by the Council.

5.250 Although MSCPs tend to best serve short stay users, it is highly likely that they will also partially meet long stay demands, especially as new commercial development starts coming forward in the town centre, until such time that a new park and ride facility is operational which can cater for this demand in a more sustainable way.

5.251 Should a MSCP be delivered, the Council may then wish to pursue the redevelopment of some its existing car parking stock in the Town Centre. These proposals will need to demonstrate that there is spare capacity in existing public parking stock serving the town centre, that is currently operational or which will be provided elsewhere as part of the redevelopment. This may include provision at a Park and Ride facility, particularly for the longer term spaces.

Park and Ride

5.252 The Council considers that Park and Ride is an important component of its longer term parking strategy, particularly to support new office development in the town centre. In light of this, a Park and Ride facility is safeguarded at Chilmington Green through the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (not superseded by this Local Plan) and at the Warren.

5.253 At this time, accepting that there is no Park and Ride facility serving Ashford Town Centre, evidence from the council's discussions with the commercial office developers demonstrate an unwillingness to provide a parking solution that doesn't provide for dedicated parking spaces on-site (or nearby) as this is what the majority of potential tenants desire. This view reflects the fact that the market for new offices in the town centre is currently fragile and such

schemes carry significant risks to the developers, so they need to present an attractive package to potential tenants.

5.254 In the medium to longer term, it is anticipated that the new office sector in the town centre will thrive and in doing so become a less risky and more desirable investment for the market. In such circumstances, the values secured through the delivery of office accommodation in the town centre will rise substantially and this will result in Park and Ride becoming a more desirable and cost effective option of securing parking space to support new development. In turn this will drive demand and patronage that would financially underpin the operation of a Park & Ride service. Combined, this may allow for a more restrictive 'on-site' parking policy to be implemented by the Council in the town centre with a view of incentivising park and ride. This issue will be revisited as part of a formal review of this Local Plan. Given this aspiration, it is prudent for the option of a Park and Ride facility at the Warren to be maintained in this Local Plan.

5.255 In the meantime, the Council intends to use CIL receipts to help deliver both the MSCP and Park and Ride provision as set out in this section.

Policy TRA2 - Strategic Public Parking Facilities

The Council will prioritise the delivery of four strategic public parking facilities by 2030 in the form of:

- **two multi-storey car parks, at Victoria Road (indicative capacity 300 spaces) and at the Commercial Quarter (indicative capacity 400 - 600 spaces); and,**
- **two Park and Ride facilities at Chilmington Green and at the Warren (indicative capacity 800 spaces).**

Proposals which would prejudice the ability to deliver these facilities on a viable basis will be refused unless it has been agreed with the Borough Council that the facility is either no longer required or the alternative provision of the same amount of parking spaces can be delivered in a suitable location.

Residential and Non-residential Parking Standards

Residential

5.256 The NPPF allows Local Planning Authorities to set their own parking standards, providing that issues of local car ownership levels, accessibility, the nature and type of the development and the desire to reduce carbon emissions are taken into account.

5.257 Ashford Borough is a large and diverse borough with extensive rural areas in addition to Ashford town itself which has seen significant expansion over the last decades. A single approach to the provision of car parking is not appropriate for all developments coming forward across the borough during the plan period. This 'zonal' approach to parking standards has been part of the Council's approach for a number of years since the Residential Parking and Design Guidance SPD (2010) was first produced that set out the quantum and design of parking provision in new housing development in the borough.

5.258 The approach taken in this SPD has proved useful, robust and clear for all parties and has helped to deliver adequate parking spaces to support development in a way that delivers better quality places and environments which is a key aspiration of the Local Plan. As part of the preparation of this Local Plan the Council have revisited the standards in the SPD and revised them slightly in the 'suburban' and 'rural' areas by promoting slightly higher minimum parking standards for certain types of residential uses. This is considered to better reflect market demand and car ownership levels (now and future trends).

5.259 For the town centre area (as identified under policy SP4) - and within the central areas of larger developments - a more significant change is now proposed. Here the Local Plan now advocates a minimum parking standard of 1 space per residential unit. This standard takes account of local circumstances including car ownership data (and future assumptions), historic problems of insufficient parking facilities in central areas and ensures that sufficient parking spaces are delivered to support development in this location.

5.260 For the avoidance of doubt, the policy below supersedes the standards set out in the 2010 SPD apart from the standards set out for visitor provision. Here the SPD standards should still be used. In addition, the design and layout guidance contained within the existing SPD remains valid and should be reflected in proposals coming forward.

Non-residential

5.261 For non-residential development the Council has, in common with other Local Planning Authorities in Kent, relied on the advice of Kent County Council and the maximum standards contained in KCC SPG4. These standards have generally proved appropriate for this borough. However, local instances of residential areas being used as overflow car parks for adjoining employment uses are of concern. It is therefore considered important that the policies of this Local Plan do not, as far as is possible, cause a repeat of such problems, which are, on the whole, connected with insufficient provision of parking for the operational stages of commercial developments, and the levying of charges on employee parking. In addition, the expansion of Permitted Development Rights for premises in commercial use and the impact of changes of occupiers, with resultant different staffing and operational arrangements, has exacerbated such problems.

5.262 To ensure the delivery of maximum parking provision in new non-residential developments in the borough over the Plan period, and to reduce opportunities for commercial developments to deliver fewer spaces than the maximum, Policy TRA3(b) sets the maximum standard of SPG4 as *the* standard for non-residential development in the borough (ie neither a maximum or a minimum). Controlled Parking Zones are also supported as an option for the Council to address specific problems with overspill commercial car parking into residential areas should these occur.

5.263 Both residential and non-residential parking standards are included within the Policy itself to provide clarity.

5.264 With all parking standards it is important to allow for flexibility in their application in order to allow for site specific issues to be taken into account. The policy below therefore provides clarification as to circumstances where departures from the proposed standards could be justified.

Policy TRA3 (a) - Parking Standards for Residential Development

Proposals for residential development within the town centre area identified on the Policies Map or within 'central areas' of larger developments shall deliver a minimum parking standard of 1 space per residential unit on average. It is expected that all of this provision should be delivered on-site.

Proposals for residential development elsewhere shall achieve the following minimum parking standards:

'SUBURBAN LOCATION'
1 BED FLAT OR HOUSE 1 SPACE PER UNIT
2 BED FLAT OR HOUSE 2 SPACES PER UNIT
3 BED DWELLING 2 SPACES PER UNIT
4 BED HOUSE 3 SPACES PER UNIT
'RURAL LOCATION'
1 BED FLAT OR HOUSE 1 SPACE PER UNIT
2 BED FLAT OR HOUSE 2 SPACES PER UNIT
3 BED DWELLINGS 2 SPACES PER UNIT
4 BED HOUSE 3 SPACES PER UNIT

Parking to support residential development within the Borough shall follow the design, layout and accessibility guidance contained within the Council's Residential Parking SPD.

Policy TRA3 (b) - Parking Standards for Non Residential Development

Proposals for non-residential developments within the Borough shall provide parking facilities to the following parking standards:

A1 Food retail up to 1,000m2	**1 space per 18m2**
A1 Food retail of 1,000 m2 and over	**1 space per 14m2**
A1 Non-food retail	**1 space per 25m2**
A2 use class	**1 space per 20m2**
A3 use class	**1 space per 6m2***
A4 use class	**1 space per 10m2***
A5 use class	**1 space per 8m2***
B1 office use (up to 500m2)	**1 space per 20m2**
B1 office use (up to 2,500m2)	**1 space per 25m2**
B1 office use (2,500m2 and over)	**1 space per 30m2**
B1 High tech/ research/light	**1 space per 35m2**

industrial.

B2 use class	**1 space per 50m2**
B8 Storage and distribution	**1 space per 110m2**
B8 Wholesale Trade	**1 space per 35m2**
Hotels	**1 space per bedroom**

These use classes are also required to deliver 1 space per 2 staff in addition to the standard set out above.

All floorspace references in this table refer to gross external floorspace.

In exceptional cases, the Council may require proposals to depart from the standards in policies TRA3 (a) or TRA3 (b) if any of the following apply:-

a. **A bespoke parking standard is included as part of site specific policy within this Local Plan that seeks to take into account specific local circumstances in that area;**
b. **In order to take account of specific local circumstances that may require a higher or lower level of parking provision, including as a result of the development site's accessibility to public transport, shops and services, highway safety concerns and local on-street parking problems;**
c. **Where an operator or potential occupier requires either more or less parking spaces to cater for their specific operational needs, such requirements can be clearly evidenced and where their presence has wider planning benefits,**
d. **Where the proposed use can reasonably rely on the availability of public off-street car parking spaces that are nearby;**
e. **To ensure the successful restoration, refurbishment and re-use of listed buildings or buildings affecting the character of a conservation area;**
f. **To allow the appropriate re-use of the upper floors of buildings in town centres or above shop units;**
g. **Should independently verified viability evidence demonstrate that achieving the minimum parking standard identified would render the scheme unviable and that there are overriding planning benefits to justify that the development should proceed.**

Where appropriate, the Council will pursue the use of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) to support the wider strategy for the management of on-street parking, in line with the approach outlined in this policy.

Bus provision

5.265 Providing a frequent, fast and high quality bus service can greatly improve bus patronage and in turn provide a viable service. In the past the Council - in liaison with the County Council and bus operators - has been successful in levering funds from the developers to support local bus provision.

5.266 In the urban area, the bus service is relatively frequent and efficient, connecting the outskirts of the town with the town centre. However enhancements will be necessary to this network to ensure that it continues to offer a realistic alternative to private car trips where possible. Particular enhancements will be targeted towards key projects in and around Ashford town centre or on the key radial routes into the town centre, as this remains the key destination of the local bus network and where investment should therefore be prioritised.

5.267 In the rural area, the bus service is less frequent which reflects both its size and nature but also the difficulties in providing a viable service here. However this provision provides a vital service for many residents in the rural area who do not have access to a car. Therefore, proportionate enhancements should be secured to deliver the most sustainable service possible in this location.

5.268 The enhancements needed will be determined in agreement with the County Council and bus operators and will be secured either through S106 contributions, where they relate to more localised projects, or site specific enhancements, or CIL monies where they relate to more strategic enhancements. The scale and timing of any contribution will be agreed between the relevant parties with a view of ensuring that the attractiveness of the bus service is maximised where possible.

5.269 The enhancements that will be sought could include the delivery of bus priority measures, the provision of new or alteration/expansion of existing routes and services, contributions towards bus-related infrastructure and operational subsidy for the service in the early years of a development.

5.270 The Infrastructure Plan that supports this Local Plan identifies bus priority measures necessary to deliver better access for bus services to the town centre. However, it is recognised that as new schemes come forward over the Plan period, new projects will be identified in order to ensure that a sustainable bus network in the Borough is maintained, as far as is practical. S106 contributions will be secured to help deliver these projects as appropriate.

Policy TRA4 - Promoting the local bus network

The Council, in liaison with the County Council, will seek enhancements to the local bus network in order to meet the additional demands created by new development as it comes forward. These enhancements could include the delivery of bus priority measures, the provision of a new service or the alteration/expansion of an existing service, contributions towards bus-related infrastructure and operational subsidy for the service in the early years of occupation of the development.

Where S106 contributions are sought, their scale and timing shall be agreed by the borough and county council following consultation with relevant bus operators, prior to the granting of planning permission.

Pedestrians

5.271 The ease with which people can move in and around places is an important part of promoting non-car based travel and also supporting local shops and services. This can give a place a sense of vibrancy and establish its character. Delivering safe and accessible pedestrian routes

within new developments and between new developments and existing facilities is also important for people's wellbeing, their and promoting healthy lifestyles.

5.272 More strategic pedestrian routes including the use of existing public rights of way should be retained where possible and the opportunities to deliver better linkages around Ashford and from the periphery to the town centre will be explored.

Policy TRA5 - Planning for Pedestrians
Development proposals shall demonstrate how safe and accessible pedestrian access and movement routes will be delivered and how they will connect to the wider movement network.

Cycling

5.273 The Council is committed to increasing cycle usage in the borough as a sustainable means of transport that also contributes to healthier lifestyles.

5.274 Ashford has a well developed network of cycleways that run through the town that have been delivered over recent years many of which link to the quiet rural lanes around the town and in the rest of the borough that are suitable for cycling. In addition, sections of off-road cycleway have been provided in the rural area, notably at Godmersham to Chilham and in Tenterden. Recent monitoring indicates that the use of the routes for cycling in the Ashford urban area has increased significantly, particularly as a means to access the domestic and international railway stations.

5.275 The network has been delivered principally via the following means:

- National Cycle Route 18 has been designated and runs through the urban area and links with the wider county wide strategic cycleway network
- The green corridor network in the urban area provides a comprehensive, primarily riverside, set of cycleway routes that converge in the town centre and provide a direct access to the railway stations. The long-standing green corridor policy has helped to deliver improvements to the cycleway network through the delivery of specific green corridor projects and via the requirement that developments adjoining the green corridor being required to make a contribution to improvements within the green corridor;
- The Council's Cycling Strategy was approved in 2011 and sets out a series of network improvements projects to be delivered over the lifetime of the Strategy. the Council is committed to reviewing and revising that Strategy;
- New developments have been required to deliver cycleways within the development areas and to make links to the wider network in the town;
- Substantial improved cycle parking provision has been provided at the Ashford domestic railway station

Policy TRA6 - Provision for Cycling

The Council will seek to improve conditions for cyclists through the following measures:-

- **Promoting and developing a Borough-wide network of cycle routes;**
- **Developments should, where opportunities arise, include safe, convenient and attractively designed cycle routes, including, where possible, connection to the Borough-wide cycle network.**
- **Promoting and providing cycle parking facilities in town centres, at railway stations and at major public buildings, and requiring new development to provide cycle parking facilities in agreement with the Council;**

Impact on the local road network

5.276 The roads within the Borough can be classified as follows:

- ***Primary routes:*** These roads form the primary network for the Borough as a whole. All long distance vehicle movements between the main settlements in the Borough and beyond the Borough should be targeted towards these routes as they have the most capacity and have been designed to accommodate proportionately more traffic movements than other routes.
- ***Secondary routes:*** These roads distribute traffic within residential and commercial areas of the Borough's settlements and include many rural roads which link some of the smaller settlements to the primary network. Much of the borough is made up of these routes which greatly contribute to its attractive and rural character.
- ***Local distributors:*** These roads distribute traffic within neighbourhoods. The form the link between secondary distributors and access roads.
- ***Access roads:*** These road give direct access to buildings and land within neighbourhood.

5.277 Within the context of the NPPF and its desire to deliver sustainable development, most of the traffic generated by development should be targeted towards the primary and secondary route network in the borough. Other routes should not be subject to inappropriate levels of traffic generation or unsuitable traffic movements.

Policy TRA7 - The Road Network and Development

Developments that would generate significant traffic movements must be well related to the primary and secondary road network and this should have adequate capacity to accommodate the development. New accesses and intensified use of existing accesses onto the primary or secondary road network will not be permitted if a materially risk of road traffic accidents or significant traffic delays would be likely to result.

In rural area, proposals which would generate levels and types of traffic movements, including heavy goods vehicle traffic, beyond that which the rural roads could reasonably accommodate in terms of capacity and road safety will not be permitted.

Assessing transport needs

5.278 Travel plans, assessments and statements are all ways of assessing and mitigating the negative transport impacts of development in order to ensure that sustainable development is delivered.

5.279 The Planning Practice Guidance effectively sets out that there is a hierarchy of evidence that is needed to support a planning application, depending on its scale and likely transport impact. Transport Statements should be used where development has a limited transport impact. Transport Assessment should be used where more impact is likely and that mitigation measures are probably needed. Travel Plans are required when long term management strategies are needed to deal with significant transport impact. For development that has no significant transport impact in that they don't generate significant amounts of movement then no statement, assessment or plan is required.

5.280 Where appropriate, the Council will liaise with the relevant transport authorities in relation to what sort of evaluation is needed when a planning application is submitted. Should a proposal fall within a designated neighbourhood plan area then liaison with the relevant neighbourhood body will also take place.

Policy TRA8 - Travel Plans, Assessments and Statements

Planning applications will be supported by either a Transport Statement, a Transport Assessment or a Travel Plan depending on the nature and scale of the proposal and the level of significant transport movements generated. Where appropriate, the Council will liaise with the relevant authority in relation to what sort of evidence is required.

The approach to Heavy Goods Vehicles

5.281 The Borough lies in a strategic position in the South East of England and the town of Ashford lies at the confluence of key railway routes and the main highway route to the Channel Tunnel and Dover - the busiest ferry port in the UK. This, combined with the increase of more distribution reliant industries means that the movement of lorries will increase over the plan period.

5.282 In response the Local Plan provides a policy framework to cater for this increase in movements so they can be suitably planned for, where those issues are relevant to planning and where the Council remain the determining authority for planning applications. Specifically, this Local Plan allocates provision for a doubling in size of the existing overnight lorry park at Waterbrook (policyS15) to around 600 spaces.

5.283 Otherwise, proposals that generate significant HGV parking shall be expected to take into account the location, the nature of the proposed use and the impact on the local road network. Proposals will need to be supported by evidence which can demonstrate that the:

- scheme provides HGV parking to at least meet the Highway Authority's adopted standards (currently in KCC SPG4 - Kent Vehicle Parking Standards (July 2006). These should be provided on-site or in any communal HGV parking area. Parking on

the public highway will not be regarded as a means of meeting HGV parking standards;
- size of the site is large enough to cater for the HGV movements envisaged, including space for loading and unloading and adequate turning circles on site so that the public highway is not needed to serve these functions as this can lead to unnecessary congestion and safety issues;
- movement and operations of any HGVs is limited to suitable times;

5.284 The Council will liaise with the relevant highway authority to ensure that the measures put in place at the planning application stage are adhered to. Where needed, the Council will use its enforcement powers should there be any breach of planning permission.

Policy TRA9 - Planning for HGV movement

Proposals which generate significant heavy goods vehicle (HGV) movements will only be supported where the use is acceptable in planning terms, and:-

a. **sufficient HGV parking spaces are provided in a way that is consistent with the Highways Authority's adopted standards and where possible exceeded, unless exceptional circumstances dictate a departure from these standards in line with policy TRA3(b) above;**
b. **the size and layout of the site is sufficient to accommodate HGV movements and parking in a way that does not lead to the public highway being used for either purpose; and,**
c. **HGV movements are limited to appropriate times of operation given the context of the site.**

SECTION D - THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

5.285 This section of the Local Plan 2030 provides the policy framework for the promotion, enhancement and protection of both the natural environment, including its biodiversity and geological interests, landscapes, green corridors, informal open space, water resources and opportunities for harnessing renewable energy, and the built heritage of the Borough, including its wealth of listed buildings, conservation areas and other heritage assets. The section is split into three main sections.

Biodiversity and Landscape

5.286 Green infrastructure plays an important role in supporting other policy areas of this Plan. By helping to create high quality environments which are attractive to businesses and investors it can drive economic growth and regeneration, deliver quality of life benefits and enhanced opportunities for recreation, social interaction and play in new and existing residential areas. Well-designed and managed green infrastructure can reinforce and enhance local landscape character, assist in halting the decline in biodiversity and mitigate the impact of climate change. In England, green infrastructure issues are dealt with through a combination of the planning system and legislation (European and national[13]).

5.287 The conserving and enhancing of the natural environment is one of the 'core planning principles' of the NPPF (para 17). It encourages (para 109) the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils. It also seeks to minimise the impact on biodiversity and encourages net gains in biodiversity through the establishment of coherent ecological networks wherever possible.

5.288 Formal open spaces (such as sports pitches) also contribute to the wider 'green' offer within the Borough and are covered in the community infrastructure section of this Plan.

Water and Climate Change

5.289 The NPPF expects a pro-active approach against climate change and states that adapting to, and mitigating against, the effects of climate change are core planning principles.

5.290 The NPPF identifies expectations to improve energy efficiency in new development in terms of decentralised energy and sustainable design, and ways of increasing the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy. It stresses the importance of addressing longer term factors such as flood risk, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.

5.291 This section of the Local Plan includes policies which will contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change, including through dealing with flood risk and water resources, requiring new development to incorporate sustainable design and mitigation measures, and promoting the use and development of renewable energy.

[13] Birds and Habitats Directives and Ramsar Convention (EU) / Water Framework Directive (EU) / Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 / Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 / Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 / Climate Change Act 2008 / The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 / Flood and Water Management Act 2010 / Localism Act 2011

The Historic Environment

5.292 Ashford Borough has a rich and varied heritage, with evidence of human settlement dating back to the Neolithic period. More recently, the long distance drovers and pilgrimage routes of the early medieval times, the Royal Military Canal of the Napoleonic period and the high speed national and international railway heritage of the 19th and 20th centuries, are evidence of the key role that the location of the Borough, at the convergence of strategic communication routes, has played in shaping its identity. The character and appearance of the Borough has also been strongly influenced by agriculture and by its rural setting, with a rich heritage of attractive villages, the market towns of Ashford and Tenterden, as well as distinctive oast houses, historic houses and gardens, many fine parish churches, water and windmills.

5.293 The Borough is home to over 2,300 listed buildings, the highest number among local authorities in Kent, and a significantly higher number of Grade I and Grade II* buildings than in other Kent districts. In addition the Borough has 43 Conservation Areas, 42 Scheduled Monuments and 6 Registered Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest, as well as a number of areas of known archaeological potential. Such buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest make a valuable contribution not only to the built and natural landscape but also to the leisure, education, tourism and economic vitality of the Borough and provide welcome opportunities for place-making and for guiding and stimulating regeneration.

Biodiversity and Landscape

Biodiversity

5.295 Ashford Borough enjoys an attractively diverse natural environment, and a green infrastructure network which supports significant areas of biodiversity interest and which delivers a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. It comprises a wide variety of landscapes and different geologies which extend from the North Downs to the Romney Marsh, with the Greensand Ridge, the Stour river valleys and extensive areas of the Weald in between. A significant proportion of the Borough is comprised of parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), the Kent Downs and the High Weald, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty.

5.296 The Borough is home to two designated sites of international significance for biodiversity, the Wye and Crundale Downs Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site which extends into an area in the south-eastern corner of the Borough between Appledore and Hamstreet. Under European legislation, the Council has a duty to ensure these sites are maintained in favourable conservation conditions and that they are afforded the greatest level of protection.

5.297 Nationally designated sites in the Borough include two National Nature Reserves, at Hamstreet Woods and Wye and Crundale Downs, and 20 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), comprising 57 SSSI units, which are of national importance on account of their biological or geological interest. These sites are legally protected by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These sites are therefore afforded a high level of protection in this Plan.

5.298 The Borough is also home to 83 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), formerly known as Sites of Nature Conservation Interest, and 3 Local Nature Reserves, the Ashford Green Corridor, Hothfield Common and Poulton Wood, Aldington. These sites are important elements of the borough's biodiversity assets and contribute to the promotion, preservation, restoration and re-creation of ecological networks. The Council therefore expects that they will be protected and enhanced in new development that arises during the lifetime of this Plan.

5.299 Recent years have seen a recognition that the planning system should, in addition to the protection of individual sites and species, move towards a more integrated landscape scale approach to improving biodiversity. In this regard, this Local Plan supports the aims and objectives of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy as they relate specifically to the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) of this Borough, to ensure that the priority habitats and species of each BOA are protected and enhanced in new development. Ashford Borough encompasses parts of 8 of Kent's BOAs, a reflection of its particularly diverse natural environment. Details of these BOAs are set out under Map 9 that supports this Local Plan.

5.300 These BOAs, together with the international, national and locally designated sites, including the Green Corridors, form the strategic Green Infrastructure Network of the Borough.

5.301 Alongside the conservation of existing habitats and species, the enhancement and integration of appropriate biodiversity into new developments can aid both the environmental sustainability of the scheme and deliver places which are more attractive in which to both live and work. Biodiversity measures may include the provision of open watercourse drainage systems, planting of native hedgerows, trees and woodland and the provision of bat and owl boxes and underpasses for mammals. These can provide important stepping stones for wildlife and ecosystems, as well as contributing to coherent ecological networks which can help to combat a decline in biodiversity.

5.302 In designating appropriate areas for development, the Local Plan has ensured that areas of international and national importance for their quality of biodiversity and landscape will not be directly adversely affected. The council will expect, and will work to ensure that all new development coming forward in the Borough will conserve or enhance local biodiversity and that unacceptable, harmful impacts on biodiversity and the natural environment will be avoided. Where this cannot be achieved to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority then appropriate mitigation measures will be required to be implemented.

Policy ENV1 - Biodiversity

Proposals that conserve or enhance biodiversity will be supported. Opportunities to incorporate and enhance biodiversity will be encouraged. In particular, development should take opportunities to help connect and improve the wider ecological networks.

Proposals should safeguard features of nature conservation interest and should include measures to retain, protect and enhance habitats, including BAP habitats, and networks of ecological interest, including ancient woodland, water features, ditches, dykes and hedgerows, as corridors and stepping stones for wildlife.

Development that will have an adverse effect on the integrity of European protected Sites, including the Wye and Crundale Special Area of Conservation and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Ramsar site, will not be permitted.

Development that will have an adverse effect on nationally designated sites, including the borough's Sites of Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves, will not be permitted unless the benefits, in terms of other objectives including overriding public interest, clearly outweigh the impacts on the special features of the site and broader nature conservation interests and there is no alternative acceptable solution.

Development should avoid significant harm to locally identified biodiversity assets, including Local Wildlife Sites and Nature Reserves and the Ashford Green Corridor as well as priority and locally important habitats and protected species. The protection and enhancement of the Ashford Green Corridor is one of the key objectives of the Plan and therefore all proposals coming forward within or adjoining the Ashford Green Corridor should comply with Policy ENV2 in the first instance.

Where harm to biodiversity assets cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation will be required on land that is suitably established prior to the commencement of the development and that can be managed in perpetuity. Normally any mitigation measures will be required to be delivered on-site, unless special circumstances dictate that an off-site model is more appropriate. A financial contribution - in lieu of mitigation - will only be considered in very exceptional circumstances.

Opportunities for the management, restoration and creation of habitats in line with the opportunities identified for the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) and targets set out in the Kent Biodiversity Strategy will be supported.

Green Corridor

5.303 The Green Corridor designation has been central to Ashford's planning strategy and approach to green infrastructure since it was adopted in the 1994 Local Plan. It comprises a connected network of largely green open areas that are predominantly located alongside the Great and East Stour rivers, the Aylesford Stream, and other watercourses which flow through Ashford's urban area. These riverside areas are largely undeveloped, due to being within the flood plain, and provide a unique opportunity for improving the quality of the urban environment. Visually, the Green Corridor provides welcome breaks in the built up areas

from the Town Centre and through the urban areas of Kennington, Willesborough, Kingsnorth, Singleton and South Ashford into the countryside beyond.

5.304 In addition to the rivers and riversides, the Green Corridor includes woodlands, orchards, ponds, lakes, nature reserves, meadows, play, leisure and recreation spaces. Its is a core element of Ashford's Green Infrastructure and offers multi-functional uses which create a number of environmental and quality of life benefits to the local community.

5.305 The Corridor promotes health and wellbeing, with a variety of open spaces both for active sports, gentle recreation and relaxation, and children's play. There is an excellent network of footpaths and cycleways throughout, including national cycle route 18, which are not just for recreational purposes but make a crucial contribution to day to day travel and transportation needs of commuting residents as most link to the town and train station. These movement networks provide a safe, traffic-free route and also reduce pollution.

5.306 As much of the Green Corridor is located within the flood zone it also acts as flood plain and water storage which prevents flooding, as well as being an important habitat for biodiversity. All along the green corridor highly valuable habitats for wildlife are found, providing an important network for the movement of wildlife through the urban areas, between designated nature sites and out towards the countryside. The Green Corridor falls within the Mid Kent Greensand and Gault Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). Much of the Green Corridor is also designated as Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and includes a number of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

5.307 Protection and enhancement of the Green Corridor is a key objective of this Local Plan. New development on land within the corridor will be strictly controlled to ensure that it retains the aspects that create the functional networks and other health, well-being and amenity benefits detailed above, and which will assist in delivering the targets for the Mid Kent Greensand and Gault BOA set out in the Kent Environment Strategy. Proposals within the Green Corridor that are directly related to, or ancillary to, the existing principal use of that section will be permitted, for example, where they enhance or improve an existing recreation, amenity or leisure use.

5.308 Development proposals that do not directly relate to the existing principal use but that would enhance the Green Corridor in other ways will be considered favourably, particularly if they are on brownfield land, are in accordance with a site specific policy in this Local Plan, or have been identified as a key project or opportunity area in the Green Corridor Action Plan. Proposals within the Green Corridor that create overriding planning benefits will be considered on their own merits.

5.309 The Green Corridor Action Plan 2016, which supports this Local Plan provides a detailed description of the value of each area of the current Green Corridor Network and identifies new areas for extension to the designation and proposes opportunity areas to be considered in the future for extensions (see Policies Map). The action plan outlines future enhancement projects and recommended maintenance, and provides information on priorities and estimated costs of the enhancements. Development proposals on land within and adjoining the Green Corridor should provide evidence that the development proposals have considered the Action Plan. Early liaison with key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency (where development is in close proximity to the rivers), Kent Stour Countryside Project (KSCP), who manage many of the Green Corridor projects and coordinate local volunteers, and other

relevant local nature or transport groups/organisations is recommended for all proposals within or adjoining the corridor.

5.310 All development proposals on land within or adjoining the Green Corridor designation must demonstrate that the proposal would not harm the overall environment, biodiversity value, visual amenity, movement networks or existing functions of the Green Corridor. All proposals must make a positive contribution to the Green Corridor in respect of its environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning and development on sites adjoining the corridor must also take into account its impacts on the setting.

Policy ENV2 - The Ashford Green Corridor

The protection and enhancement of Ashford's Green Corridor is a key objective.

Development proposals within the identified Corridor designation (and proposed extensions) will be permitted, providing that it is compatible with, or ancillary to, their principal open space use or other existing uses within them, and it can be demonstrated that the proposal would not harm the overall environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning of the Green Corridor.

Other forms of development proposals, including those relating to an existing use within the Green Corridor will not be permitted, unless it would be in accordance with a site specific policy in this Local Plan; or where it relates to a) the redevelopment of a suitable brownfield site or b) delivers overriding benefits, and in either scenario, that it can be demonstrated that there would be no significant harm to the overall environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning of the Green Corridor.

Development proposals on land adjoining the Green Corridor shall provide suitable access and links to the existing networks of the adjoining Green Corridor wherever possible; and make a positive contribution to the Green Corridor in respect of its environment, biodiversity, visual amenity, movement networks or functioning and its setting.

Development proposals must take into consideration the appraisals, projects and management recommendations set out for the specific areas in the Ashford Green Corridor Action Plan, including the identified proposed extension areas to the designation.

Landscape Character

5.311 Ashford Borough enjoys a rich variety of landscapes from the North Downs to the Romney Marsh with the Greensand Ridge, the Stour river valleys and extensive areas of the High Weald and Low Weald between. These provide important recreational resources for both residents and visitors, as well as forming the attractive setting for the towns and villages that make the Borough a special place to live.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

5.312 Large parts of the Borough lie within two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Kent Downs AONB and the High Weald AONB. The distinctive landscapes of these AONBs play an important role in defining the overall character of the Borough. The Council has a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of these designated landscapes. The NPPF requires that great weight (paragraph 115) is given to the conserving of the landscape and scenic beauty of AONBs and so, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF, major developments in these designated areas will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that they are in the public interest. All proposals within the AONBs must take account of the landscape character areas and policies of the appropriate AONB Management Plan and other relevant AONB Guidance.

Landscape Character Assessments

5.313 Where development is considered appropriate in principle it will be required to be designed in a way which complements the particular type of landscape in which it is located. Key characteristics and features that shape landscape character include :

1. Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage - the way in which development fits within the landscape can be determined by its relationship with the natural topography of the area. Particular landform features that contribute to the character of the landscape in that area (and their setting) should be protected. Views into and from a site will be a relevant factor in assessing the impact of a proposal. Developments should be planned around natural patterns of drainage and minimise the need to divert or block these.

2. The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands - trees and woodlands often constitute valuable features in a landscape by giving it definition and legibility. These features should normally be retained and protected. Similarly, the nature of the woodland may be a relevant factor in assessing the impact of a development on the character of the landscape.

3. The type and composition of wildlife habitats - the presence of wildlife itself within a landscape area can often contribute towards its attractiveness and its character by giving it activity and vibrancy. The identification and protection of habitat should be part of development proposals.

4. The pattern and composition of field boundaries - the size and definition of field boundaries may be a significant factor in giving a landscape its character. Development proposals should retain existing hedgerows and maintain the prevailing pattern of field boundaries and where appropriate the council shall seek the repair or replanting of damaged field boundaries.

5. The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths - The form and pattern of built development within the landscape provides the contrast with the natural countryside which together creates the overall character of the area. This may have evolved over many years or may be more recent but in either case, should be considered as a relevant factor in assessing the impact of development proposals.

6. The presence and pattern of historic landscape features - heritage landscape features are likely to play an important role in defining the character of the landscape. These features and their setting should be protected from new development that would adversely affect their integrity or views to or from them.

7. The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man-made features - the landscape character can also be defined in part by the local character of individual or groups of buildings. Where such buildings play an important role in the identification of landscape character, new development should take account of their scale, design and detailing.

5.314 The landscape character of the Borough has been extensively analysed in work carried out in two Landscape Studies. The findings of these Studies, which together define 44 Landscape Character Areas (LCAs) across the Borough outside of the two AONBs and the Ashford and Tenterden Urban Areas, are brought together and set out in detail in the Landscape Character SPD (2011). This document sets out clearly the key characteristics of each LCA. All proposals coming forward should have regard to this SPD, and to the guidance on landscape characteristics that it provides, so as to ensure that new development does not compromise or damage landscape character but instead contributes towards enhancing the character of the LCA in which the site is located.

5.315 Development proposals near to the boundary of a LCA should take account of any relevant landscape features or characteristics of the adjacent LCA in addition to that in which it is situated, in order to ensure that there would be no adverse impacts on the character of that area.

Policy ENV3 - Landscape Character and Design

The Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs will be given the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty. Major development proposals within the AONBs will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and where they are in the public interest. Other proposals within the AONBs will be permitted where the form, scale, materials and design would conserve and enhance the character of the landscape.

All proposals shall demonstrate particular regard to the following landscape characteristics:

a. **Landform, topography and natural patterns of drainage;**
b. **The pattern and composition of trees and woodlands;**
c. **The type and composition of wildlife habitats;**
d. **The pattern and composition of field boundaries;**
e. **The pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths;**
f. **The presence and pattern of historic landscape features;**
g. **The setting, scale, layout, design and detailing of vernacular buildings and other traditional man made features;**
h. **Any relevant guidance given in the Landscape Character SPD or an AONB Management Plan.**
i. **Existing features that are important to the local landscape character shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development.**

Dark Skies

5.316 Paragraph 125 of the NPPF identifies the importance of minimising the impact of light pollution, stating *'by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation'.*

5.317 This is of particular relevance to Ashford Borough as the rural areas in the southern part of the borough currently enjoy some of the darkest skies in the south east region, unaffected as yet by the effects of external lighting often brought on by development. The area around Woodchurch in particular, to the east of Tenterden, has been measured by global satellites as comprising one of the only areas in the county with no light detected. It therefore provides important opportunities for stargazing activity and meets the criteria for an 'intrinsically dark landscape' as described by the NPPF. This opportunity is currently being pursued by the Council, in partnership with the relevant Parish Councils and in close consultation with the Astronomical Society (a key and highly active part of the local voluntary sector within the Borough) to secure the designation of this area as a Dark Sky Zone.

5.318 In addition, much of the Kent Downs and High Weald AONBs currently enjoy low levels of light pollution, an important aspect of their landscape character and tranquility and one which it is therefore important to seek to conserve and enhance.

5.319 In all areas of the Borough, obtrusive external lighting can result in harm to residential amenity and to the diurnal rhythms of biodiversity. Light control is therefore a key planning consideration in all development proposals, with particular attention required to this aspect of development in the zones of darkest skies and existing low district brightness, as set out in the Ashford Dark Skies SPD (2014). In such zones, lighting should be the minimum needed for security or working purposes and should minimise the potential obtrusive light from glare or light trespass. Lighting proposals that would significantly affect areas of nature conservation importance, including National Nature Reserves, SSSIs and Local Wildlife Sites will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Policy ENV4 - Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies

All proposals will be expected to comply with the guidance and requirements set out in the Council's Dark Skies SPD (2014).

Proposals where external lighting is required should include a full lighting scheme that provides information about layout and beam orientation, a schedule of the light equipment proposed including luminaire type, mounting height, aiming angles and lumen unit levels. Proposals will be permitted provided that the lighting proposed is the minimum appropriate for its purpose, is designed such that lighting is directed downwards, with a beam angle below 70 degrees and that no significant adverse effects individually or cumulatively will result to the character of the area, the residential amenity of local residents, the safety of vehicle users and pedestrians or the diurnal rhythms of the Borough's biodiversity assets.

Within the area proposed to be designated as a 'dark sky zone', proposals will only be permitted where they adhere to the above requirements and where they can demonstrate that there will be no significant adverse effects on the visibility of the night sky or its intrinsically dark landscapes.

Protecting Important Rural Features

5.320 In addition to the many and varied elements that constitute landscape character, there are a number of specific features that are worthy of protection in their own right. Ancient and semi-natural woodlands are often not just important landscape features but provide a range of habitat and biodiversity value not found in other forms of woodland. The NPPF (paragraph 118) advises against the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees, unless the need for and benefits of the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. The protection of such important features of the Borough's landscapes which have long contributed to the quality and variety of the countryside here is an important objective that requires specific policy coverage.

5.321 The river corridors and tributaries that permeate the rural areas of the Borough also play an important role in defining the appearance and function of many parts of the Ashford countryside, including several villages. These corridors are important for floodwater storage and conveyance and safeguarded water quality and can play a variety of roles from recreational routes to wildlife habitats and therefore are considered worthy of protection from inappropriate development.

5.322 The Borough's rural lanes provide the means to travel around the countryside but are also distinctive features in their own right that have played a role in shaping the overall character and appearance of the countryside of this Borough over many centuries. Some rural lanes may have a particular landscape, nature conservation or historic importance and their character and appearance should be protected. Similarly, the public rights of way network (including bridleways) often reflects a legacy of the Borough's strong history of routeways and provides a mosaic of opportunities across the borough for walking, equestrianism and recreation in the countryside. It is important that this network is retained and, if possible,

enhanced through the creation of clear, attractive connections to (or through) new developments.

Policy ENV5 - Protecting important rural features

All development in the rural areas of the Borough shall protect and, where possible, enhance the following features:

a. **ancient woodland and semi-natural woodland;**
b. **river corridors and tributaries;**
c. **rural lanes which have a landscape, nature conservation or historic importance; and**
d. **public rights of way.**

Water and Climate Change

Development and Flood Risk

5.323 Ashford is at particular risk from fluvial flooding, as five main rivers converge in the town – the Great Stour, East Stour, Aylesford Stream, Whitewater Dyke and Ruckinge Dyke. Two flood storage reservoirs upstream of Ashford, one at Aldington on the East Stour, the other at Hothfield on the Great Stour currently protect Ashford town from fluvial flooding. These reservoirs were recently tested between December 2013 and February 2014 with the wettest winter since 1910. The region received 258% of long term average rainfall with high peak flows in local rivers. The reservoirs neared full capacity but prevented widespread flooding in Ashford[14].

5.324 Flooding remains a critical issue for Ashford given the topography of the surrounding area and the geology which is predominantly Chalk, with outcrops of Gault Clay and Lower Greensands. The rivers are highly responsive to flows which increase rapidly after heavy rain and fall quickly in drier spells giving them 'flashy' characteristics. Whilst the Ashford urban area has had significant investment in flood alleviation in recent years, there are some areas of the town still considered to be at risk of flooding by the Environment Agency, notably in South Ashford. It is therefore essential that development does not increase this risk. New development presents an important opportunity to 'build-in' additional local capacity in terms of flood mitigation. Adaptations to new development can contribute towards combating the effects of climate change over the next 100 years.

5.325 The NPPF and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance makes it clear the importance of accounting for flood risk within Local Plans to protect people and property from flooding. The Environment Agency has identified areas at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea for the Ashford Borough, available from the Flood Mapping pages of the Agency's website[15]. These areas are defined into four categories as follows, Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), Zone 2 (medium probability), Zone 3a (high probability) and Zone 3b (functional floodplain). These flood zones are indicative of the potential undefended floodplain.

[14] Information supplied by the Environment Agency.
[15] What's in your Back Yard, Environment Agency: http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/37837.aspx

5.326 In allocating new areas of development, the Local Plan has generally avoided areas with a high probability of flood risk and the functional floodplain. All future proposals should preferably be located in Flood Zone 1, as locating development in Flood Zone 1 means that future development is not reliant on costly fluvial flood defences that may become unsustainable in future due to climate change. It should be noted, that runoff from development within Flood Zone 1 has the potential to cause an increase in the probability of flooding if not mitigated. Therefore, any development which causes an additional flood risk by virtue of increasing runoff would need to be suitably mitigated or it will be considered unacceptable.

5.327 However, for other reasons of sustainability and regeneration and where there are no reasonable alternative available sites, the Council may give consideration to the vulnerability of land uses in considering development in higher flood risk areas. In these circumstances, developments will need to meet the 'exceptions test' as specified within the NPPF. It will be important to establish the 'actual' risk of flooding, which takes account of the protection afforded by any flood defences present, and the 'residual' risk should that level of protection fail, as set out within the Ashford SFRA. The development must demonstrate that any additional flood risk has been adequately mitigated either on or off site.

5.328 Site-specific flood risk assessments (FRAs) should be submitted alongside development proposals in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance. FRAs should be appropriate to the scale and nature of proposed development taking account of flood risk and future climate change.

5.329 The functional floodplain is *'land where water has to flow or be stored in times of flood'* and will have the highest protection against development. Only water compatible developments or essential infrastructure will be allowed in these areas where they have passed both exception tests. In any event, development must avoid flood storage areas or restricting water flows. The Ashford Green Corridor is made up of open spaces and recreational areas alongside the rivers that flow through Ashford, much of which is within the functional floodplain. These areas will be protected and enhanced for flood storage and their amenity value.

5.330 In line with government guidance, the Council commissioned the Ashford Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2014) which assessed the extent and nature of flood risk across the Borough and the implications for land use planning, taking account of the anticipated impacts of climate change. In addition, Kent County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority prepared the Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan. These documents together with the Environment Agency's maps should be used to support the consideration of all planning applications.

5.331 Applicants will need to demonstrate that their proposal accords with both the NPPF and Local Plan policies in relation to flood risk. The appropriate responsible bodies should be consulted, as required, during the initial design process, including the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Southern Water and Kent County Council.

Policy ENV6 - Flood Risk

Proposals for new development should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction.

The sequential test and exception tests established by the National Planning Policy Framework will be strictly adhered to across the Borough, with new development preferably being located in Flood Zone 1.

Development will only be permitted where it would not be at an unacceptable risk of flooding itself, and, there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere.

In exceptional circumstances, where the tests above cannot be met, essential transport or utility infrastructure, or other development on brownfield sites may be allowed if:

the development is designed to be compatible with potential flood conditions, and,

a. **there are no alternative sites in a lower flood risk zone, and**
b. **suitable flood protection and mitigation measures are incorporated into the development appropriate to the nature and scale of risk, and**
c. **comprehensive management and maintenance plans are in place for its effective operation during the lifetime of the development (taking account of climate change allowances), and**
d. **adoption arrangements are secured (where applicable) with the relevant public authority or statutory undertaker, and**
e. **the development would make a significant contribution to the overall sustainable development objectives of the Local Plan, such that the wider sustainability benefits of the development outweigh the flood risk, and**
f. **it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Council and the Environment Agency that adequate resistance and resilience measures have been put in place to avoid any increase in flooding either on site or elsewhere.**

A site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), endorsed by the Environment Agency, appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks involved will be required inline with Planning Practice Guidance and in particular where the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment or Surface Water Management Plan, indicates there are records of historic flooding or other sources of flooding.

In all cases, development that would harm the effectiveness of existing flood defences or prejudice their maintenance or management will not be permitted.

Water Resources and Efficiency

5.334 Water is a finite resource essential for human health and wellbeing as well as the natural environment and needs to be managed. Water resources are managed by the Environment Agency in England who implement a licensing strategy for the abstraction of water for various purposes, including public water supplies, industry and agriculture. Once abstracted

from the environment responsibility passes over to the water undertakers who have a statutory duty to supply drinking water.

5.335 South East Water (SEW) supplies the Ashford Borough with potable water. Currently, household demand for water is a high proportion of the current effective rainfall which is available to meet demand, and as such the whole of SEW's supply area is currently classified as 'an area of serious water stress'[16].

5.336 Public concern about water supply remains high. SEW forecast data shows that if the company 'do nothing' there will be insufficient water to meet future demand across their supply area. The SEW Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) (2015-2040) uses a twin-track approach to managing this supply demand deficit through demand management and water resource development as without these measures in place new development may be restricted in future. However, SEW have confirmed that following sensitivity testing on housing numbers their WRMP programme will fully satisfy the growth in demands within their supply area proposed within the Ashford Local Plan.

5.337 Demand management measures include a long-term strategy to reduce water use focused on changing customer behaviour. The WRMP has a target to reduce per capita consumption of water across their supply area to 149 litres per person per day (l/p/d) by 2040. This is a reduction against the current baseline of 166 l/p/d and highlights the need for sustained water efficiency improvements.

5.338 A range of new water resource infrastructure is being proposed to increase capacity within the WRMP some located within the Ashford Borough or adjoining local authority area. This includes a new groundwater source at Maytham Farm, Rolvenden with plans to replace non-operational works with a new treatment works (in 2020), and a new reservoir at Broad Oak near Canterbury (in 2033).

5.339 There is a need for local authorities, developers and water companies to work closely together to deliver the efficiencies necessary to meet the identified water supply targets set out within the SEW WRMP (2015-2040).

5.340 The Government updated Building Regulations Part G in 2015, introducing an 'optional' requirement of 110 l/p/day for new residential development, which should be implemented through local policy where there is a clearly evidenced need. The evidence clearly justifies the need for more stringent water efficiency targets for new residential development in the Borough.

Policy ENV7 - Water Efficiency
All new residential development must achieve as a minimum the optional requirement set through Building Regulations for water efficiency that requires an estimated water use of no more than 110 litres per person per day.

[16] Environment Agency, Water Stress Classification (July 2013).

Water Quality, Supply and Treatment

5.342 The majority of Ashford's water supply comes from large underground chalk and greensand aquifers that need regular replenishment over sustained periods. These aquifers are currently over abstracted and over licensed and there is a 'presumption against' further consumptive abstraction[17] . As well as being an important source of drinking water, groundwater provides rivers with their base-flow which if not maintained can be detrimental to river water quality. DEFRA are proposing changes to water abstraction licensing exemptions in England which will bring in New Authorisations into the licensing system in 2016 to better manage water at catchment level. Demand management measures such as water efficiency and the use of sustainable drainage to retain groundwater supplies are essential for the long-term resilience of water supplies in the Ashford.

5.343 The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is the legal framework established to protect and restore clean water throughout Europe. A key target of the WFD is to achieve 'good' status by 2021 or 2027. Aylesford Stream on the East Stour was previously the only waterbody within East Kent achieving 'Good' WFD status but the latest cycle (2) shows that it is no longer meeting WFD objectives. Whilst pollution from wastewater has a significant impact on water quality other impacts such as road runoff, rural discharge from farming practices and low rainfall combined with widespread water abstraction and physical modifications are also contributing to poor water quality.

5.344 New development must ensure that there are no direct or indirect adverse effects on the quality of water supplies. Appropriate mitigation measures need to be put in place to minimise the impact of increased urbanisation on the water environment. Without such measures, there will be a significant risk of groundwater pollution and flooding.

Policy ENV8 - Water Quality, Supply and Treatment

Major proposals for new development must be able to demonstrate that there are, or will be, adequate water supply and wastewater treatment facilities in place to serve the whole development, or where development is being carried out in phases, the whole of the phase for which approval is being sought. Improvements in these facilities, the timing of their provision and funding sources will be key to the delivery of development.

All development proposals must provide a connection to the sewerage system at the nearest point of adequate capacity, as advised by Southern Water, and ensure future access to the existing sewerage systems for maintenance and upsizing purposes.

Schemes that would be likely to result in a reduction in the quality or quantity of groundwater resources will not be permitted. The Council will support, in principle, infrastructure proposals designed to increase water supply and wastewater treatment capacity subject to there being no significant adverse environmental impacts and the minimisation of those that may remain.

[17] Stour Abstraction Licensing Strategy (2013) Environment Agency

Strategic Urban Drainage Systems (SuDs)

5.346 Water supply, flood risk and water quality have all been identified as critical constraints to the sustainable growth of Ashford. Ashford's water environment needs to be managed carefully and the multi-benefits of implementing SuDS within local developments can not be overstated.

5.347 SuDS can make a real different to flood risk by managing the quantity of surface water run-off from development, they can also moderate flow rates and prevent sudden water level rises following heavy rain. SuDS can significantly reduce harm to valuable water resources by retaining water within the local hydrological system as well as protecting water resources from pollution by filtering run-off. SuDS can form an integral part of both soft or hard landscaping and can contribute to the quality of green space for the benefit of amenity, recreation and wildlife. SuDS may also allow new development in areas where existing drainage systems are close to capacity, thereby enabling development within existing urban areas.

5.348 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 introduced the concept of flood risk management into law and sets out the intention for SuDS in all new development. The NPPF requires LPAs to minimise vulnerability and provide resilience to the impacts of climate change, and requires all new developments in areas at risk of flooding to give 'priority to the use of sustainable drainage systems'[18]. The Government have recently made changes to the NPPF making it clear that they expect SuDS to be provided in all new major development wherever it is appropriate[19]. DEFRA have published 'non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems[20]' which provides guidance on minimum standards of design, maintenance and operation of SuDS systems and sits alongside the Planning Practice Guidance. These documents together with the Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan[21] provide information and guidance in formulating planning proposals.

5.349 The Ashford Integrated Water Management Study[22] identified that SuDS with restricted discharges would be integral to managing flood risk as Ashford grows.

5.350 Sustainable drainage systems are designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls and mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. Sustainable drainage systems also provide opportunities (in line with NPPF) to:

- reduce the causes and impacts of flooding;
- remove pollutants from urban run-off at source;
- combine water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife.

5.351 In April 2015 KCC as Lead Local Flood Authority for Kent become a statutory consultee as per national requirements following a parliamentary statement in December 2014. Kent County Council have an adopted "Drainage and Planning Policy Statement" which should inform development of drainage schemes. There are also situations where consultation with

[18] National Planning Policy Framework (2012), DCLG, Paragraph 103.
[19] Written Ministerial Statement, DCLG (December 2014) HCWS161.
[20] Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems, Defra, March 2015.
[21] KCC, Ashford Stage 1 Surface Water Management Plan (October 2013).
[22] Ashford Integrated Water Management Study (2005), Ashford's Future / Environment Agency

the Environment Agency will be necessary in relation fluvial flood risk, water quality, biodiversity and groundwater protection, which may impact measures proposed for surface water management.

5.352 A recent discharge rates assessment based on the latest flood modelling for Ashford confirms the potential to reduce flood risk in Ashford through development appropriately managing and ultimately reducing site runoff rates through new development will assist in ensuring that the floodplain extents within Ashford do not increase even in light of expected changes in rainfall intensity as a result of predicted climate change.

5.353 The findings of the Discharge Rates Assessment demonstrated that the current Ashford Borough Council SuDS SPD policy (CS20) standard of 4 l/s/ha is difficult to achieve when applying to small site developments. The infrastructure required to store the quantity of water needed to achieve this discharge rate would not be feasible within smaller sites, as long term storage requires large areas of land.

5.354 The Assessment also recommended that discharge requirements should be based on site-specific conditions and monitoring (if available). By undertaking site-specific studies, a detailed analysis of what SuDS could be implemented into the site could also be achieved.

5.355 Finally, it was also recommended that the Council should consider a higher discharge rate than 4 l/s/ha to apply borough wide if the site is brownfield. This study has outlined that the majority of the allocated sites would be capable of accommodating drainage infrastructure that would be able to discharge to half-capacity within 24 hours, based on a discharge rate of 5 l/s/ha.

5.356 In light of the recommendations of this report, the SPD is to be updated to reflect recent changes in local and national policies with respect to the requirements for discharge runoff rates throughout the borough and recent government changes on SuDS. These changes will seek to continue the reduction in flood risk through development across the borough, targeting larger sites where multifaceted benefits can be obtained by the introduction of appropriate SuDS and discharge rate reduction. The discharge rates will also be simplified to be more aligned with current guidance / established best practice wherever possible to ensure a robust reasoning behind the policy document. Moreover, discharge rates will be more site specific and should mimic the current drainage regime for a site, whilst also reducing the peak discharges from the critical storms. The ultimate aim of the policy is to improve flood risk management in the Borough through future development.

5.357 The existing Sustainable Drainage SPD (2010) rates remain in place until such time that an updated Sustainable Drainage SPD is released, unless alternative discharge rates are agreed by the Council in consultation with KCC as Lead Local Flood Authority.

5.358 The updated Sustainable Drainage SPD is anticipated to recommend the following discharge rates based upon the Discharge Rates Assessment:

- **Greenfield** –Discharge rates for undeveloped sites should discharge at a maximum of 5l/s/ha, or 10% below current greenfield rates for the existing 1:100 storm event, whichever is lower. There must be no increase in discharge rate from less severe rainfall events, with evidence submitted to demonstrate this principle.

- **Previously Developed** – Discharge rates for previously developed sites must meet at a minimum a reduction of 10% of existing runoff rates where this existing discharge rate can be established or 10.26l/s/ha where this cannot be established; but must endeavour to achieve 5 l/s/ha or seek to achieve 50% reduction from existing runoff rates for the site (where this can be established).

5.359 The above proposals set out the continuation of reducing runoff rates within the Borough through development.

5.360 Within the Ashford Borough the requirement for the inclusion of SuDS within major development has been extended beyond that set out within the NPPF, and also includes minor developments. Permitted developments are also encouraged to integrate SuDS into development.

5.361 Developers will normally be expected to make provision for SuDS on-site where it is practical to do so. As an exception, where SuDS cannot be achieved on developments in the Ashford urban area, developers will be required to make suitable in-lieu financial contributions through Section 106 Agreements. Consideration should also be given to 'strategic SuDS' where a limited number of attenuation and treatment areas are needed downstream in areas of significant planned development.

5.362 The Council expects SuDS to form an integral part of the development design process. This is because successful SuDS require a range of discharge or infiltration techniques that need to be designed in a sequential order. Whilst primarily used to attenuate runoff, early consideration of SuDS provides the opportunity to design-in other benefits which will deliver more sustainable developments. Whilst it is acknowledged that some sites can be more challenging than others, SuDS can be applied to any site. For the reasons set out above, the Council advocates the use of masterplanning in SuDS. Useful guidance on how to successfully integrate SuDS through the masterplanning process has been development by KCC in Water.People.Place[23]. Kent County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and statutory consultee has also produced a Drainage and Planning Policy Statement which should be referred to in the consideration of planning applications[24].

[23] Water.People.Places can be found at: http://www.kent.gov.uk/waste-planning-and-land/flooding-and-drainage/sustainable-drainage-systems
[24] KCC, Drainage and Planning Policy Statement, (September 2015).

Policy ENV9 - Sustainable Drainage

All development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality, and to mimic the drainage from the pre-developed site.

Any SuDS scheme should be compliant with the adopted Sustainable Drainage SPD and any subsequent revisions.

SuDS features should always be the preferred option and provided onsite wherever practicable. In the Ashford urban area if this cannot be achieved, then more strategic forms of SuDS may be appropriate. In such circumstances, developers will need to contribute towards the costs of provision via Section 106 Agreements.

All development proposals will be required to:

a. **Ensure all new developments are designed to reduce the risk of flooding, and maximise environmental gain, such as: water quality, water resources, biodiversity, landscape and recreational open space.**
b. **Ensure that all new developments are designed to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.**
c. **Lower runoff flow rates, reducing the impact of urbanisation on flooding.**
d. **Protect or enhance water quality. Incorporating appropriate pollution control measures, to ensure there are no adverse impacts on the water quality of receiving waters, both during construction and in operation;**
e. **Be sympathetic to the environmental setting and the needs of the local community.**
f. **Incorporate a SuDS scheme that is coherent with the surrounding landscape and/or townscape;**
g. **Provide a habitat for wildlife in urban watercourses; and encourage natural groundwater recharge (where appropriate).**
h. **Demonstrate that opportunities have been taken to integrate sustainable drainage with biodiversity enhancements through appropriately designed surface water systems, as well as contribute to amenity and open spaces;**
i. **Demonstrate that the first 5mm of any rainfall event can be accommodated and disposed of on-site;**
j. **Demonstrate that clear arrangements have been established for the operation and maintenance of the SuDS component for the lifetime of the development.**

Developers must notify the Council to discharge any relevant conditions before commencement of works on site to ensure a compliant design has been submitted.

Renewable Energy

5.370 The NPPF (Para. 97) recognises the responsibility on all communities to contribute to energy generation from renewable and low carbon sources. LPAs are required to have a positive strategy to promote energy from renewable and low carbon sources as it helps ensure a secure more sustainable supply of energy that reduces carbon emissions minimising the impact of climate change.

5.371 There is an array of technology available which is classified as renewable and low carbon technology, some of which are now commonplace within Ashford developments. The more familiar types used include solar thermal and photovoltaics panels, ground or air source heat pumps and, to a lesser extent, combined heat and power, wind turbines and small scale hydro. These technologies should be located onsite or in close proximity to the end user.

5.372 National policy requires LPAs to *'design their policies to maximise renewable and low carbon energy development while ensuring that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including cumulative landscape and visual impacts'.*

5.373 It is recognised that any planning decision needs to balance the impacts of renewables provision against the benefits of the proposal and planning policy guidance makes it quite clear that renewable energy does not automatically override environmental protection.

5.374 This is significant for the Ashford Borough which has large areas designated as AONB and is predominantly rural in character. Proposals which have an adverse impact on the landscape character, distinctive landform, special characteristics and qualities of the AONB or its setting would need to be opposed unless their impacts can be successfully mitigated. Local topography will be an important factor when considering whether there could be any damaging effect on the landscape. The use of Landscape Character Assessments will be useful in this context and their outcomes should inform any future proposal.

5.375 In helping increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy, the NPPF (para. 97) requires Local Plans to '*identify opportunities where development can draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems and for co-locating potential heat customers and suppliers'.* Decentralised energy relates to local renewable energy and can encompass a wide range of technologies. Renewable and low carbon energy includes heating and cooling as well as the generation of electricity.

5.376 Co-locating potential heat customers provides the opportunity to utilise district heat networks subject to appropriate heat demand. If supported by Combined Heat and Power (CHP), district heat networks can provide a highly efficient means of supplying energy. The government recognises this, hence the promotion through national policy. Policy CG19 of the Chilmington Green AAP promotes this form of technology for the first phase as the scale and mix of uses, including a primary school and retail units have the potential to make such a scheme viable. There are also stand alone CHP schemes located at the International Station and Tesco's at Park Farm[25].

5.377 The issues associated with implementing such a heat network are intrinsically complex including capacity and heat distribution issues as well as the cost of bringing forward such infrastructure. Imposing such a requirement has the potential to add a significant burden to development infrastructure costs. Aside from the Chilmington Green development, no policy intervention approach is proposed for district heat networks, instead leaving it to the market to bring forward suitable proposals.

[25] There may be other CHPs within the Borough, but these are logged with the CHPQA Programme.

Standalone Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation

5.378 PV Panels or solar technology relating to an individual building is often permitted development provided it's not in a designated area, is not of an unusual design or will not be installed on a listed building. The Council have established Renewable Energy Planning Guidance Notes that have been approved by Cabinet. The guidance notes have been prepared to assist applicants in bringing forward domestic and medium scale solar PV arrays, as well as large scale solar PV arrays, such as solar farms.

5.379 Following concerns by local communities into the insufficient weight given to the environment with regard to landscape, heritage and local amenity in relation to wind farms. The government issued a statement (6 June 2013) expecting local plans to include policies to ensure the adverse impact from wind farms, including cumulative landscape and visual impact are addressed satisfactorily.

5.380 The government intends to amend legislation so that LPAs will handle all planning applications for onshore wind energy development. Kent Downs AONB JAC have produced a Renewable Energy Position Statement (Updated June 2011) in which it states that due to the high sensitivity of the Kent Downs AONB it considers that large scale commercial wind turbine developments will be unacceptable. The statement also considers it extremely unlikely that any location can be found in or within the setting of the AONB where field-scale solar PV arrays, such as solar farms does not have a significant adverse effect on the landscape. National policy guidance also highlights the need to focus large scale solar farm on previously developed land and non agricultural land and as a last resort low grade agricultural land. This greatly limits the availability of potential sites within the Borough.

5.381 The following policy sets out how proposals for renewable and low carbon energy generation will be considered.

Policy ENV10 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

Planning permission for proposals to generate energy from renewable and low carbon sources will be permitted provided that:

a. **The development, either individually or cumulatively does not result in significant adverse impacts on the landscape, natural assets or historic assets (including their setting);**
b. **The scale and design of renewable energy provision is compatible with the character and appearance of the area, having special regard to nationally recognised designations and their setting, such as AONBs, Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings.**
c. **The development does not generate an unacceptable level of traffic or loss of amenity to nearby residents (visual impact, noise, disturbance, shadow flicker, odour).**
d. **Provision is made for the decommissioning of the infrastructure once operation has ceased, including the restoration of the site to its previous use;**
e. **Evidence is provided to demonstrate effective engagement with the local community and local authority.**

A Sustainability Assessment should be submitted alongside any planning application illustrating the social, environmental and economic benefits of the proposal against this criterion and any mitigation measures necessary.

Sustainable Design and Construction

5.383 The NPPF (paragraph 94) requires LPAs to have a proactive strategy to mitigate and adapt to climate change within their Local Plans. This will include policies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting the delivery of highly efficient buildings both in terms of energy and water use.

5.384 Carbon dioxide emissions account for the majority of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK (82% in 2013). It is estimated that 37% of carbon dioxide emissions are emitted from the energy sector, 25% from transport, 17% from the residential sector and 16% from the commercial sector[26].

5.385 Previous Local Plan policy and supplementary planning documents have required new residential development, through the implementation of EcoHomes and the Code for Sustainable Homes, to reduce energy emissions. Both of these have been recently been superseded by changes to Building Regulations that have come into force for new dwellings. Building Regulations now take into account all regulated emissions, i.e. arising from heating, water heating, fixed lighting and ventilation. The Council is therefore relying upon Building Regulations to reduce energy emissions from new housing development in the future.

5.386 With regards to non-residential and commercial sectors of development, which also account for a significant proportion of carbon emissions, government's recent reforms have not been introduced for this sector, although it is expected that a similar framework will be adopted by

[26] DECC, 2013 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions (27th March 2014).

the government in the future. Previous Local Plan policy in the relation to setting sustainability standards for non-residential development has focused on the use of BREEAM standards. Given the uncertainty about when national requirements may come into place, and the significant proportion of carbon emissions, that this sector accounts for, it is considered necessary to require new development to achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard.

5.387 As set out in previous parts of this chapter, water resource is also a major issue for the Borough. The policy therefore requires new development to achieve specific improvements in terms of water consumption.

Policy ENV11 - Sustainable Design and Construction - Non-residential

All major non-residential development will achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' standard, with at least a 40% improvement in water consumption against the baseline performance of the building (Wat1, 3 credits), unless demonstrated not to be practicable.

Air Quality

5.389 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. It should prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk of pollution including air pollution. Consideration must be given to the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas.

5.390 Ashford Borough generally has very good air quality. There are currently no areas within the Borough where the air quality fails to meet the required standards, and there are no designated Air Quality Management Areas. However, future development in the Borough has potential to impact upon air quality.

5.391 Planning is an effective tool to improve air quality. It can be used to locate development to reduce emissions overall, and reduce the direct impacts of new development, through policy requirements. As set out in the Strategic Policies of this Plan, proposed development allocations have been located to, where possible, minimise the need to travel, therefore reducing emissions from road traffic. The transport section of this Plan includes policies which promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, with the aim of reducing the use of the car.

5.392 Ashford Borough Council is a member of the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnership where data and information about air quality throughout Kent is pooled and shared. The partnership has produced guidance which sets of the requirements for the consideration of air quality in proposals for new development. National guidance has been produced by Environmental Protection UK and the Institute of Air Quality Management.

5.393 The overall outcome of an air quality assessment is to determine whether the development will have a significant impact on air quality and/or whether the existing air quality environment is acceptable for the proposed development.

5.394 The types of development that are likely to require an air quality assessment are identified in the Kent and Medway Air Quality Partnerships Technical Planning Guide.

5.395 The following policy sets out the requirements for development proposals to consider air quality and ensure potential negative impacts upon air quality are ameliorated.

Policy ENV12 - Air Quality

All major development proposals should promote a shift to the use of sustainable low emission transport to minimise the impact of vehicle emissions on air quality. Development should be located where it is accessible to support the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Development proposals that might lead to a significant deterioration in air quality or national air quality objectives being exceeded, either by itself, or in combination with other committed development, will require the submission of an Air Quality Assessment to be carried out in accordance with the relevant guidance. This should address:-

a. **The cumulative effect of further emissions;**
b. **The proposed measures of mitigation through good design and offsetting measures that would prevent the National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded or reduce the extent of the air quality deterioration.**

Proposals which will result in National Air Quality Objectives being exceeded will not be permitted.

The Historic Environment

Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

5.396 One of the core principles of the NPPF is that planning should 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. Heritage assets are defined in the NPPF as "*a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)*". Significance is defined, in this context, as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. Evidence of the breadth of heritage assets in the Borough is contained in the National Historic List for England and the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Kent County Council for the county.

The Ashford Heritage Strategy

5.397 The Draft Ashford Heritage Strategy, prepared by the Council, sets out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the Borough's rich historic environment, assessing the significance of its broad portfolio of heritage assets, the contribution they make to the environment of the Borough and their potential to contribute to the delivery of other sustainable development objectives of the Local Plan. Given the high number of listed buildings and other designated places and structures in the Borough, the Strategy categorises all historic assets under a series of themes selected to reflect the broad heritage and historical fabric of Ashford - Prehistory, Farming and Farmsteads, Routeways, Historic Houses and Gardens, Ecclesiastical, Industry and Commerce, Invasion and Defence and the Railway. This is an approach adopted by other heritage strategies and endorsed by Kent County Council.These themes are not meant to be a definitive list, or to be read in any other way than as a tool for facilitating the assessment of the significance of the large numbers of the Borough's heritage assets and the contribution they make to the environment.

5.398 The NPPF (paragraph 128) advises that local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected by proposals including any contribution made by their setting, and the Heritage Strategy provides a useful resource to assist in this regard.

Listed Buildings

5.399 Ashford Borough is home to a significant number of listed buildings, statutorily recognised as being of particular special architectural or historic interest. They are a valuable and irreplaceable resource for the Borough and the NPPF advises they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 126). As well as being of heritage value in themselves, Listed Buildings often make an important contribution to the character of a wider area and help to deliver positive benefits to the cultural, economic and environmental offer of the Borough. To this end, the Council will support proposals which put such buildings to viable use consistent with their conservation.

Local Listing

5.400 Many buildings or structures in the Borough which do not currently meet national criteria for statutory listing nevertheless often have local historical importance and may be worthy of protection and conservation in their own right. Local lists play an important role in celebrating non-designated heritage that is particularly valued by communities.The process of preparing a local heritage list allows local people, in partnership with the Council, to identify local heritage that they would wish to see recognised and protected. Such local lists once agreed by the local planning authority as having heritage significance, will merit consideration in planning matters, with the planning authority taking a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset itself. Ashford does not currently have a Local List and the council will therefore prepare SPD setting out guidance and recommended methodology on Historic England's Guiding Principles for Local Heritage Listing in order to support local groups wishing to prepare Local Heritage Lists.

Policy ENV13 - Conservation and Enhancement of Heritage Assets

Proposals which protect, conserve and enhance the heritage assets of the Borough, sustaining and enhancing their significance and the contribution they make to local character and distinctiveness, will be supported. Proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets through regeneration, particularly where these bring redundant or under-used buildings and areas into appropriate and viable use consistent with their conservation, will be encouraged.

Development will not be permitted where it will cause loss or substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets or their settings unless it can be demonstrated that substantial public benefits will be delivered that outweigh the harm or loss.

All applications which will affect a heritage asset or its setting should be supported by a description of the asset's historic, architectural or archaeological significance with an appropriate level of detail relating to the asset and the likely impact of the proposals on its significance.

Conservation Areas

5.401 Conservation Areas contain some of the best townscapes in the Borough along with attractive areas of landscape which provide their settings. Their designation demonstrates that they have "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) The Council has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Borough's 43 Conservation Areas and as part of this duty has an ongoing programme of updating and preparing Appraisals for each of the Conservation Areas as heritage assets in their own right.

5.402 Conservation Area Appraisals have recently been undertaken for Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch. These Appraisals examine the key elements that contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of each Area in addition to a spatial analysis of the area including a description of interrelationships of spaces and key views and vistas, and landmarks and an assessment of architectural details, building materials and the contribution of the public realm, local green spaces, parks, gardens and trees (public and private) to the setting of the Conservation Area. They also briefly record the general condition of the area and identify negative features that should be improved or enhanced, suggest potential boundary changes and identify pressures and problems such as traffic, inappropriate advertising, vacancy and disrepair of buildings that detract from the setting and character of the Area. The Council will continue to review the Conservation Areas across the Borough and where appropriate will amend or create new Conservation Areas in accordance with guidance provided by Historic England.

5.403 The variety of building styles dating from different periods frequently adds character and interest to Conservation Areas. Innovative design can be appropriate, provided that it is of highest quality and is sensitive to the context of the site and its setting within the Conservation Area. Therefore, development proposals coming forward within Conservation Areas should have regard to the layout and grain of buildings, streets and spaces and should reflect and enhance local distinctiveness through the retention of building lines, and attention to boundary treatments, open spaces and footpaths. It is also important

that new development takes particular account of the impact on the setting of Conservation Areas and important views into and out of the Area.

Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas

Development or redevelopment within Conservation Areas will be permitted provided such proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Area. Proposals should fulfill each of the following:

a. **the scale and detailed design of all new development and alterations should respect the historical and architectural character, proportion and massing, including roofscapes, of the area, the relationship between buildings, the spaces between them and with their setting;**
b. **the materials proposed should be appropriate to the locality and in sympathy with the existing buildings;**
c. **buildings and streets of townscape character, trees, open spaces, walls, fences or any other features should be retained where they contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area;**
d. **the development should not generate levels of traffic, parking or other environmental problems which would damage the character or appearance of the area; and**
e. **the use should be appropriate.**

Proposals for inappropriate demolition, alteration or extension of buildings in Conservation Areas or which could prejudice important views into or out of a Conservation Area, will be resisted where such proposals would be detrimental to their character or setting.

Archaeology

5.404 There are 42 Scheduled Monuments in Ashford Borough. These are identified in the Heritage Strategy. In addition, areas of known archaeological potential, arising largely from evidence uncovered during new developments, and from the Kent Historic Towns Surveys of 2003 - 2004 (undertaken across the county by Historic England and KCC and including seven towns and villages in the Borough), have been identified by Kent County Council. Further information about these areas is contained in the Ashford Heritage Strategy. In these areas, there is a reasonable possibility that archaeological remains exist and therefore the potential impact of any proposed development on archaeological remains will need to be considered. In certain cases, developers may be required to provide detailed information on the nature and quality of any archaeological remains on the site before a planning application is determined. Large scale development proposals affecting sites outside but adjoining areas of known archaeological potential may also be required to submit archaeological surveys.

5.405 Should a significant archaeological find occur unexpectedly during development, the Council will seek specialist advice and encourage appropriate action, including recording, preservation in situ (the preferred option) limited or full excavation. In some cases approved schemes may need to be amended to avoid excessive damage to archaeological remains.

Policy ENV15 - Archaeology

The archaeological and historic integrity of Scheduled Monuments and other important archaeological sites, together with their settings, will be protected and where possible enhanced. Development which would adversely affect such designated heritage assets will not be permitted.

Planning applications, on sites where there is, or is the known potential for, an archaeological heritage asset, should include an appropriate desk based assessment of the asset. In addition, where important or potentially significant archaeological heritage assets may exist, developers will be required to arrange for field evaluations to be carried out in advance of the determination of planning applications.

Where the case for development affecting a heritage asset of archaeological interest is accepted, the archaeological remains should be preserved in situ as the preferred approach. Where this is not possible or justified, appropriate provision for preservation by record may be an acceptable alternative. Any archaeological recording should be by an approved archaeological body and take place in accordance with a specification and programme of work to be submitted to and approved by the Borough Council in advance of development commencing.

SECTION E - COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Meeting the needs of the community

5.406 The provision of good quality community infrastructure and services designed around people and their cultural, leisure, health, learning, social and wellbeing needs is fundamental to the creation of strong, vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities. As Ashford grows and the demand for new or enhanced community infrastructure increases, there is a need to apply strategic policies to ensure appropriate and sustainable provision that supports this demand. This will mean that some community facilities and services may be locally based and aimed at meeting the needs of the local residents in that particular area, whilst others may be more strategic and will need to be delivered in larger facilities and spaces which serve the wider town or Borough.

5.407 This Chapter provides the policy framework for the delivery of facilities that provide social and community leisure space, recreation and sports, arts and creative industry spaces, public open spaces, children's play, educational and learning such as schools and libraries; health services, places of worship, space for the voluntary and community sector, and youth and children's services. Such spaces and services involve a mix of agencies, professions and services and require the coordinated actions of a number of stakeholders, including the voluntary sector, to successfully deliver, manage and maintain.

5.408 It has been proved that community infrastructure that offers a range of services at one site, or 'Hub', helps to establish a focal and active point that benefits the area and community life. It also enables land to be better used with toilets and kitchens as well as parking and green space shared by a number of users. In general, such a model of provision is also more viable to maintain.

5.409 The longstanding commitment by this Council to the delivery of new infrastructure that embraces the 'hub' approach has and continues to result in good quality and well placed community and social facilities in the Borough. Such existing and programmed provision provides a useful framework upon which to build, in order to meet the needs generated by the additional level of population growth which will arise over the Local Plan period.

5.410 To this end the Council's approach will be to continue to work with developers and providers to ensure the provision of community infrastructure in the right locations and at the right time. The Council recognise that - in practice - it will need to adopt a pragmatic approach as large amounts of community provision is subject to planning approval, but has not actually been implemented yet - something which the Council cannot control. Therefore, contributions from new developments may be needed to expand or enhance infrastructure that is already being planned or is in the early stages of being implemented. This may also involve monies to secure the early delivery of such infrastructure where it is appropriate to do so. Adopting this approach ensures that provisions are in place that will support the communities as they develop - a key planning objective of this Local Plan.

Retention of Existing Facilities

5.411 Retaining existing facilities wherever practical is the most sustainable way of enhancing and expanding provision. This position is supported by the NPPF which recognises the

importance of community and social facilities and requires that LPAs guard against the unnecessary loss of this valued provision, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day to day needs.

5.412 The Council therefore aims to protect social and community infrastructure and to guard against unnecessary loss unless there are strong reasons why this is no longer viable or where provision is replicated nearby.

The Arts and Creative Industries

5.413 Participation in arts and creative pursuits increases personal well-being and helps to build healthy communities; it enhances people's skills, unlocks potential and stimulates learning and enterprise.

5.414 Enhancing the local arts scene and working with the creative industries has been a particular focus of the Council's work in recent years and is a priority of the Corporate Plan. An Arts and Creative Industry Strategy is emerging which supports the 'Grow the Arts in Ashford', the Council's adopted Art Strategy. These strategies are committed to nurturing and supporting the arts and help form evidence to this Local Plan and its supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

5.415 Ashford's offer has been enhanced recently through the development of a new arts and performance space at St Mary's Church (in the centre of town) which attracts regionally and nationally significant touring artists and is developing a local audience. The establishment of the internationally renowned Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company has also elevated Ashford's position as an emerging key destination for the arts. The draft Strategy acknowledges that while Ashford enjoys these facilities, and also enjoys a wider programme of cultural opportunities such events across the Borough, including local festivals, there is a marked lack of spaces such as galleries, multi-use art facilities, theatre and production and rehearsal spaces.

5.416 The following strategic arts spaces are identified in the draft Strategy to meet the current deficit and provide a wide range of creative activities and opportunities as Ashford grows:

- Revelations St Mary's: as Ashford's occupancy increases this venue will be a significant space to meet the demands of the local audience and a key strategic centre for presenting a high quality arts programme that enhances the economy of the town centre;
- Rehearsal and production centre: a large space for touring companies and local community groups to create and show work and smaller spaces for educational sessions. This will aim to drive innovation in the arts and the provision of excellent arts experiences;
- Making and exhibiting workspaces: a space (or collection of spaces) where creative designers can co-locate, make and present their work in a gallery and offer associated spaces for the community to engage in the arts and crafts;
- Arts use in community hubs: helping to ensure urban and rural community hubs cater for arts and are well equipped and design to support a range of creative activity.

5.417 The Council expects that these projects will largely be funded by way of CIL receipts. S106 contributions will however be used where local community buildings/ indoor sports buildings

are required, as stipulated through various site allocations in this Local Plan. These buildings will be required to be designed in a way that allows for a variety of users, including art and creative industries.

5.418 Overall proposals that would significantly improve Ashford's arts scene and encourage creative industries by virtue of their quality, cultural diversity, distinctiveness and economic impact should be supported.

5.419 New public art will also be encouraged as a result of developments throughout the town and key developments will be expected to contribute to such provision as part of ensuring a higher quality and more distinctive urban environment. This is further explored under policy SP6 'Promoting High Quality Design'.

The Voluntary Sector

5.420 Over recent years the voluntary and community sector (VCS) has become increasingly involved in managing many community facilities and delivering public services. The VCS in the Borough is vibrant and diverse comprising in the region of 850 organisations providing a wide range of services and has been shown to bring considerable advantages and benefits deriving from its value-driven motivation and focus on social needs.

5.421 Given the wide nature of the sector, it is accepted that projects which are needed to allow the voluntary sector to continue to play a role in meeting the communities needs will come forward over the lifetime of this plan. Where these projects can be costed and shown to be deliverable, the Council will seek proportionate developer contributions or the delivery of space/ provision on site. It is likely such provision will be focused in and around Ashford Town Centre, but is not limited to this boundary.

The Education Sector

5.422 The requirements identified in this Local Plan have been based with ongoing discussions with Kent County Council.

5.423 The residential developments proposed in this Local Plan will create a requirement for additional school places and thus for existing primary and secondary schools to be expanded and for new schools to be built. Wider demographic trends also affect the need for school places. The Council's longstanding approach has been to require developer contributions on behalf of the education authority where new primary and secondary schools or extensions to existing ones are needed to cater for the influx of new children from housing development. The contribution sought is based on 'pupil product figures' provided by Kent County Council for the number of primary and secondary school children likely to arise from each new housing development.

5.424 Broadly, this approach will continue, with the Council consulting the local education authority to determine where an education contribution should be sought. In most circumstances the Borough Council will only seek contributions from the larger schemes, in light of the S106 pooling restrictions and this is reflected in site allocation policies in this Local Plan. CIL receipts are also likely to be required.

5.425 In some parts of the Borough the number of additional school children will create the need for new schools to be built, as reflected in the site allocations that accompany this Local Plan. The specification required will be determined through negotiation between the County Council, the Borough Council and the developer.

The Health Sector

5.426 The NPPF acknowledges the link between planning and healthy communities and states that the planning system should support strategies to improve health and well being, promote healthy communities and include strategic policies that will deliver the provision of health facilities. It encourages policies that will facilitate social interaction and healthy inclusive communities.

5.427 The Ashford Health and Wellbeing Board, comprised of health professionals, local government officers and patient representatives, was established in 2013. The board offers a fresh look at the way the health and wellbeing of Ashford's residents is observed and measured. It also has an influence over the commissioning decisions made across public health and social care in the borough. It looks at improving the health and wellbeing of the people living in Ashford through joined up commissioning across the National Health Service, social care, borough council, public health and other services that are directly related to health and wellbeing.

5.428 Health issues are addressed in policies across this Plan, including those on design, transport, economic development, employment skills and training and provision of cultural and local services. Proposals for new health facilities in sustainable locations will generally be supported.

Community Leisure Buildings

5.429 The Council has a long established tradition of delivering 'multi-purpose community leisure buildings' which fulfill the needs of emerging and established communities. Recent provision takes into account the scale of the development, the nature of the place being delivered, and the proximity of nearby facilities and its offer. This Local Plan adopts this robust approach, supported by the Council's, and partners experience, of what kind of facilities are deliverable and viable over the longer term particularly in response to some of the larger site allocations being proposed.

5.430 In addition, where indoor sporting facilities are proposed, they should generally provide space for a mixed use of community activity as part of their delivery to make the most efficient use of these buildings and also help with their on-going viability.

Policy COM1 - Meeting the Community's Needs

Infrastructure and facilities required to meet the needs generated by new development, including sports, arts, community (including youth) and voluntary sector space, education and health provision, open space and play areas shall be provided as the community is established.

Infrastructure or facilities designed to meet localised needs should normally be provided on-site. Other needs will be delivered in liaison with the relevant stakeholders and service providers to ensure that the provision is supplied in a way that meets their requirements and supports sustainability.

Development monies will be secured via S106 where provision relates to a localised need or as identified through the site allocations in this Local Plan. Otherwise, CIL receipts will be used to deliver strategic provision.

Where the need for developments to contribute to, or provide, particular infrastructure or facilities is dependent on their size, floorspace, traffic generation or any other attribute or impact exceeding a specified threshold and any site is brought forward as two or more separate schemes of which one or more falls below the relevant threshold, the Council will seek from each scheme a proportionate contribution of the level of provision so as to match in total the requirement that would apply if the site came forward as a whole.

In the Borough as a whole, the loss of existing community infrastructure will be resisted unless sufficient evidence has been submitted to demonstrate that they are no longer required or are obsolete and that suitable replacement provision is being provided or is located nearby.

Sport, Recreation and Play

5.431 Recreation, sport, open space and play areas can enrich the quality of our lives and contribute towards healthy living. The Borough currently enjoys a wide range of such space and this provision will be added to when current planning applications are implemented, most notably Chilmington Green which will deliver significant recreational and leisure areas.

5.432 The following total quantum's of recreational, play, sport and open space are required to meet the needs of the new development proposed in this Local Plan. These figures are derived from the emerging Sports Pitches and Indoor Sports Facility Strategy, alongside standards set out in the current Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD. They take into account planned provision that is earmarked to come forward, such as at Chilmington Green. The figures do not take take into account the role which could be played by provision at schools. This provision should be treated as supplementary as in most cases it tends to have limited public access at key times.

Table 4 - Total Spatial Target for play, open space and sports	
Informal space	**22.5ha**
Children's play	**5.6ha**
Strategic Parks	**3.4ha**
Allotment provision	**2.2ha**
Sports halls (1 badminton hall or equivalent)	**4**
3G Artificial Pitch	**1**
Football Pitches	**7 adult, 3 junior**
Hockey 2G pitch	**1 adult**
Rugby	**2 senior pitches**
Cricket square and outfield	**1**

5.433 These figures are a 'target' as not all residential development coming forward will be required to deliver a proportion of these provisions. For example, some development will be excluded on viability grounds such as most proposals coming forward in the town centre, and a number of developments will fall below the threshold that trigger a requirement for provision. However, this is somewhat countered as CIL receipts can be used to deliver recreation, sport, play and open space, where it is strategic in nature. This type of provision effectively meets a need for all new developments in the Borough. Therefore the identification of a target figure is considered to be a robust starting point for the policy below.

5.434 In order to determine the quantum and type of provision required for each qualifying proposal, applicants will be expected to use the Sports England Calculator and the relevant standards in the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD. Aside from informal space – which will normally be delivered on site and form part of the wider landscaping/ SUDs strategy, incidental space around buildings, discussions with the Council shall then take place as to what exact provision will be sort from any S106 monies to be collected, using the projects identified within the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan schedule as the starting point.

The Hub Approach

5.435 The Local Plan seeks to deliver a community hub model and the strategies emerging for recreation, sports, open space and play all recommend the same model. The sport and recreational hubs are identified on Strategic Diagram 2 which supports this Local Plan. They are:

5.436 **Discovery Park:** a new, major open space and recreational area that is proposed to include a number of sports pitches (including the provision for 3G pitches), a large scale indoor sports building, strategic play space and managed outdoor recreational space. The majority of Discovery Park will come forward in response to development at Chilmington Green and the area is protected as part of the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan, the provisions of which fall outside the scope of this Local Plan. However, an extension to Discovery Park is proposed to come forward as part of the Court Lodge development (policy S3).

5.437 **Conningbrook Park:** a new large water based recreational resource and facilities at Conningbrook Lakes and significant indoor sports provision in the form of the existing Julie

Rose Stadium. Complementary provision in the form of strategic play space and informal space will also be provided here.

5.438 **Ashford Town Centre:** a key location for indoor sports provision within the Borough. The Stour Centre is the principal indoor sports facility within the borough and caters for a range of sports, including swimming, badminton, squash, netball and football. In addition the Town Centre is also home to green spaces in the form of Victoria Park, Memorial Gardens and the Green Corridor. The Town Centre will continue to be a key recreational and sporting hub over the plan period.

5.439 **Finberry/ Park Farm:** a community and leisure hub adjacent to the planned primary school that compliments the facilities planned at Bridgefield Park. This Hub aims to deliver a 3G state of the art sports pitch which will be supported by a multi-use play area, a community building with indoor sports courts and changing facilities.

5.440 **Kingsnorth Recreation Centre**: already a well established urban hub for the area and town. This could support an increase in the recreational and outdoor space offer located here.

5.441 **Sandyhurst Lane:** another site already offering social, community and sports provision (comprising two full size grass football pitches and one rugby pitch supported by a pavilion comprising four team and one officials changing room, bar and large function room). New provision is proposed which could include improved sports pitches, informal and natural green space and potentially allotment space.

5.442 **Spearpoint:** a busy football hub already existing on this site and contains six grass pitches, a newly built pavilion and tennis courts. The courts are currently in poor condition. The aspiration is to refurbish the tennis courts and provide a major new play area. Further leisure development on this site could also be considered.

5.443 **Pitchside/Courtside:** Pitchside and Courtside are adjacent dual use sites in South Ashford on the campus of John Wallis Academy. Pitchside consists of a full size 3G pitch and two full size grass football pitches for community use. In addition the Academy grass playing field has a junior pitch, full size football pitch and full size rugby pitch which are available for occasional community use as demand dictates. Pitchside is supported by a 4 changing room pavilion. Courtside comprises six hard courts supported by a two changing room pavilion with meeting room and office. The primary use of the courts is for netball with tennis the main secondary use. This provides a key mixed use sports hub and has the potential to be extending and upgraded.

Local Provision

5.444 Not all of the provision of recreation, sport, open space and play areas will serve a wider catchment or play a strategic role. There are a number of local areas which fulfil a key role in meeting the everyday communities needs. These areas include Bridgefield Park, South Willesborough (Bulleid Place/Swan Centre), Singleton (Cuckoo Park/ Singleton Environment Centre), and Repton Park and Community Centre. These offer multi-use community space for local residents, children's play and informal recreational open space. Hythe Road Recreation ground should be up-graded to provide a much needed quality open space for informal recreation including multi-use games area. When new development comes forward, there will

remain a need to deliver provision at a local scale, to directly serve the community in which it is located.

The approach in the rural area

5.445 The spatial approach in the rural area has to be a different one to the strategic hub approach above, given the dispersed nature of the settlement pattern. Here the Council has a strong track record of working with Parish Councils to ensure the delivery and maintenance of small scale provision across the rural settlements of the Borough.

5.446 In the rural areas it is important that the provision is linked where possible to public transport routes in order to work to avoid social exclusion, to ensure facilities are as accessible as possible to the widest catchment of users and thereby maximize the viability and vitality of the facilities themselves.

5.447 The Council will continue to liaise with the Parish Councils to determine the optimum level of provision possible in the rural areas.

Policy COM2 - Recreation, Sport, Play and Open Spaces

As a target, the Council shall seek to deliver the quantum of provision as new recreation, sport, play and open space provision by 2030 as set out in table 4 of this Local Plan.

Proposals will utilise the Sports England Calculator and comply with the standards set out within the Green Spaces and Water SPD, where practical.

Informal green space will normally be provided on site in line with the guidance and provisions contained within the Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

In Ashford, the provision of children's play, strategic parks, allotments, sports facilities shall be concentrated on key allocated sites within this Local Plan or at the sports and recreation hubs identified above. Proposals which undermine the ability of a hub to play a role in delivering this provision shall not be supported.

Provision that meets a localised need shall normally be required to be delivered on-site in a way that supports the local community as it comes forward.

In the rural area, provision should normally be delivered in a way that helps maintain, enhance and potentially expand existing provision at the settlement where development is proposed, or at the nearest settlement.

In line with the provision within the NPPF exceptions to the approach outlined above could be justified, should the following circumstances arise in that:

a. **there is suitable open/ green space provision nearby and this provision can be accessed by green routes,**
b. **there is suitable sports provision nearby and this provision is accessible and the facility is able to and has the capacity to be used by the public at key times and this access can be secured over the long term at determination of the application,**
c. **delivering such provision would render a scheme unviable,**
d. **not delivering the required provision is supported by the Council or in agreement with the Parish Council.**

Allotments

5.448 Allotment gardening is an increasingly popular leisure activity and allotments themselves are an important feature in both urban and rural communities, providing wildlife and species rich habitats and attractive areas of green space in otherwise residential areas.

5.449 Allotments also make an important contribution to the planning and promotion of healthy communities, with the benefits of such safe, attractive and functional green areas including not only the direct provision of places for physical activity, but also the psychological and social benefits that arise from engaging with nature and opportunities for informal social interaction. Given their role in the well-being of communities and the difficulties in finding new open spaces within existing built up areas, the development of existing allotment land will only be supported in exceptional circumstances.

5.450 Demand for allotments owned by the Council is kept under review, with additional provision being made where necessary. Over the lifetime of this Local Plan the need for additional allotment provision is 2.2ha, the strategy for which will be identified in the emerging Open Space Strategy.

5.451 Allotment provision should be provided in a way that is well related to residential properties, sit sympathetically in the landscape and enjoy suitable vehicular access arrangements. In addition, the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD establishes a number of design principles relating to allotment provision which should also be applied to all new allotment sites coming forward during the lifetime of this Plan.

Policy COM3 - Allotments

The provision of new allotments will be supported provided they follow the design principles established within the Public Green Spaces and Water Environment SPD.

Proposals for the redevelopment of existing allotment land will only be permitted where the allotment site is significantly under-used and suitable alternative provision for allotment holders is available nearby, where the site is not needed to rectify any local shortages in informal open space, and where the proposed development would not lead to the loss of an important undeveloped area which plays a significant role in the character of the local environment.

Cemeteries

5.452 The yearly mortality rate in this Borough has remained broadly constant over the last ten years despite an increase in population. This is due to people living longer, however a continued increase in life spans is unlikely over the medium term and so it has been assumed that the future mortality rate will increase in line with Ashford's population growth, which grew at a rate of 1.2% per annum between 2001 and 2011. Based on an average annual year on year future population increase of 1.2% per annum burial space within the Council's Cemeteries is likely to be exhausted in the early twenty twenties.

Policy COM4 - Cemetery Provision
Proposals for the expansion or creation of new cemeteries in the Borough will be supported providing that the land is suitable for such use, there are no adverse impacts on the water table, the provision and any facilities would sit sympathetically on the landscape so as to not adversely impact any wider views and suitable access onto the local road network can be achieved.

SECTION F - IMPLEMENTATION

Funding and Delivery of Infrastructure

5.453 This Plan is supported by an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which is an iterative document that sets out the infrastructure that is required to be delivered to support the planned development up to 2030. It has been informed by discussion with key providers and identifies (where known) how and when this infrastructure might be delivered and to what extent new development is directly reliant on its delivery as a means of prioritising the required infrastructure.

5.454 Over the last 20 years or so, the Council has successfully managed to fund new infrastructure of many types and forms through Section 106 Agreements. This infrastructure has helped to ensure that new developments are properly served by the services and facilities that support everyday life and that these facilities are delivered at the right time to meet new demand.

5.455 The introduction of the CIL Regulations in April 2015 now limits the scope of Section 106 Agreements and their ability to act as a pool for developer contributions towards strategic infrastructure, although they still have a role in the provision of site specific facilities. As a consequence the Council proposes to introduce a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule alongside this Local Plan. This has been tailored to take account of the general policy requirements contained within this Plan and reflects the viability position at the time of drafting. It is likely that the CIL Charging Schedule will need to be reviewed on a regular basis to reflect changing market conditions.

5.456 Nevertheless, the Council still considers that Section 106 Agreements can provide a more certain means of delivering specific infrastructure and services than the use of CIL receipts. This has benefits for developers, residents and service providers and allows for more transparency about what will be delivered and when. Consequently, the Council will continue to work with service providers to identify specific projects which meet additional demand arising from the policies of this Plan, allowing for a maximum of five S106 Agreements to provide proportionate contributions to those projects, in preference to assuming funding will arise from CIL in due course.

5.457 The Council also intends to publish a generic development contributions SPD that will provide greater clarity on what level of financial contributions will be sought from the development schemes to deliver the infrastructure that is required.

5.458 Clearly, it is not possible to foresee all potential needs arising from development proposals (including windfalls), and so these will need to be assessed at the time against relevant policies in this Plan. Where specific requirements are known at this stage, these have been identified through the site allocation policies.

Policy IMP1 - Infrastructure Provision

The Council will continue to work with relevant service providers to identify and deliver the infrastructure that is needed to support the development set out in this Plan.

All developments shall make provision to meet the additional requirements for infrastructure arising from the development, either through Section 106 Agreements and / or Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

Deferred Financial Contributions

5.459 Although this Plan is based on a whole plan viability approach to show that it is realistically able to be delivered, the Council understands the need to remain flexible - a key requirement of the NPPF.

5.460 In reality, the wider economy and the property market are likely to experience a number of different cycles through the lifespan of the Local Plan. Changes in demand, development values, and build costs will all have a bearing as can Government policy – for example, the support given to funding to secure development and infrastructure. Individual sites may incur unforeseen abnormal costs in their redevelopment or require specific infrastructure requirements that mean that, on occasion, additional costs need to be carried.

5.461 The starting point for this Plan is that development proposals can meet all of their respective policy and infrastructure requirements in full and be delivered in a timely way to ensure needs are met as a scheme comes forward. The Council has in the past adopted a flexible approach in relation to affordable housing and the provision of other infrastructure contributions. Given that this Plan has been subject to much more stringent viability testing than previous ones, and the policies in it have been framed from this evidence, it is expected that the number of applications where viability issues are identified should significantly reduce.

5.462 However it is recognised, that in some cases a shortfall in the contributions towards infrastructure requirements and affordable housing provision, as set out in this plan may be justified on viability grounds. In such cases, the council will work with the relevant service providers to determine the most appropriate balance of infrastructure provision that should be delivered so that the impact on residents who need the infrastructure is kept to the minimal possible.

5.463 Where site specific viability evidence can robustly demonstrate that the required developer contributions cannot be met, the council has adopted a system of 'deferred contributions'. Using this approach, the Council may agree that some normal Section 106 financial contributions can be foregone on the proviso that, should sales values increase beyond an agreed benchmark in future, some or all of the previously under-funded contributions will be made up. This approach provides the council and developers with important flexibility to allow development to proceed in changing market conditions over the course of the Plan period and has successfully been applied in the last few years. Where development risk is highest and market demand uncertain – for example, in new or untested sectors of the housing market such as private rented sector apartment complexes in the town centre - the Council may seek independent advice and decide to waive the 'deferred contributions' approach to help de-risk schemes and improve prospects of their delivery.

Policy IMP2 - Deferred Contributions

Development proposals shall achieve all of the policy and infrastructure requirements set out in this Local Plan in a way that ensures provision comes forward when it is required to support the needs generated by the development.

Proposals which do not fulfil this objective should not be permitted unless it is supported by extensive viability evidence that establishes why any deficit is deemed necessary to make the scheme viable and that there are wider planning benefits for the development to go ahead.

Any viability evidence that is provided to support an application must be done so in a transparent way and will be rigorously tested by independent advisors, paid for by the applicant. For larger schemes, where a proposals is to be phased over time, or where the opportunity exists to do so, the applicant will agree with the Council a programme or method of re-evaluating the viability of the scheme, to capture changes in circumstances.

Where a deficit has been deemed acceptable, the Council will require the applicant to agree a deferred contributions approach, to claw back as much of any deficit as possible, should market conditions improve significantly.

Enforcement

5.464 The Council's approach to enforcement is clear. It is the responsibility of individuals and businesses to comply with the law. The Council will do all it can to help advise and treat people fairly but those who flout the system deliberately and/or repeatedly and cause serious harm can expect the strongest possible response. The range of actions open to the Council and severity of penalties are often dictated by central government but, within these limits, the Council will always aim to act in way which deters others from non-compliance.

5.465 Residents understandably put great value on the quality of life and local environment that they enjoy – in the Borough's countryside, towns and villages. When development takes place without permission and causes significant impacts on people's lives, residents of the Borough understandably expect that action should be taken.

5.466 The Council has agreed 'Local Enforcement Plan' (as advised by the NPPF) which sets out how the Council can and will respond. Government advice encourages councils to try to resolve issues by negotiation as this is very often the quickest and most effective way to resolve problems. It is also the best way to use resources. Taking formal action, assuming it succeeds, can be a much longer process than people imagine and consumes a lot of staff time.

5.467 However, where negotiation fails, or individuals deliberately or persistently ignore the rules and carry out development that seriously impacts on the wider community, then there should be no doubt that the Council will take formal action whenever possible.

Policy IMP3 - Planning Enforcement

In line with the provisions in the NPPF, the Council have agreed a 'Local Enforcement Plan'. Provisions within this plan will be enacted by the Council and where negotiations fail, or where individuals deliberately or persistently ignore the rules and carry out development that seriously impact on the wider community then the Council will take formal action wherever possible

Governance of public community space and facilities

5.468 Development proposed within this Local Plan will deliver a variety of what can broadly be termed public community space and facilities which – in this context - includes open space, indoor and outdoor sports provision, community buildings, venues for art and the voluntary sector, SuDS features and areas around these features and, potentially, the verges next to footpaths and roads.

5.469 How this provision is delivered and maintained has a direct impact on the quality of a place. In the past, the Council has generally been successful in securing and managing, with our partners, community space and facilities from developers. This has greatly improved the quality of life for the Borough's residents and ensures that Ashford remains an attractive place to live, work and visit – a key objective of the Council as referenced in its Corporate Plan.

5.470 Although expanding such provision to cater for the new development proposed in this Local Plan clearly delivers many sound planning benefits, it does also create operational and financial challenges for the Council given the pressures on Council budgets. The same is true of our public sector partners. This pressure is unlikely to be eased, certainly in the short to medium term and in fact is likely to be increased, meaning a dynamic and innovative solution needs to be applied to ensure that both the right level of provision is secured to meet need, and that it is managed to a high standard so that the quality place aspirations are sustained.

5.471 With such public sector financial constraint, there is a real potential that the quality of community space and facilities is undermined through a lack of resources, particularly if it relies on the public sector adopting and taking full responsibility for the long term stewardship. Furthermore, such a total adoption role provides very limited opportunities and incentives for local communities to have – and maintain – a stake in their area and help develop a positive sense of place.

5.472 The Council's preferred position in recent times has been to not adopt new community space and facilities that come forward in response to development proposals. This remains the case.

5.473 Instead, the Council favours stewardship models as a means of ensuring ongoing management of community space and facilities. Such models take various forms, including community management companies, charitable trusts; Parish Council led models, community development trusts, community interest companies, and co-operative or community benefit societies.

5.474 The exact form of model will be dependent on local circumstances, the stewardship functions transferred, the extent and type of assets to be managed and the types of financial arrangements needed. Developers will be expected to endow new stewardship bodies with

both assets and cash where practical, the latter of which should be at a level at least equivalent to a ten year commuted payment period.

5.475 The Council accepts that these sorts of models may only be suitable where there is a sufficient scale of development to create a natural community focus or where there is sufficient scale of on-site community space and facilities to manage. In certain circumstances, smaller schemes could also adopt such an approach, particularly if there is sufficient space and facilities nearby which could be taken on by a joint governance arrangement.

5.476 Where a proposal is not suitable to deliver the community based model envisaged above on account of its lack of size or facilities being delivered and / or its proximity to other developments does not allow for a more holistic approach, then a private management company solution might be considered acceptable.

5.477 Where this is the case, proposals will need to demonstrate that the private management company proposed will:

- be run in a way that ensures residents have and retain a key governance role,
- maintain openness and transparency,
- be focused on the local development and the maintenance of the environment in the longer term with surpluses reinvested for such purpose,
- provide a quality service at a reasonable cost over the longer term,
- allow for residents to take control in the longer term should this be their ambition.

5.478 In certain circumstances, such as the adoption of community space and facilities that will form provision within a strategic hub (see policy COM2) or where the Council currently plays a governance role and want to retain this role, then the Council could be the adopting body. In these circumstances, financial contributions will be required towards the management of community space and facilities, for not less than a ten year period.

5.479 Given the importance of the issue of governance, all schemes that will deliver substantial levels of community space and facilities will be required to produce a governance strategy that will set out the specifications and details of the facilities to be delivered and how these will be managed and maintained over time. For larger schemes, this will also need to set out how the early governance arrangements will work in practice given that community space and facilities might be delivered before a community is fully established.

Policy IMP4 - Governance of Public Community Space and Facilities

Proposals that will deliver substantial community space and facilities are required to be supported by a governance strategy which will need to be agreed with the Council. This strategy will need to set out what facilities are to be delivered and by when, and how they will be managed over time to an acceptable standard.

Proposals which adopt a community stewardship model of governance will be supported.

Should a private management company model be promoted, then it will need to be established and run in a way that is affordable, gives the residents a key governance role and is focused towards the management of the facilities to be delivered by the development.

Where the Council takes on an adoption role, financial contributions will be secured from the developer towards the maintenance of facilities for at least a ten year period.

6 MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 It is essential that the policies in this new Local Plan are monitored so that early action can be taken to overcome any barriers to delivery of the Plan's objectives and policies. This is particularly important where there are key pieces of infrastructure that need to be delivered in a timely manner to enable development to proceed. Monitoring is also important to enable communities and interested parties to be aware of progress.

6.2 The Borough Council produces an Annual Monitoring Report that sets out the overall performance of planning policies set out in the various DPDs that have been prepared previously - each DPD has a set of Key Indicators that are used to monitor overall progress. The Monitoring Report will also provide up-to-date information on the implementation of any neighbourhood plans that have been made, and to determine whether there is a need to undertake a partial or full review of the Local Plan.

6.3 The Council's view is that there needs to be a consolidation of the various indicators that have been previously used into a set that can be easily interpreted and reflect the current Sustainability Appraisal Objectives. Such indicators will be included within the submission version of this Plan . The Council's framework for monitoring of this plan will be based on the following:

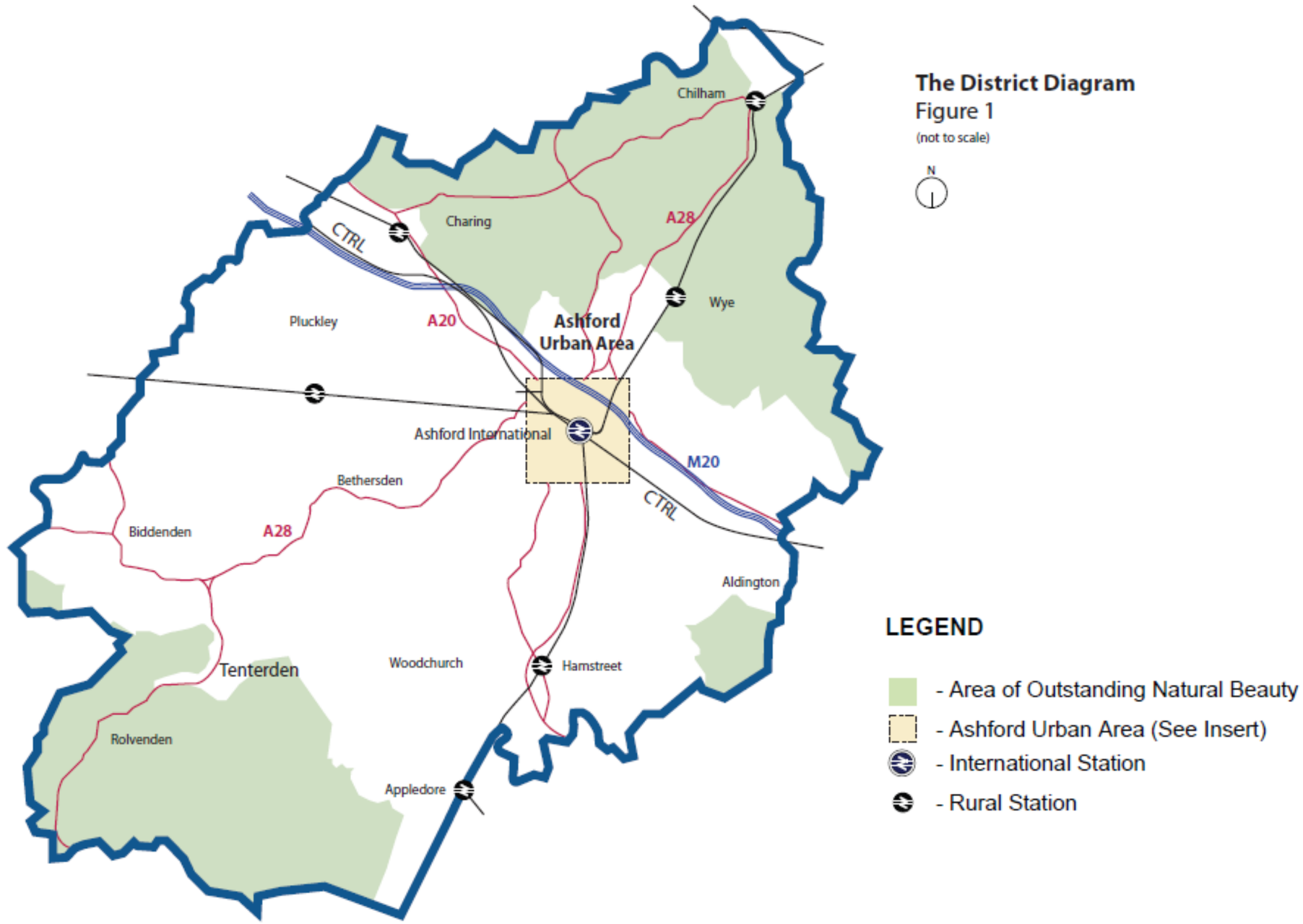
- To check the effectiveness of policy and whether it is delivering sustainable development;
- To check the timely delivery of key infrastructure
- To assess the extent to which policies are being implemented and whether development targets are being met;
- Where policies are not being implemented then explain why
- To identify policies that need early review if necessary

7 POLICIES MAP EXTRACTS

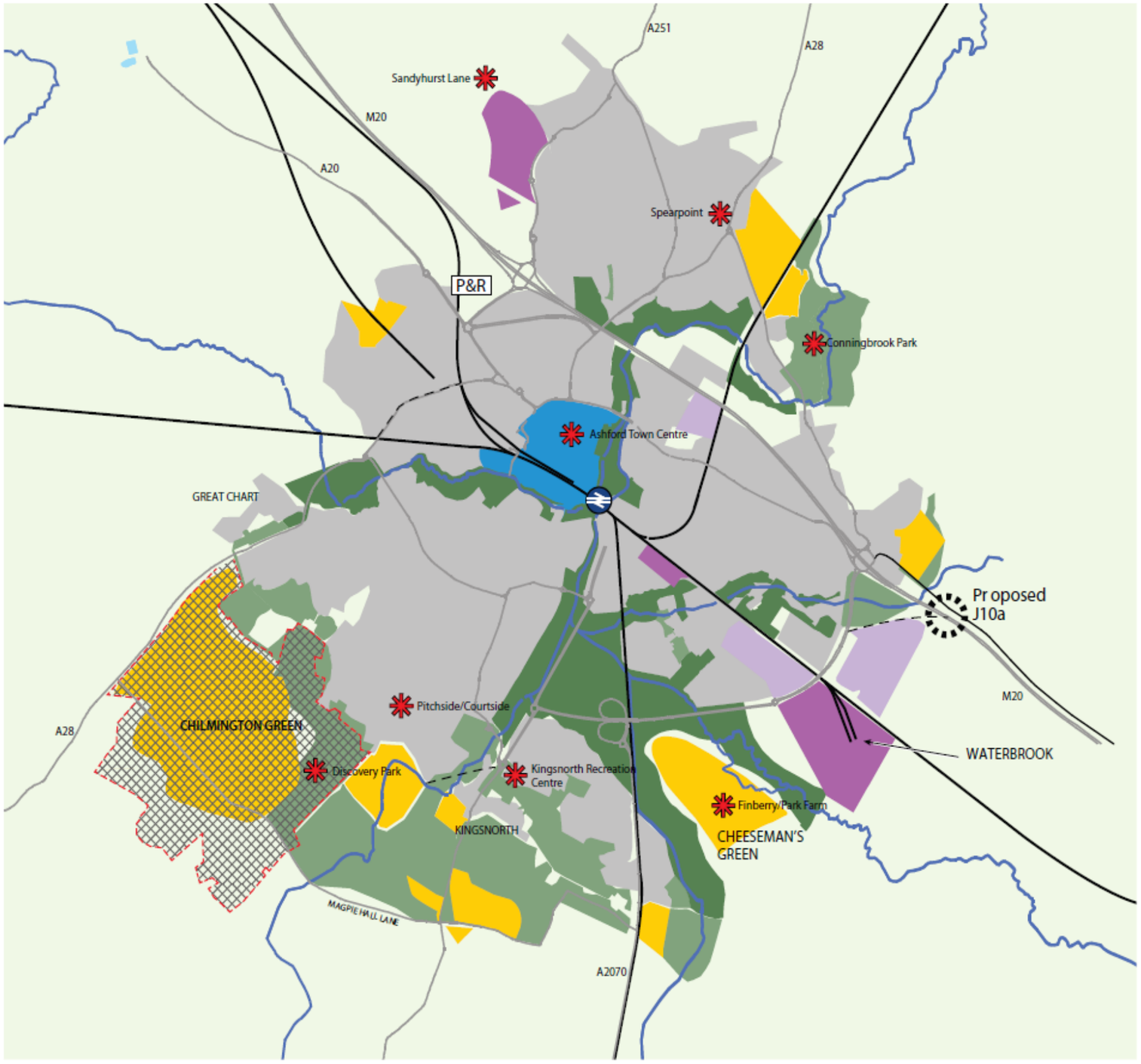
7.1 A full online policies map can be found at the following link:

http://www.ashford.gov.uk/local-plan-2030

Strategic Policy Maps



The District Diagram
Figure 1
(not to scale)



Ashford Urban Area - Insert
Figure 2
(not to scale)

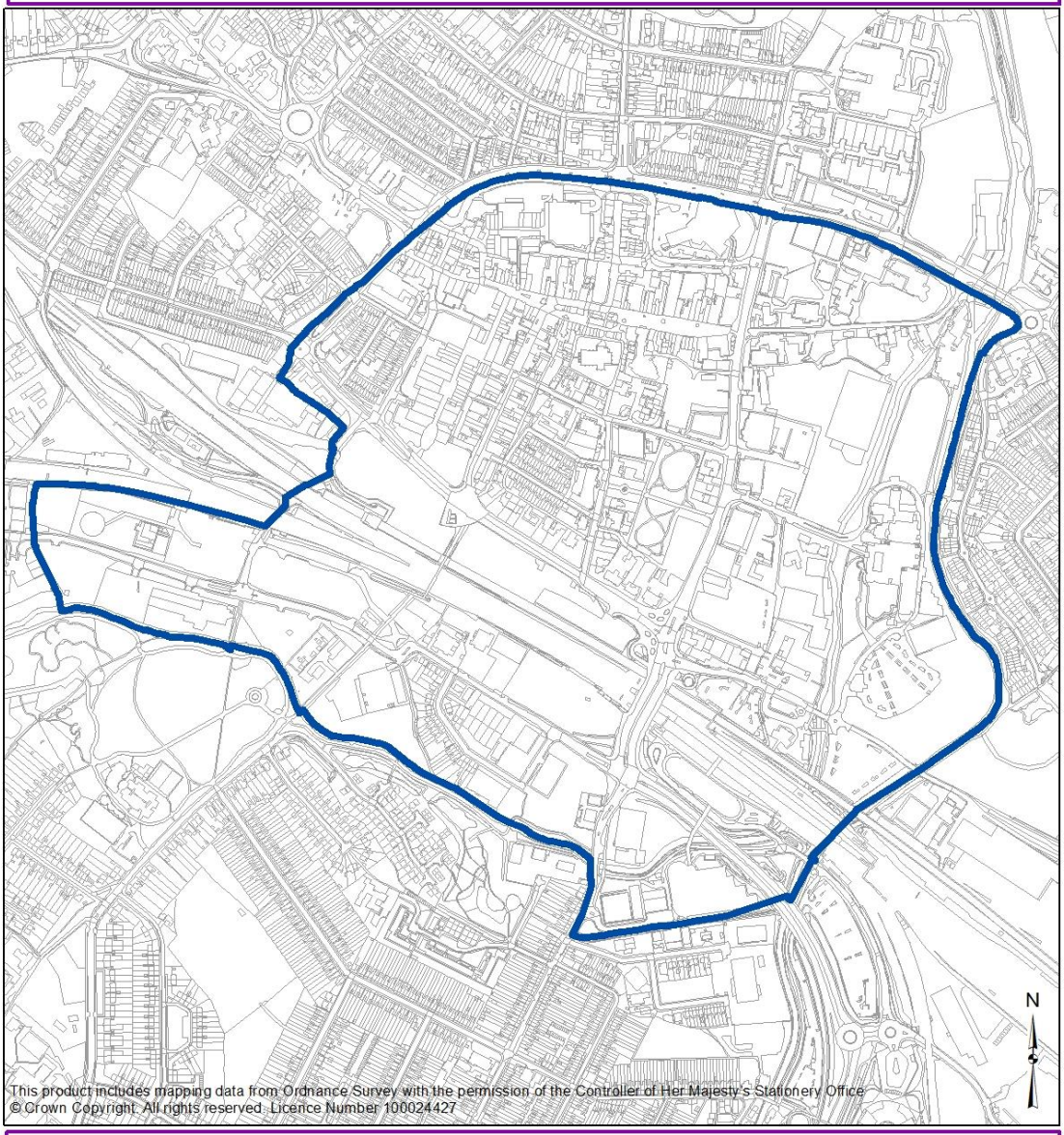
N

LEGEND

- Town centre
- Primarily employment development areas
- Primarily residential development areas
- Possible direction of development post 2030
- Mixed use development areas
- Possible direction of development post 2030
- Proposed highway schemes
- Sports & Recreation Hub
- Park and Ride
- Green Corridor
- Green Corridor Expansion
- Subject to Chilmington Green AAP Policies
- International and Domestic Station

Topic Policy Detailed Maps

SP4 Ashford Town Centre



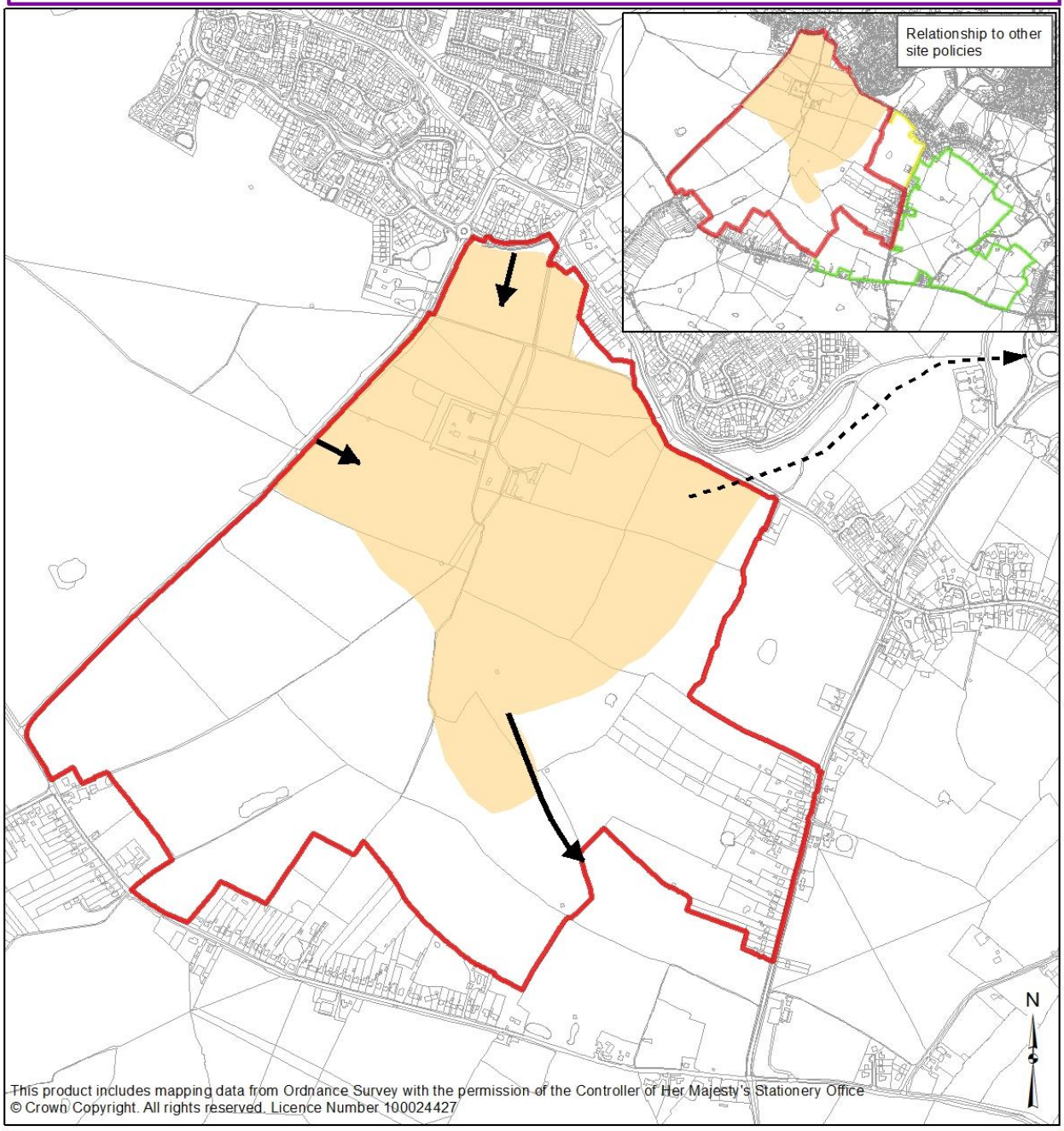
Key

Ashford Town Centre Boundary

0 120 240 480 Metres

Ashford local plan

S3 Court Lodge



0 0.5 1 Kilometres

Key

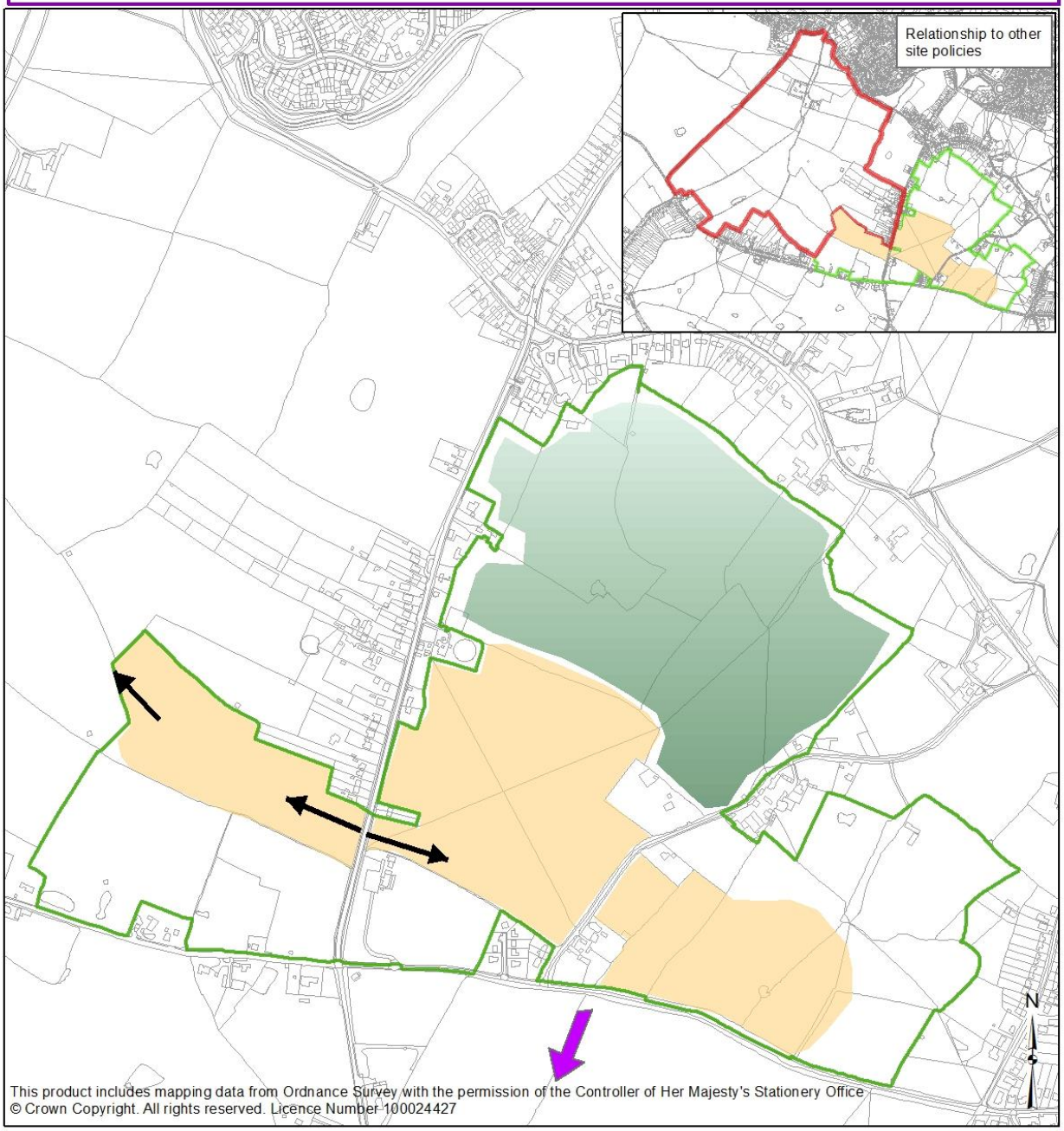
- S3 Court Lodge
- Main Access
- Indicative extent of development

Ashford local plan

Relationship to other site policies

- S4 Land N of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road
- S5 Land South of Pound Lane

S4 Land N of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road



Key

0 0.35 0.7 Kilometres

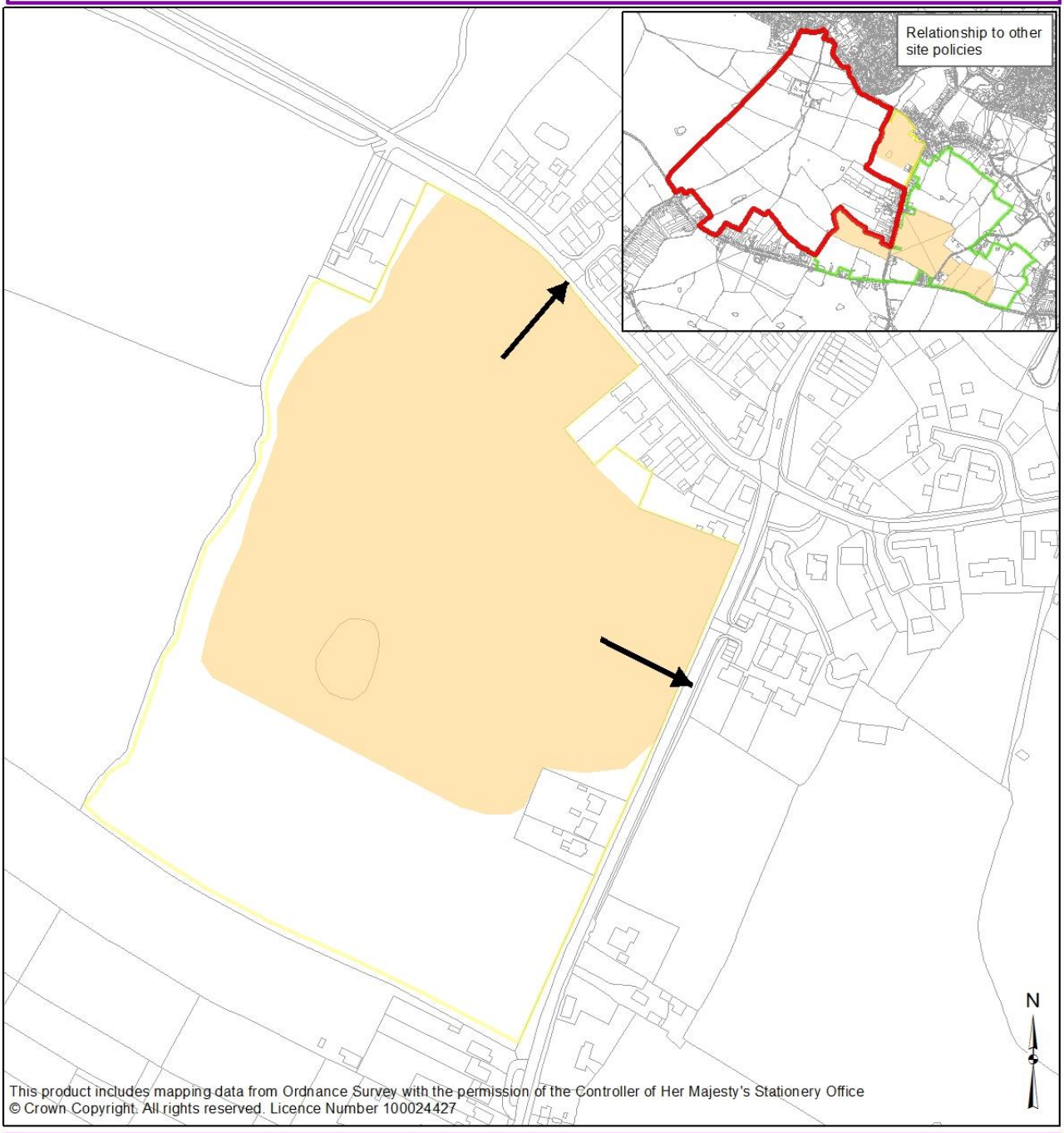
- S4 Land N of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road
- Main Access
- Future Potential Development
- Indicative extent of development
- Buffer zone

Relationship to other site policies

- S3 Court Lodge
- S5 Land South of Pound Lane

Ashford local plan

S5 Land south of Pound Lane



0 0.125 0.25 Kilometres

Key

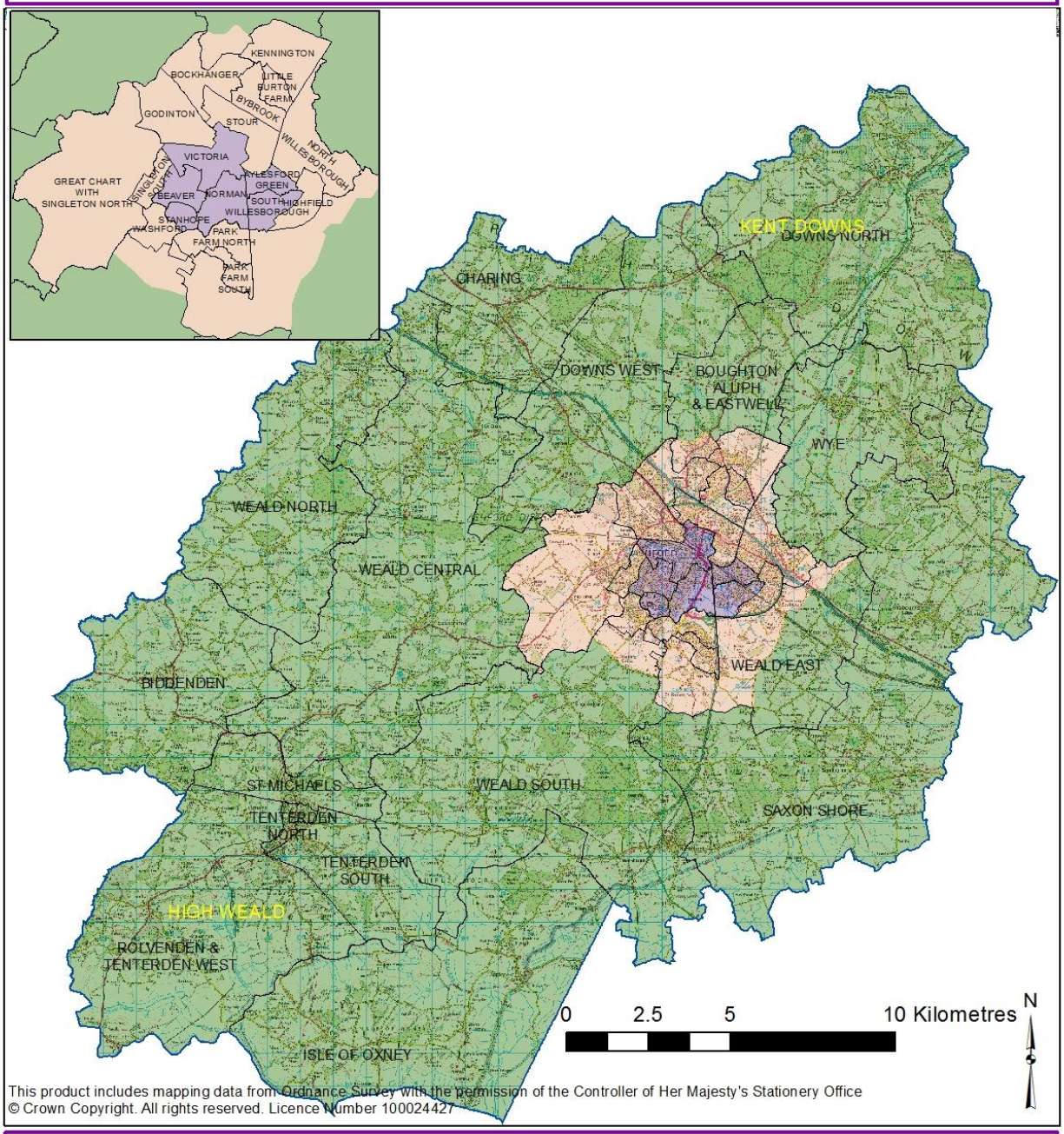
- S5 Land South of Pound Lane
- Main Access
- Indicative extent of development

Relationship to other site policies

- S3 Court Lodge
- S4 Land N of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road

Ashford local plan

Affordable Housing Viability Areas

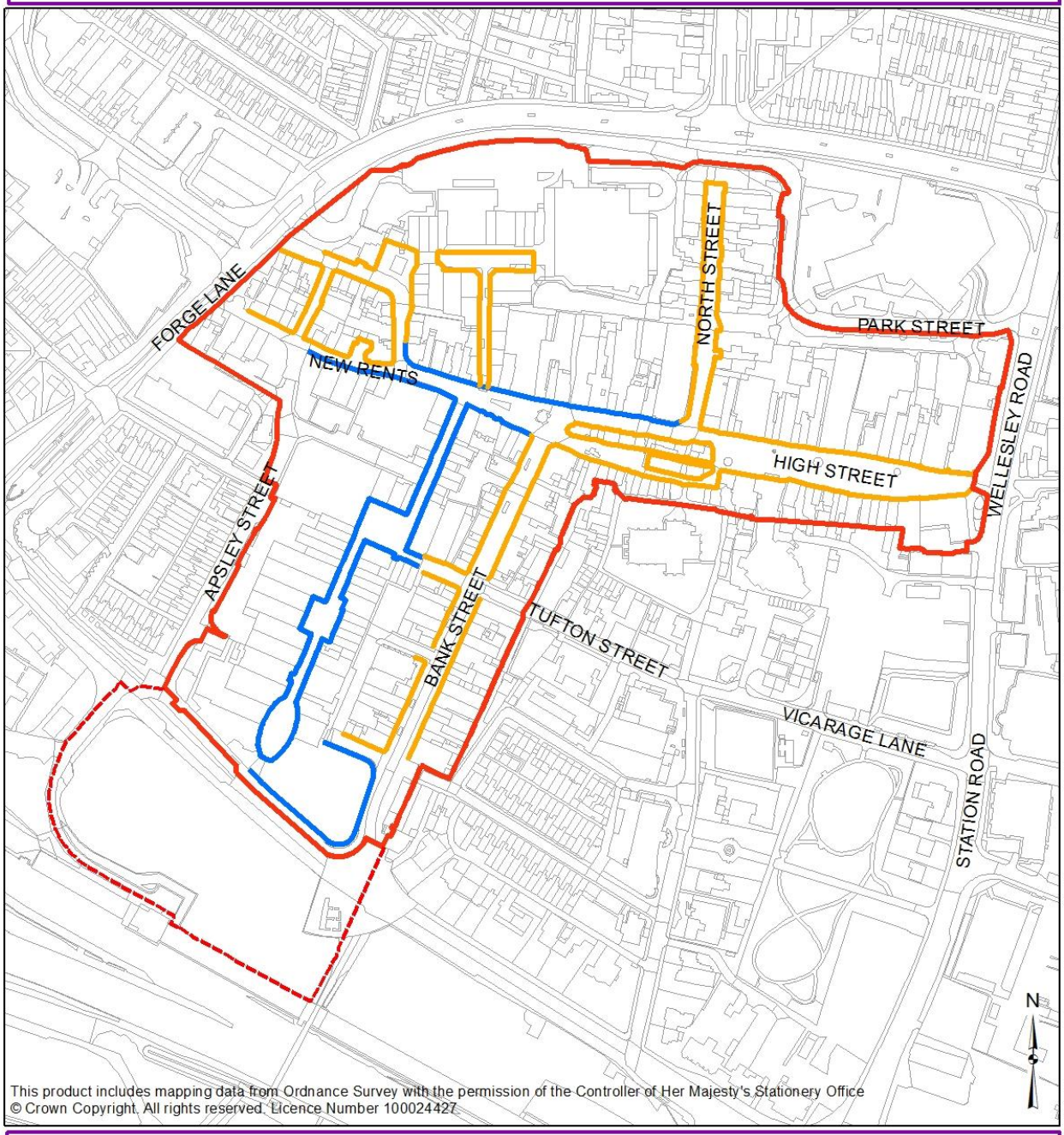


Key

- Ward Boundaries
- Zone A
- Zone B
- Zone C

Ashford local plan

EMP7 Shopping Frontages in Ashford Town Centre



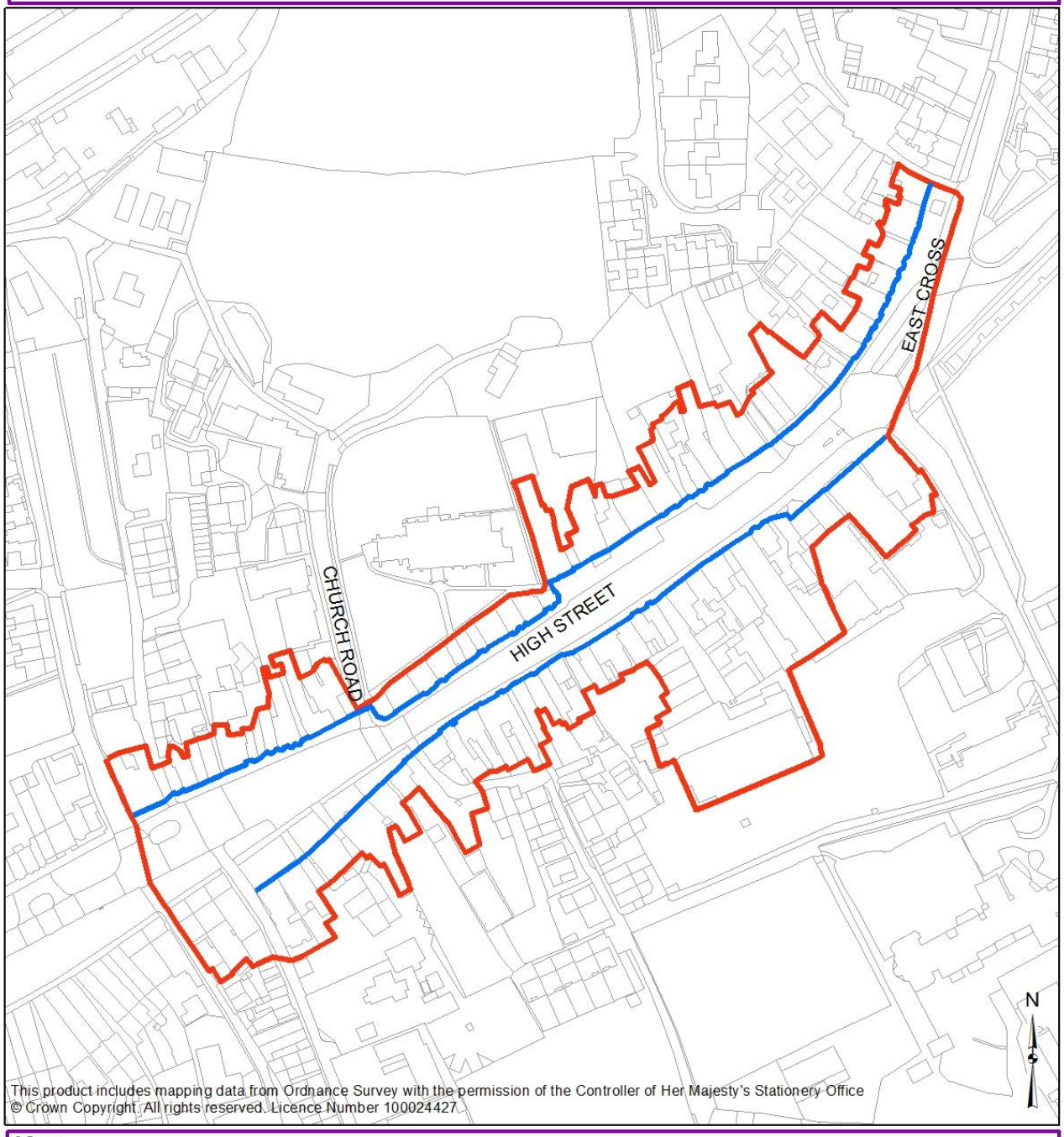
Key

- Primary Shopping Area
- Extension to Primary Shopping Area
- Primary Frontage
- Secondary Frontage

0 50 100 200 Metres

Ashford local plan

EMP8 Primary Shopping Frontage in Tenterden Town centre



Key

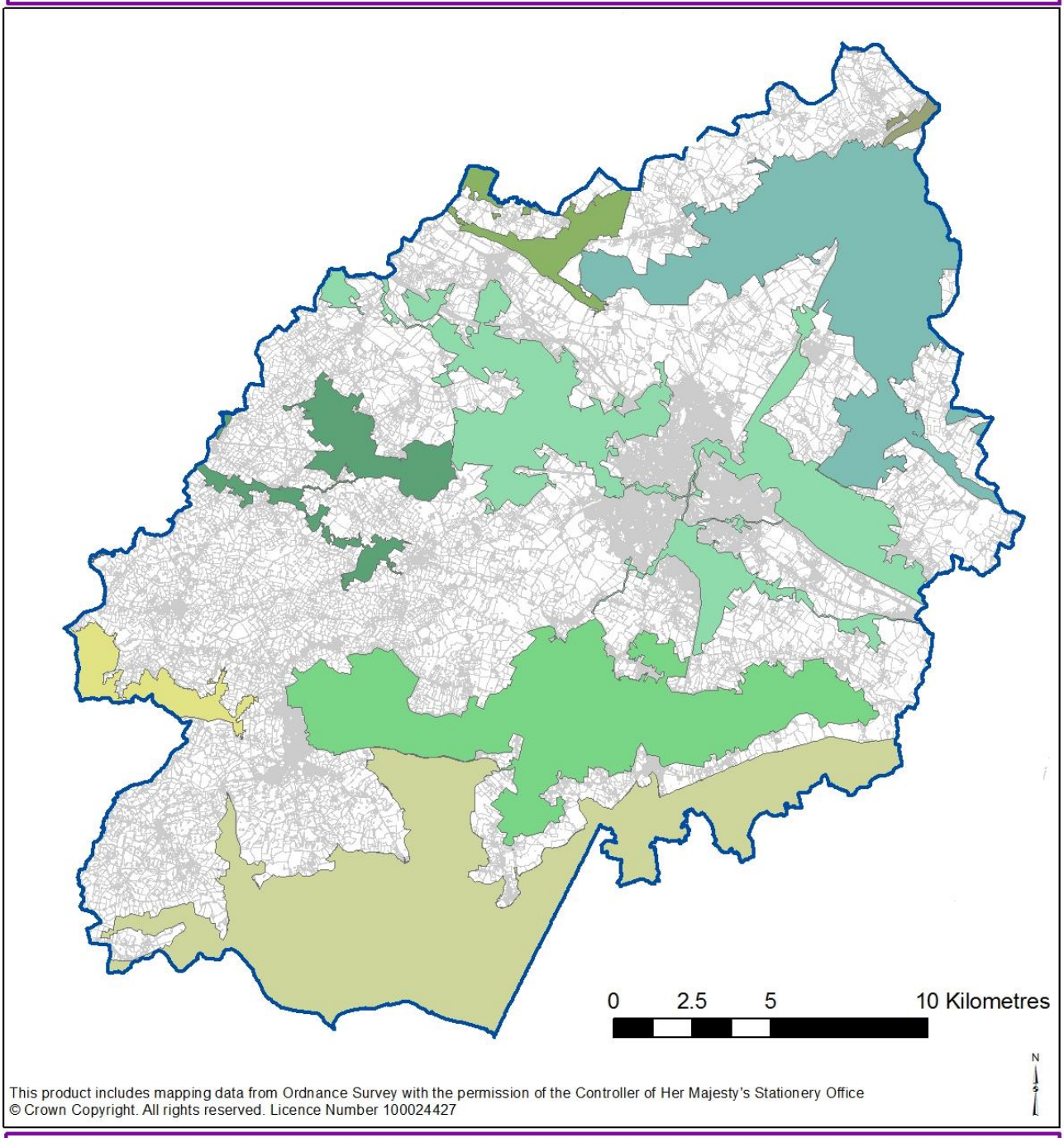
Primary Shopping Area

Primary Frontage

0 30 60 120 Metres

Ashford local plan

Ashford Biodiversity Opportunity Areas 2015



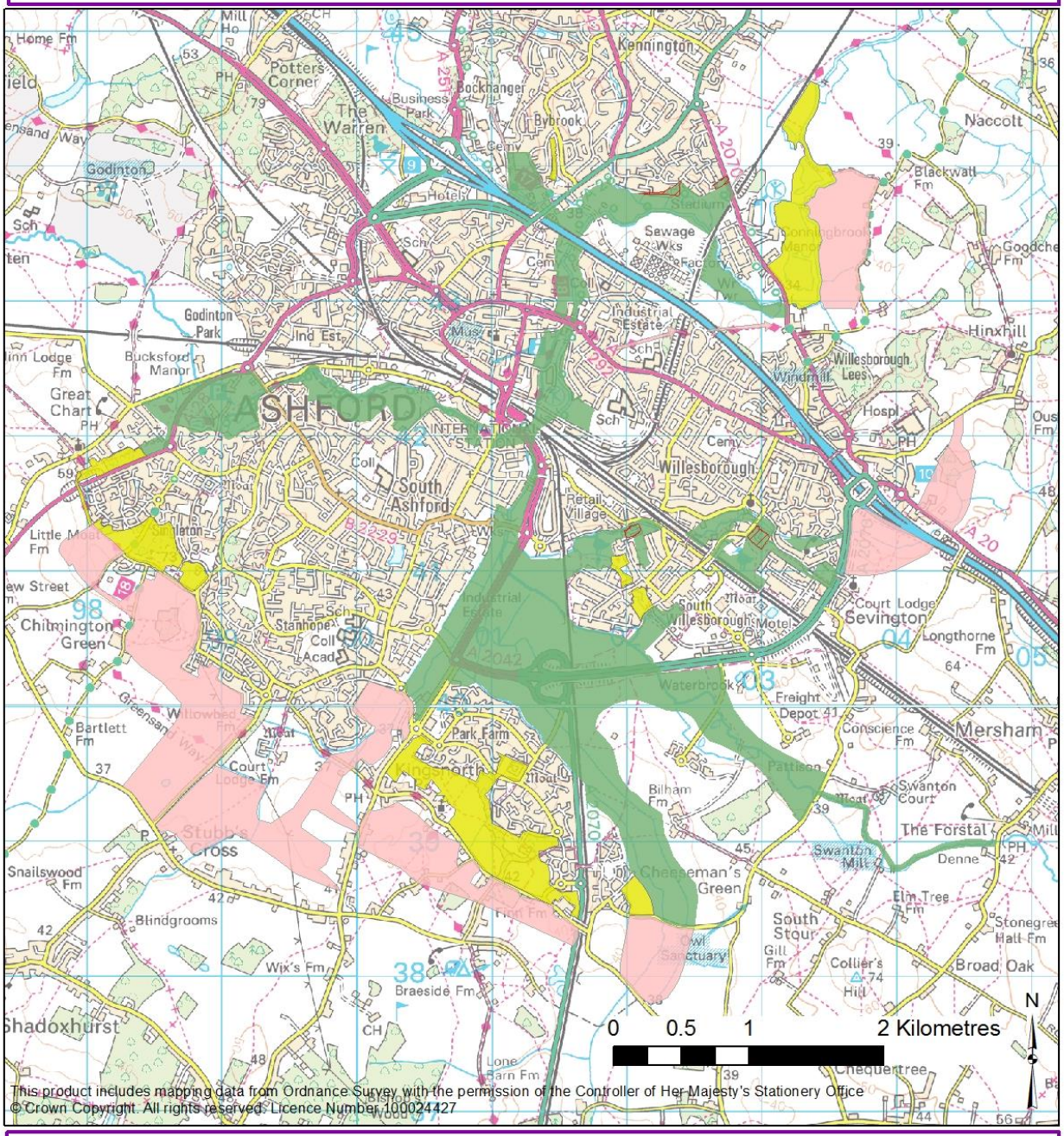
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Key

- Ashford Borough Boundary
- East Kent Woodlands & Downs
- High Weald
- Low Weald Woodland
- Lower Stour Wetlands
- Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
- Mid Kent Downs Woods & Scarp
- Mid Kent Greensand & Gault
- Romney Marshes
- The Blean

Ashford local plan

Ashford Green Corridor

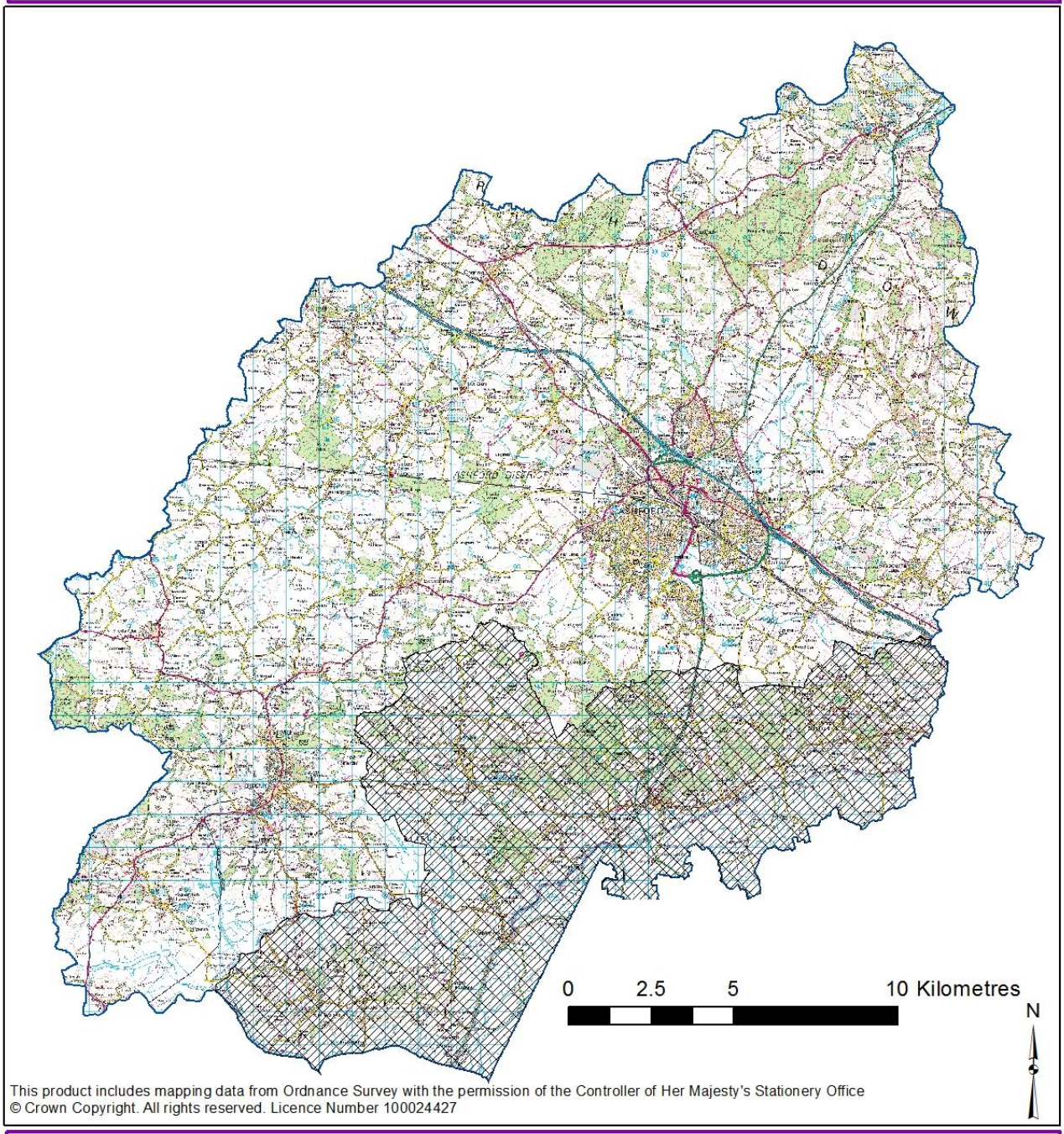


Key

- GREEN CORRIDOR
- EXTENSION
- FUTURE POTENTIAL
- REMOVAL

Ashford local plan

Proposed Dark Sky Zone



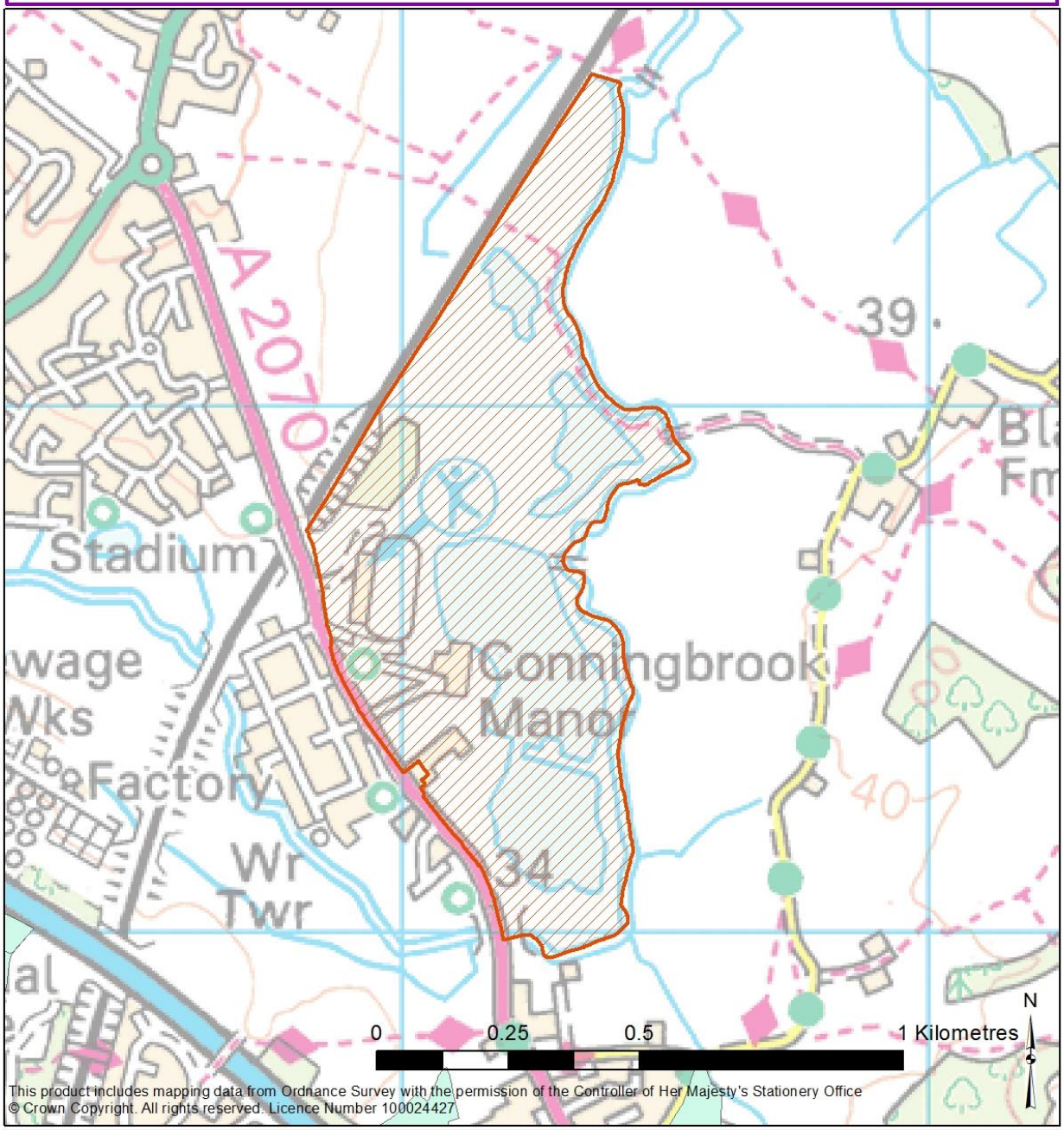
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Key

Proposed Dark Sky Zone

Ashford local plan

Conningbrook Strategic Park



Key

Conningbrook Strategic Park

Ashford local plan

8 GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

Air Quality Management Areas: Areas designated by local authorities because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives by the relevant deadlines.

Article 4 direction: A direction which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

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

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy allowing local authorities to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in their area.

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 Management: Development Management is the process by which planning applications are determined.

Development Plan: This includes adopted Local Plans and neighbourhood plans and is defined in Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

DPD: Development Plan Document. These are policy documents on a specific topic or cover a specific area that make up part of the current Development Plan. For Ashford these are the Ashford Core Strategy (2008), Ashford Town Centre Area Action Plan (2010), the Tenterden and Rural Sites Development Plan Document (2010), the Urban Sites and Infrastructure Plan (2012) and the Chilmington Green Area Action Plan (2014). These can be found on the Council's website http://www.ashford.gov.uk/development-plan-documents

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.

European site: This includes candidate Special Areas of Conservation, Sites of Community Importance, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, and is defined in regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.

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.

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).

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.

HMOs: Houses in Multiple in Occupation: Housing which is occupied by 3 or more unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities.

HRA: Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna into UK national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Assessments for significant effects on habitats must be carried out and mitigation measure identified.

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.

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.

Localism Act: The Localism Act was introduced in 2011. Its aim was to devolve powers from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils.

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).

National Planning Policy Framework. National planning policy (NPPF): This is the Government's statement of planning policy with which all Local Plan's must be in conformity. Where a local plan is silent on an issue planning decisions will be made in accordance with national policy. This document came into force in March 2012 and replaces the planning policy statements and planning policy guidance notes (PPS' and PPGs). http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG): Supporting guidance to the NPPF. Guidance can be updated and is available to view under: http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/

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).

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.

Plan Period: The period covered by policies in the Local Plan (up to 2030).

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.

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.

Primary shopping area: Defined area where retail development is concentrated (generally comprising the primary and those secondary frontages which are adjoining and closely related to the primary shopping frontage).

Primary and secondary frontages: Primary frontages are likely to include a high proportion of retail uses which may include food, drinks, clothing and household goods. Secondary frontages provide greater opportunities for a diversity of uses such as restaurants, cinemas and businesses.

Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principle 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.

Ramsar sites: Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.

Regional Spatial Strategy: The Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East is the South East Plan adopted in 2009. This was produced by the South East England Regional Assembly

which later became the South East England Regional Planning Body. This organisation and the South East Plan have been revoked under the Localism Act 2011.

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 qualifying households.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sites designated by Natural England under theWildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC): 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 (SPA): Areas which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, 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.

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.

9 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Schedule of superseded or deleted adopted policies

Policy Number	Policy Title/Purpose
GP10	Conserving and Enhancing Tenterden's Special Character
GP12	Protecting the Countryside and Managing Change
EN7	Shop Front
EN9	Setting and Entrances to Towns and Villages
EN10	Development on the Edge of Existing Settlements
EN11	Merging of Distinct Settlements
EN12	Private Areas of Open Space
EN13	Green Corridors
EN14	Land Adjoining the Green Corridors
EN16	Development in Conservation Areas
EN23	Sites of Archaeological Importance
EN27	Landscape Conservation
EN28	Historic Parks and Gardens
EN30	Nature Conservation Sites
EN31	Important Habitats
EN32	Important Trees and Woodlands
S13	Cheeseman's Green
S17	Park Farm, Kingsnorth
S20	Singleton
S21	Great Chart Playing Fields and Cricket Barracks
S22	Land at Former Rowcroft and Templar Barracks
S34	William Harvey Hospital
S36	Klondyke Works
HG3	Design in Village
HG5	Sites not on the Proposals Map
HG9	Extensions to Dwelling in the Countryside
HG10	Residential annexes
HG12	Extensions to caravans or mobile homes
HG16	Protection of existing housing
ET3	Ashford 'Employment Core'
ET4	Business Parks
ET7	'Bad Neighbour' developments
ET9	Re-use of Industrial Building for Leisure
RE4	B1 uses within Residential Curtilages

RE12	Annexes to Agricultural Dwellings for Retired or Semi-Retired Farmers
RE14	Removal of Agricultural Occupancy Conditions
RE15	Location of Agricultural Services
SH1	Proposals in Ashford and Tenterden town Centre
SH2	New Retail Schemes in out of Centre Locations
SH3	Primary Frontage in Ashford Town Centre
SH4	A2 Retail uses in Bank Street, Ashford
SH6	Local and Village Centre and Individual Shops
SH11	Garden Centre
SH16	Pubs
TP6	Cycle Parking
TP10	Park and Ride
TP20	Roadside Facilities
LE5	Equipped Public Open Space
LE6	Off-Site Provision of Public Open Space
LE7	Play Facilities
LE8	Leisure Facilities
LE9	Maintenance of Open Spaces
LE10	Loss of Leisure Facilities
LE11	Loos of Public Open Spaces
LE12	Loss of Playing Fields
LE13	Leisure Building on Public Open Space
LE16	Allotments
CF6	Standard of Construction of Sewerage Systems
CF7	Main Drainage in Village
CF8	Renewable Energy
CF9	Waste Recycling
CF10	Satellite Dishes
CF12	Free Standing Telecommunications Masts
CF14	Overhead Electricity Lines
CF19	New Health Care Centres
CF20	Nurseries and Crèches
CF21	School Requirements for new Housing Development
CS1	Guiding Principles
CS2	The Borough Wide Strategy
CS3	Ashford Town Centre
CS4	Ashford Urban Area
CS5	Ashford Urban Extensions
CS6	The Rural Settlement Hierarchy
CS7	The Economy and Employment Development
CS8	Infrastructure Contributions

CS9	Design Quality
CS10	Sustainable Design and Construction
CS11	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
CS12	Affordable Housing
CS13	Range of Dwelling Types and Sizes
CS14	Gypsies and Travellers
CS15	Transport
CS16	Retail
CS17	Tourism
CS18	Meeting the Community's Needs
CS18a	Strategic Recreational Open Spaces
CS19	Development and Flood Risk
CS20	Sustainable Drainage
CS21	Water Supply and Treatment
TC1	Guiding Principles for Town Centre development
TC2	The Town Centre Core
TC3	Elwick Place
TC4	Park Mall
TC5	Vicarage Lane Car Park
TC6	Corner of Elwick Road and Station Road
TC7	Ashford Library
TC8	Godington Way Industrial Estate
TC9	The Commercial Quarter
TC10	The Southern Expansion Quarter
TC11	Victoria Way East
TC12	Former Powergen North
TC13	Victoria Way South
TC14	Gasworks Lane
TC15	The Internationals Station Quarter
TC16	Former B&Q Site, Beaver Road
TC17	The Civic Centre
TC18	The Residential Transition Quarter
TC19	New Station South
TC20	New Station North
TC21	Multi-Storey Car Parks
TC22	Office, Retail and Leisure Parking Standards
TC23	Residential Parking Standards
TC24	Cycles Parking Standards
TC25	Commuted Parking
TC26	Green Corridors in the Town Centre
TC27	Open Space, Recreation, Sport and Play Facilities

TENT1	Tenterden Southern Extension
CHAR1	Land South of Arthur Baker Playing Fields
CHAR2	Land South of Maidstone Road
HAM1	Land North of Lancaster Close
HAM2	Land at Parker Farm
WYE1	Wye Court Farm, Land off Churchfield Way
WYE2	Land at Luckley Field, Wye
WYE3	Imperial College, Wye
ALD1	Land South and West of Quarry Wood
BETH1a	Land at Mill Road
BETH2	Land rear of The George Public House
BID1	Land at Sandeman Way
CHIL1	Former Chilham Sawmill Site
ROLV1	Rolvenden Football Ground, Tenterden Road
WOOD1	Land between 82-120 Front Road, Woodchurch
TRS1	Minor Residential Development or Infilling
TRS2	New Residential Development Elsewhere
TRS3	Replacement Dwelling in the Countryside
TRS4	Exception Sites for Local Needs Housing
TRS5	Exception Sites for Specialist Housing Schemes
TRS6	Exception Sites for Community Facilities
TRS7	Retention of Existing Employment Sites & Premises
TRS8	Extension to Employment Premises
TRS9	New Employment Premises and Uses in the Rural Settlements
TRS10	New Employment Premises in the Countryside
TRS11	Conversions of Rural Buildings to Non-Residential Uses
TRS12	Conversion of Rural Buildings to Tourist-Related Residential Uses
TRS13	Conversion of Rural Buildings to General Residential Uses
TRS14	Diversifying Existing Agricultural Businesses
TRS15	Tenterden Primary Shopping Frontages
TRS16	Rural Shops and Services
TRS17	Landscape Character & Design
TRS18	Important Rural Features
TRS19	Infrastructure Provision to Serve the Needs of New Developments
U0	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
U1	Land off Abby Way, Willesborough Lees
U2	Newtown Works
U3	Land at Chart Industrial Estate
U4	Lower Queens Road
U5	Land at Blackwall Road, Willesborough Lees
U6a	Former Ashford South Primary School

U6b	K College, Jemmett Road
U7	Leacon Road
U8	Warren Park and Ride
U9	Maidstone Road
U10	Former Ashford Hospital
U11	Bishop's Green, Singleton
U12	Associate House, Queens Road
U13	Mabledon Avenue
U14	Land at Willesborough Lees
U15	Henwod
U16	Orbital Park
U17	Eureka Business Park
U18	Warren Lane
U19	Sevington
U20	Loss or Redevelopment of Employment Sites
U21	Green Corridors
U22	Conningbrook Strategic Park
U23	Landscape Character and Design
U24	Infrastructure Provisoon to Serve the Needs of New Development

Appendix 2 - Evidence Base

Ashford Town Centre Parking Review: Ashford Borough Council (ABC) appointed Peter Brett Associates to provide a review and update of the existing parking strategy to establish potential capacity and future demands arising from development envisaged in the Local Plan.

Ashford Cycling Strategy: Sustrans have been contracted to survey every town in England for the Department for Transport to provide cycle data. The cycling strategy builds upon this evidence and sets out a strategy for cycling in the town of Ashford.

Draft Ashford Borough Cultural Strategy: The strategy looks at the existing art and cultural industry provision within the borough but with a specific focus on the town of Ashford. It then looks at opportunities for the industry to expand and what the future demands might be for a variety of space as a result of development coming forward over the Plan period.

Draft Ashford Borough Outdoor Sports and Indoor Facilities Strategy: Reviews and audits all outdoors sports pitches and indoor facilities in the borough. The Strategy then sets out how this provision could be expanded and managed up to 2030, in a sustainable way. The Strategy is Sports England compliant in that it follows their guidance and has had input from various national governing bodies for sports (including football, rugby, hockey and cricket).

Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016: Sets out the infrastructure that will be needed up to 2030 in order to support the growth envisaged in the Local Plan. The IDP is supported by a Infrastructure Delivery Schedule which separates this provision into various themes and provides an indication of when the provision is needed, who is the lead body to deliver it, what it will broadly cost and what the likely funding gap is. The IDP and IDS are both iterative in nature and have been supported by extensive input from infrastructure providers.

Employment Land Review 2016: Commissioned by the Council and carried out by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners in 2016. Provides a review of current provision and forecasts future demands in terms of employment land needs, by sector.

Gypsy, traveller and travelling showpeople assessments (2012 and update 2016): ABC commissioned Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) at the University of Salford to produce an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, establishing the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This report presents the projection of permanent and transit requirements for the period 2012-2028. ABC produced an update to this work in 2016.

Habitat regulation assessment and appropriate assessment: Habitats Regulations Assessment. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 transposes EU Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats of wild flora and fauna into UK national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites. Assessments for significant effects on habitats must be carried out and mitigation measure identified.

Retail and leisure needs assessment 2015: Assessment which advises on the level of retail / leisure development that is required based on the current provision and market share and how this could change as a result planned growth up to 2030.

Rural economic assessment: The purpose of the study is to assess the likely growth of the rural economy to 2030 and to identify locations within the rural area of Ashford Borough that are capable and suitable for accommodating jobs and industry to support the growth of the local economy.

Strategic employment options report: Ashford Borough Council commissioned a Strategic Employment Options Report to consider future demand for employment land to 2030. The report has been prepared by a consultancy team, comprising GL Hearn (GLH), Cambridge Econometrics (CE) and SQW.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: An SFRA is a planning tool that assists councils in their selection and development of sustainable site allocations away from vulnerable flood risk areas. The SFRA will assist the council to make the spatial planning decisions required to inform the forthcoming Local Plan for the period up to 2030.

Strategic housing and employment land availability assessment: A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which requires LPA's to: *'prepare a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the plan period.'*

Strategic housing market assessment: The purpose of the SHMA is to develop a robust understanding of housing market dynamics, to provide an assessment of future needs for both market and affordable housing and the housing requirements of different groups within the population.

Sustainability Appraisal /Strategic Environmental Assessment: In line with relevant EU and UK legislation, these documents review the policy framework against economic, social and environmental factors to ensure that they contribute towards the aims of sustainable development.

Transport evidence - Court Lodge Link Road: A report undertaken by Amey, commissioned by ABC through KCC, which provides design support in respect of the proposed Court Lodge Link Road as identified in the Local Plan.

Transport modelling: Amey have been commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC), in partnership with Ashford Borough Council (ABC), to assess the impact of major Local Plan allocation sites to the north of Ashford town centre. This report aims to assess the impact of two sites (Kennington East and Eureka) on the local highway network.

Whole Plan Viability: Evidence which assess the cost implications on the development industry, stemming from the policy framework contained within the Local Plan. It has been prepared in consultation with the development industry and other key stakeholders and follows the relevant regulations and guidance.

Appendix 3 - List of housing site allocations

	Site	Units
S2	Kennington	700
S3	Court Lodge	950
S4	Land South of Steeds Lane and Magpie Hall Road	320
S5	Land south of Pound Lane	100
S6A	Newtown Works	350
S7	Lower Queens Road	40
S8	Kennard Way	25
S9	Gasworks Lane	150
S10	Victoria Way/ Leacon Road	100
S11	K College Site, Jemmett Road	154
S12	South School	110
S13	Park Farm South East	250
S14	Finberry North West	300
S15	Waterbrook	300
S17	Willesborough Lees	200
S19	Conningbrook – Phase 2	120
S20	Eureka Park	300
S24	TENT 1B	175
S26	Appledore Surgery & Village Hall	15
S27	Biddenden – North Street	45
S28	Charing – Northdown Service Station, Maidstone Road	20
S29	Egerton – Land on New Road	15
S30	Hamstreet – Land North of St Mary's Close	80
S31	Hamstreet – Parker Farm	10
S32	High Halden – Land at Hope House	25
S33	Hothfield – Land East of Coach Drive	40
S34	Mersham – Land adjacent to the Village Hall	10
S35	Shadoxhurst – Rear of Kings Head PH	25
S36	Smarden – Land adjacent to Village Hall	25
S37	Smeeth – Land south of Church Road	30
S38	Woodchurch – Lower Road	8
S39	Front Road, Woodchurch – Front Road	8
S40	Arthur Baker Playing Field, Charing	35
	TOTAL	**5,010**

Appendix 4 - Green Infrastructure Assets

INTERNATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

- Wye and Crundale SAC
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay RAMSAR

NATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

NNRs at:

- Hamstreet Woods
- Wye and Crundale Downs

SSSIs at :

Alex Farm Pastures TQ 968 369

River Beult TQ 865 425

Charing Beech Hangers TQ 979 484

Down Bank TR 083 522

Ham Street Woods TQ 996 352

Hart Hill TQ 943 506

Hatch Park TR 063 410

Hoads Wood TQ 953 426

Hothfield Common TQ 969 458

Orlestone Forest TQ 982 350

Park Wood, Chilham TR 043 526

Walland Marsh TQ 950 290

Wye and Crundale Downs TR 080 470

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

Hemsted Forest

Sandpit Wood, etc. Clapper Hill

Woods, Meadows and Ponds, High Halden

Knock Wood, etc. Tenterden

Ashenden Gill, etc. Tenterden

Heronden Woods and Pasture, Tenterden

Friezingham Dykes and Newmill Channel, etc. Tenterden

Rother Levels and adjacent Woods, Wittersham

Halden Place Orchard, Nr. Rolvenden

Stone Cliff, Isle of Oxney

Comb Wood, etc. Wittersham

Spuckles Wood, etc. Stalisfield Green

Hunts Wood, etc. Kenardington

Harlakenden Wood, Shadoxhurst

Valley west of Tong Green

Bilsington Woods and Pasture

Blean Woods, South

Aldington Sandpit

South Willesborough Dykes

Park Wood, etc. Nr. Kenardington

Shadoxhurst Woods and Pasture

Aldington Woods

River Great Stour, etc. Godinton

Hothfield Lake, etc.

Ashford Warren, etc.

Royal Military Canal

Great Stour, etc. Ashford to Fordwich

Little Chart Mill Ponds, Woods, etc.

Woods and Pasture, extra to Hoads Wood SSSI

March Wood, etc. Hothfield

Weald Cottage Meadow, etc. Bethersden

Dering Wood, etc. Pluckley

Pasture and Orchard, Pluckley

Ponds and Pasture around Smarden

Tylden Strict Baptist Chapel Yard

River Sherway adj. Ponds and Pasture, Headcorn

Foxden Wood, etc. Egerton

Pasture, Pembles Cross

Charing Hill Chalk Pit, etc.

Longbeech Wood, Charing

Challock Forest, King's Wood

Denge Wood complex

Woods and Pasture, Mill Pond, near St. Michaels

Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood, etc.

Naccolt Pit

Woods, etc. Brabourne

Pasture, etc. Bulltown Corner, extra to SSSI

Kingsmill Down Pasture, Hastingleigh

Huntstreet Woods and Pasture

Bybrook Nature Reserve

Orlestone Forest

Lord's Wood, etc. Stone-in-Oxney

Meadow near Maltman's Hill, Smarden

Wanden Meadows, etc. Egerton Forstal

Woods and Meadows near Shadoxhurst

Jarvis Farm Meadows and Pond, near Woodchurch

Tile Lodge Wood, etc. Eastwell

Winchcombe Down (south), extra to SSSI

Challock Churchyard, near Challock Manor

Woods, Pasture and Ponds, Bromley Green

Burnt Mill Pond, etc. Charing Heath - extra to SSSI

Orlestone Pastures and Woods

Dering Meadows, Maltman's Hill

Rolvenden Churchyard

Lenham Heath and Chilston Park

Hothfield Common Field

Hurst Wood, Charing Heath

Cork Farm Apple Orchard, Old Wives Lees

BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Parts of the following Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) fall within this Borough:

- East Kent Woodlands & Downs
- High Weald
- Lower Stour Wetlands
- Low Weald Woodland
- Mid Kent Greensand & Gault
- Mid Kent Downs Woods & Scarp
- Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
- Romney Marshes
- The Blean

INTERNATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

- Wye and Crundale SAC
- Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay RAMSAR

NATIONALLY PROTECTED SITES

NNRs at:

- Hamstreet Woods
- Wye and Crundale Downs

SSSIs at :

- Alex Farm Pastures TQ 968 369
- River Beult TQ 865 425
- Charing Beech Hangers TQ 979 484
- Down Bank TR 083 522
- Ham Street Woods TQ 996 352
- Hart Hill TQ 943 506
- Hatch Park TR 063 410
- Hoads Wood TQ 953 426
- Hothfield Common TQ 969 458
- Orlestone Forest TQ 982 350
- Park Wood, Chilham TR 043 526
- Walland Marsh TQ 950 290
- Wye and Crundale Downs TR 080 470

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES

- Hemsted Forest
- Sandpit Wood, etc. Clapper Hill
- Woods, Meadows and Ponds, High Halden
- Knock Wood, etc. Tenterden
- Ashenden Gill, etc. Tenterden
- Heronden Woods and Pasture, Tenterden
- Friezingham Dykes and Newmill Channel, etc. Tenterden
- Rother Levels and adjacent Woods, Wittersham
- Halden Place Orchard, Nr. Rolvenden
- Stone Cliff, Isle of Oxney
- Comb Wood, etc. Wittersham
- Spuckles Wood, etc. Stalisfield Green
- Hunts Wood, etc. Kenardington
- Harlakenden Wood, Shadoxhurst
- Valley west of Tong Green
- Bilsington Woods and Pasture
- Blean Woods, South
- Aldington Sandpit
- South Willesborough Dykes
- Park Wood, etc. Nr. Kenardington
- Shadoxhurst Woods and Pasture
- Aldington Woods
- River Great Stour, etc. Godinton
- Hothfield Lake, etc.
- Ashford Warren, etc.
- Royal Military Canal
- Great Stour, etc. Ashford to Fordwich

- Little Chart Mill Ponds, Woods, etc.
- Woods and Pasture, extra to Hoads Wood SSSI
- March Wood, etc. Hothfield
- Weald Cottage Meadow, etc. Bethersden
- Dering Wood, etc. Pluckley
- Pasture and Orchard, Pluckley
- Ponds and Pasture around Smarden
- Tylden Strict Baptist Chapel Yard
- River Sherway adj. Ponds and Pasture, Headcorn
- Foxden Wood, etc. Egerton
- Pasture, Pembles Cross
- Charing Hill Chalk Pit, etc.
- Longbeech Wood, Charing
- Challock Forest, King's Wood
- Denge Wood complex
- Woods and Pasture, Mill Pond, near St. Michaels
- Willesborough Lees and Flowergarden Wood, etc.
- Naccolt Pit
- Woods, etc. Brabourne
- Pasture, etc. Bulltown Corner, extra to SSSI
- Kingsmill Down Pasture, Hastingleigh
- Huntstreet Woods and Pasture
- Bybrook Nature Reserve
- Orlestone Forest
- Lord's Wood, etc. Stone-in-Oxney
- Meadow near Maltman's Hill, Smarden
- Wanden Meadows, etc. Egerton Forstal
- Woods and Meadows near Shadoxhurst
- Jarvis Farm Meadows and Pond, near Woodchurch
- Tile Lodge Wood, etc. Eastwell
- Winchcombe Down (south), extra to SSSI
- Challock Churchyard, near Challock Manor
- Woods, Pasture and Ponds, Bromley Green
- Burnt Mill Pond, etc. Charing Heath - extra to SSSI
- Orlestone Pastures and Woods
- Dering Meadows, Maltman's Hill
- Rolvenden Churchyard
- Lenham Heath and Chilston Park
- Hothfield Common Field
- Hurst Wood, Charing Heath
- Cork Farm Apple Orchard, Old Wives Lees

BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Parts of the following Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) fall within this Borough:

- East Kent Woodlands & Downs
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- Mid Kent Downs Woods & Scarp
- Medway & Low Weald Grassland & Wetland
- Romney Marshes
- The Blean

Appendix 5 - The Housing Trajectory

Housing Target figure 2011-2030	14,680				Completions		11//12	633	13//14	137	15/16	1022		Residual 16-30	12,199
							12//13	284	14//15	405	Total	2,481			
	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	TOTAL
TOWN CENTRE SITES															
Former Powergen			150		100		150		150		110				660
Elwick Road Phase 2				50	50	100									200
Victoria Way East			60	60	60	40									220
Gasworks Lane										50	50	50			150
Extant dwellings - not started															0
Com Quarter (TC9)				79	80										159
CHILMINGTON GREEN			50	100	150	200	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	2500
URBAN SITES															0
Existing Allocations - Under construction															0
Finberry (LP 2000)*	110	65	65	65	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	0		905
Repton Park (LP 2000)	80	80	80	80	80	75									475
Land at Park Farm East (Bridgefield) (LP 2000)	86														86
Ashford Hospital Kings Avenue (U10)	3														3
Existing allocations - Not started															0
Godinton Way (TC8)	40	43													83
Conningbrook (U22)			25	50	50	50	50	50	25						300
Land at butt field road, Singleton (U11)	14														14
Lower Queens road (U4)								40							40
Leacon road (U7)			50	50											100
K College (U6b)					35	40	44	35							154
Former Ashford South Primary School (U6a)								25	50	35					110
Blackwall road (U5)		34													34
Abbey Way (U1)			20												20
Willesborough Lees (U14)		25	50	50	50	25									200
Klondyke/Newtown Works Phase 2						50	50	50	50	50	50	50			350
New Urban Site allocations															0
Court Lodge				50	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	950
Kennington					35	70	85	85	85	85	85	85	85		700
Eureka			50	50	50	50	50	50							300
Park Farm - South of Bridgefield			20	60	60	60	50								250
The 'Park' at Finberry											75	75	75	75	300
Conningbrook Phase 2									20	50	50				120
Land south of Steeds Lane Kingsnorth				25	60	60	60	60	55						320
Land to the west of Ash Road Kingsnorth (C Lodge)			25	50	25										100
Waterbrook					50	50	50	50	50	50					300
Kennard Way - Henwood		25													25
RURAL SITES															0
Existing Allocations - Under construction															0
Chil1 - Chilham Place	11														11
Char2 - Land south of maidstone road	17														17
HAM1 - Lancaster Close	4														4
ALD1 - Land south and west of Quarry Wood	41														41
Existing allocations - Not started															0
WYE1 -Land at Kelston Wye	27														27
Tent 1 - Tenterden Southern Extension Phase A		65	65	60	60										250
ROLV1- Rolvenden Football Ground	20	20													40
HAM2 - Land at Parker Farm Hamstreet		10													10
Char1 - Land South of Arthur Baker Playing Field Charing		35													35
WYE2 - Land at Luckly Field Wye	25														25
WOOD1 - Land at Front rd Woodchurch	8														8
Tent 1b - Tenterden Southern Extension Phase B						40	60	60	15						175
New Rural Site Allocations															0
Appledore - Land rear of Village Hall			15												15
Egerton - New Road			15												15
Hamstreet - Land north of St. Mary's Close			25	25				30							80
High Halden - Land at Hope House			25												25
Mersham - Land adjacent to Village Hall			10												10
Shadoxhurst - Land rear of Kings Head PH		30													30
Smarden - Land adjacent to Memorial Hall		25													25
Smeeth - Land South of Church Road			20												20
Biddenden - North Street			20	25											45
Charing - Land rear of Northdown Service Station			20												20
Woodchurch - Land fronting Lower Road			8												8
Hothfield - Land East of Coach Drive				40											40
Neighbourhood Plans															0
Wye3, Former Imperial College			26	26											52
WINDFALLS															0
Windfalls - small sites (10 and under) - not started**		75	75	42											192
Windfalls - small sites (10 and under) - under construction	127														127
Windfalls - major sites (above 10) - not started**		22	23	27											72
Windfalls - MAJOR sites (10 or above) under construction	64														64
MAJOR WINDFALLS SINCE APRIL 2016															0
Projected windfalls Total					100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1000
*(*reduced from total 1,100 extant to take account of 90 live work/units not being built)*															12611
*(**figures in table show minus 25% for assumed non implementation)*															
Totals	677	554	992	1064	1260	1175	1164	1050	1015	835	935	775	600	515	12611
	677	1231	2223	3287	4547	5722	6886	7936	8951	9786	10721	11496	12096	12611	